

michael lawrence green



BY ED GOLDMAN

For many of us, "You must remember this" is merely the opening of the song "As Time Goes By." For Michael Lawrence Green, it's become a mission statement for his company, Memory Spring.

Green, who turns 43 this month, trains private- and public-sector leaders and staffs in the delicate art of recall. "I fully believe that when people learn to remember someone else's name or face — and ideally, both — they become more successful in their work, their family lives and their friendships."

As co-founder and vice president of sales for MVP Associates/Delta-4, a business-training firm, Green had already coached hundreds of salespeople when the concept of Memory Spring took root. "I had told the folks who run staff development at UC Davis, where I'd led some training classes, that if they ever had a speaker drop out at the last minute, I'd be happy to jump in — for the experience and because I love talking to people," he says. "One day a couple of years ago, they called me on a Monday and asked if I could do a class that Wednesday. I said I'd be thrilled to."

It was while teaching that two-hour course to 40 human resource professionals that Green discovered the extra edge he brought to training: Amazingly, he

remembered everyone's name at the end of the session (and no, the students weren't wearing name tags). Amid the applause and laughter, the head of staff development asked Green if he could come back soon and teach a course in memory skills.

Since then, he's taught memory courses for University of California, Davis department heads and employees; private physician groups; Sacramento Municipal Utility District employees; senior citizens; companies and non-profit organizations. So what's his secret?

"I work at it," he says over a Cobb salad at Ink Eats and Drinks, the animated and stylish midtown Sacramento restaurant. "When I greet people, I immediately tell them my name so they'll tell me theirs. I look them in the eye, pick out

something visual to remember about them — because most of us have visual memories, even though we suppress them — and I find a way to repeat their names three times, to lock them into my memory."

Naturally, we ask Green if he ever forgets things. "Well, sure, sometimes," he says. "We all forget stuff. No one can remember 100 percent of everything. But all of us can do a lot better." He smiles impishly. "What was your question again?" he says.

"I fully believe that when people remember names and faces, they become more successful."

Birthplace: Miami Beach, Fla.

Family matters: Michael has two younger sisters and is married to Holly Green, a hairstylist. They have three children: Max, 11; and twins Sarah and Rachel, 8.

Back story: A former mortgage banker (as is his wife), Michael graduated from California State University, Northridge in 1986 with a degree in finance. His mother lives in Boca Raton, Fla. His late father was a sales executive in the garment industry. "A very tough business with a lot of characters," he says.

Say what? "I'm not in this to help people memorize the New York City phonebook. I don't care about parlor tricks. I'm in it because I want to help people be better."

Come again? "When people say they simply don't have a good memory, they set themselves up for failure. It becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. If you keep the brain busy and you learn new things, you'll enhance your memory. The brain is like a muscle: Use it or lose it."

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