

America's Top Coach Ranks Media Personalities Just in Time for May Sweeps

NEW YORK, May 6 /PRNewswire/ -- While everyone knows it takes a certain level of ego to survive the grueling national spotlight as a media personality, an often over-looked aspect of the on-going success formula is the ability to be guided or coached. America's Top Coach, Stephen Xavier, whose clients include top Fortune 500 CEOs, has ranked the coachability and leadership styles of America's most luminous media stars. Xavier points out that a television celebrity's commitment to "change and growth" -- plus an ability to take direction -- could prove to be a key to their survival, or untimely demise.

Here are the rankings:

1) THE WINNERS

-- They are masters at playing the corporate game -- and refuse to rest on their laurels. The media personalities who score high in this category are the most coachable because they will do anything for the success of their shows, and they are constantly developing new ways to win the loyalty and affection of their viewers.

-- Matt Lauer -- Among news biz stars, he stands out as super-talented, smooth and dedicated to the hilt, running all over the world at the expense of his family time for his Today Show segment "Where In The World is Matt Lauer?" Personal sacrifice aside, he has made his mark in the annals of broadcast journalism and he is the hands-down winner in likeability.

-- Oprah Winfrey -- The reigning superstar of daytime or primetime, she set a new standard for talk show hosts in terms of quality of show content, Emmys, knowing viewers interests and tastes, and sheer power to motivate her audience to write bestsellers and support causes.

-- Anderson Cooper -- Solid and steady, he is always tackling new challenges in a calculating and strategic manner. He keeps broadening, and takes viewers with him as he learns, but he also stays within the bounds of his expertise.

-- Howard Stern -- His devotion to his over 30 year career and his fans -- from radio shock jock to television superstar and satellite radio pioneer -- took its toll on his marriage to Alison. He paid a price personally, but his loyal fans and his ability to stay successful while

changing networks has proven he is a winner.

- Jon Stewart -- He began as the quintessential IVY league TV comedy writer and has taken the genre to a new level on his own show. His dedication to hard work and "kissing up" took him to Oscar award host stardom.

2) THE STALWARTS

- Barbara Walters, Walter Conkrite, Tom Brokaw, Mike Wallace, Charles Gibson, Diane Sawyer, Wolf Blitzer, Jim Lehrer, Lou Dobbs, Ted Koppel, Sam Donaldson and Bill Moyers -- By making their news reporting the top priority in their lives, they have all survived an industry that changed from a small network television business to ownership by multi-million dollar corporations.

3) RESPECTED but STALE ...

- These media personalities may be fulfilling their contractual obligations
- but just showing up and doing their jobs only gets them to third place in terms of coachability.

- David Letterman -- He is a media-lion with droves of loyal fans, but the thrill is long gone.

- Jay Leno -- What's to say, he's loveable and funny but, he's served his term and is ready to choose his successor.

- Conan O'Brien -- He is the other nighttime superstar who did his time, lost his sizzle and has been promoted to his next big slot. We'll see if he reignites. He chose Jimmy Fallon as his successor.

- Katie Couric -- She was one of the most beloved morning talk show hosts throughout her tenure on Today and she still has the love and support from her fans, while coping with the mismatched programming placement on CBS Evening News.

- Meredith Viera -- She never touched America's hearts as much as Today Show predecessor, Katie Couric -- but she works hard and puts a lot of money in the bank. Not too many people realize her total devotion to her husband Richard Cohen, a respected news producer who has written about his battle with multiple sclerosis. She wins our vote for compassion.

4) THE CLOWNS-100% SELF OBSESSED

They are in the right place at the right time, but they are focused only on themselves. They may be experiencing a successful run, but they probably won't go down in history as legendary.

-- Tyra Banks -- She is a superstar model with lots of sass riding a tidal wave of ratings, but her colossal ego needs taming if she is to rise above her fellow clowns.

-- Rush Limbaugh -- Listeners love his strong opinions, but "windbag" also comes to mind.

-- Bill Maher -- Frequently criticized for being rude and arrogant, his impressive viewership keeps him on the air with HBO.

-- Ryan Seacrest -- He has aged more than 40 years during the last seven seasons of American Idol. Successful at reinventing himself but we ask, "Now what?"

-- Bill O'Reilly -- Hmm ... ranks high in strength of conviction, fails miserably in all other areas of good leadership and manners.

-- Martha Stewart -- High end country club jail says it all. Plus the fact that she opted out of submitting for an Emmy this year after two straight losses.

BEHIND THE RANKINGS:

According to Xavier, his rankings were based on an analysis of six criteria that he often uses in assessing leadership in his work with top executives at Fortune 500 companies, including Amgen, Disney, Motorola, Northrop Grumman and Goldman Sachs. The criteria include:

1. Overall personality -- They are "likeable" and seen as someone who can be trusted, familiar and friendly.
2. Compassionate -- They are caring and interested in the human-side of people, issues, tragedies, etc.
3. Balanced and objective -- They come across to viewers as people who can be counted on to dig deep, assess, analyze and report back honestly and fairly -- not a zealot -- left or right-leaning.
4. Strength of Conviction -- They take a stand on tough and controversial issues -- won't back down.
5. Broad Range of Interest/Talent -- They aren't uni-dimensional or myopic, and work across a wide range of issues, topics, cultures, etc. -- they grow themselves and audience with them.

6. Personal Sacrifice -- While deserting one's family too often is anathema in business, it is often a given for success in the news business.

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