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## Teacher shows commodity traders how to belt it out

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CHICAGO — A voice consultant and former choir director is helping to train commodity traders who perform in trading pits and need strong voices to bid for pork bellies, not applause.

"Very often traders know a lot about strategy," said consultant William Rush.

"They know a lot about markets, the options," he said, "but the other half of their skill is they've got to communicate it."

A trader's voice must be loud, easy to understand, "and it needs to have endurance," Rush said.

"If they had their druthers, they'd shout down everybody in the place," said Rush, 43, who lives in suburban Evanston. "This is money we're talking about, and they usually will work far too hard" to be heard.

Rush's office is in the Civic Opera Building, across the street from the Chicago Mercantile Exchange and three blocks from the Chicago Board of Trade, the nation's two largest commodity exchanges.

Hundreds of traders jam into trading pits there and shout bids on such commodities as pork bellies, soybeans, British pounds and Treasury bills.

"Essentially what I do is to help them work smart instead of hard, and they end up making a lot more sound with a lot less effort," Rush said.

"They don't go home with sore throats."



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Trader Mikros (left) gives coach Rush a tour of Chicago Board of Trade.

Rush, who has a master's degree in voice, is a former high school choral director, singer and actor.

In addition to traders, he and his wife, Kathy, train singers, actors, lawyers, salesmen and executives in the principles of voice delivery.

He teaches the traders voice exercises, tells them to breathe with their diaphragms and urges them to use higher-pitched voices, which sound authoritative and louder.

"Men tend to get away from that because they're afraid they won't sound macho," he said.

He urges his clients to speak clearly and to move their arms so their upper muscles will not tighten.

Such tension, he said, makes them look

"like someone had zapped them with spray starch."

Because traders often cannot hear themselves in the hectic trading, he said, "They'll push more, and the harder they push, the less sound they'll make."

"They'll wind up looking apoplectic. Their eyes get wide, and their skin gets very red. The guys just try too hard."

Rush declined to say how much he charges the traders he tutors. One of his clients, bond trader Scott Mikros, 26, said the training sessions are not expensive.

"You can recover what you invest with Bill in a matter of minutes," Mikros said. "People can hear you all over the place."

"I can yell all day long ... and my throat doesn't get damaged."