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*Understanding customer needs and trends.
Honing your message and strategies to meet market demands.
Building a reputation to create and sustain your leadership.
Demonstrating value.*

These are all paramount to your success.

Inspiration and ideas come from a wide variety of sources. The ability to integrate new thoughts and make the strategy + communications + leadership link helps companies and executives alike elevate their performance.

Because it's challenging at the top, [The Aerie Company](#) offers you useful and thought provoking ideas to help you soar to new heights. Enjoy these latest insights.



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Becoming an Advocate

As health care reform brings millions more people into the system over the next several years, there has never been such an urgent and dramatic need to advocate for yourself, your family and the people you love at the doctor's office and in the hospital.

The successful champions will be those with a solid health literacy foundation – often described as an individual's ability to read, understand and use healthcare information to make decisions and follow instructions for treatment. While it seems pretty straightforward, the complexities of chronic conditions, varied therapeutic approaches and an enormous array of drug options, let alone insurance and financial

issues, require today's patients and consumers to be prepared for even more responsibility and accountability for their health.



In a calendar filled with disease awareness weeks and months, [Health Literacy Month](#) in October trumps most given its central mission to draw increased attention on the importance of access to accurate, understandable health information and promoting good health. It has been well documented that limited health literacy has a direct link to worse health outcomes and higher costs, something we can ill afford today.

Among many resources available to promote greater consumer understanding of health, particularly navigating the system, is "[The Empowered Patient](#)" by CNN senior medical correspondent Elizabeth Cohen. The book is an outgrowth a career reporting on healthcare, her Empowered Patient column for CNN.com and personal and family experience as patients. Cohen takes a be-prepared-like-a-Boy Scout approach offering advice, patient stories, resources and check lists on getting the right diagnosis and plan for the best medical care, dealing with your insurance company, how to maximize prescriptions, ultimately informing patients of their vital role in creating a smarter, safer health care system.

The basic principles for becoming a personal advocate ring true for the business environment as well, whether responding to a crisis or promoting a new point of view on issues critical to your company or industry. To help pave the way to define and resolve problems, focus on advocacy skills that enable you to:

- **Be prepared** – do your research to support your position, keep organized records that outline all details and have a plan for success
- **Be clear** – articulate a clear, specific definition of the problem that distinguishes major issues from incidental details and always be listening to ensure you understand any response you receive
- **Be engaged** – adopt a lifelong learning mindset so you are receptive and can question new information and options while remaining polite and persistent

With better understanding comes better decision-making. When it comes to a healthy and productive workforce, health literacy cannot be the sole obligation of a single stakeholder. Employers, care management programs, insurance companies and individuals alike need to be the advocates for better health and outcomes.

If you could benefit from being a more effective advocate, [The Aerie Company](#) is here to help. From developing and implementing communication programs that advocate better employee health to building your personal communication and advocacy skills, we have resources to support you. Click [here](#) for more information.

New Links

Links to help you communicate more effectively.

[Woe Is I, the Grammarphobe's Guide to Better English in Plain English](#) may be the first book on grammar and powerful language you enjoy reading. Patricia T. O'Conner has created an excellent resource for those who still have no idea when to use who or whom, its or it's, when we need to talk vs. dialogue and work together vs. interface.

[Clue](#) is an ingenious web application that allows anyone to conduct a free test of what visitors remember

about a website and whether they understand what you are trying to get across. It is a quick, easy and no-cost way to determine whether your brand message is clear and your calls to action memorable. It is also valuable for testing out new ideas or a new page before going live with new or enhanced sites.

See our website at www.aeriecompany.com for more links.

About The Aerie Company

At The Aerie Company, we help organizations and executives demonstrate their value and accelerate growth. Because it's challenging at the top, we show our clients how to go beyond where they are today and elevate their business and personal market leadership performance. We build a strategic stronghold with better understanding of your current market, an aligned and articulate vision, mission and strategy, a compelling position that resonates in the marketplace and effective communication so your stakeholders recognize your real benefits and value.



For more information, visit www.aeriecompany.com, email us at suzanne@aeriecompany.com or call 847-556-8873.



Watch for regular updates from The Aerie Company on best practices, advice on communication and market leadership development, and other insights we gain as devoted lifelong learners to help you demonstrate your value and improve your performance.