

CABLEgram

Career and Civic Connections

May 2004

No buts about it. Karyl Innis is one smart woman! As CEO of The Innis Company, Karyl's strategic advice has enabled top Fortune 500 companies from around the country to get the most out of their employees. And at the May 12th CABLE program, Karyl will share her most effective career strategies with "YOU Might be Smart, but... Great Careers Don't Just Happen!"

Karyl's own career has served as a springboard for her business, and it's given her the kind of personal experience that enhances her insight into other people's careers. She's gone from starting a job in the '70s, making more than most women only because her name was misread as "Karl," to heading a business that's now the largest 100 percent woman-owned company of its type in the country.

Along the way, Karyl has run into more than her fair share of "smart, buts."™ These are people who are bright enough to be on the fast-track to success, yet their flaws are holding them back.

Perhaps they are unwilling to speak up and take a leadership role, or maybe they are so abrupt that other employees don't want to deal with them. Despite their brains, they can't understand what is readily apparent to management – they aren't ready for promotion.

"The word 'but' is a verbal eraser," Karyl said. "It negates whatever goes before it. When coupled with the word 'smart,' it automatically means 'disregard any intelligence this human has.'"

Karyl cites an example from *The Apprentice*, the reality TV show in which each week Donald Trump eliminates candidates from a pool of prospective employees. The last one standing gets a plum \$250,000 one-year job working for The Donald.

"The first apprentice fired was David. He was described as 'scary' he was so smart.



"YOU Might be Smart, but... Great Careers Don't Just Happen!"

"If I'm so smart, why is my career stalled?"

He held an MD and an MBA. In the cab, as he was leaving the site of his termination, he looked into the camera and said, 'I can take solace in the fact that I am the smartest.' I looked back at the television and said to him,

'You are a 'smart, but'™!'

He was the first fired.

He couldn't find a way to use his considerable intellect for the good of the team."

According to Karyl, we are all "smart, buts"™ to a degree. We may be a genius at marketing, but completely ignorant when it comes to accounting. Or perhaps we are skilled at getting people to work together as a team, but too disorganized to follow up on team goals. Still the real problem comes when we act

as if our particular strength has entitled us to all the answers.

Through her work as a human resources consultant and her career coaching expertise, Karyl helps companies turn "smart, buts"™ into valuable and valued leaders. Businesses get to fully utilize an employee's talents, and they save the time and money involved in

undergoing another potentially fruitless search, hoping for a better fit.

And employees who overcome their "smart, but"™ images can finally start reaping the benefits of promotions and challenges that lead to a more fulfilling career. How does Karyl feel about those results? That's a no-brainer. It's one of the most rewarding aspects of her career, creating win-win solutions for employees and employers.

