

Marco businessman advocates workplace civility

Randy Jones finds a national audience via NPR.

9:30 PM, Apr. 11, 2012 | Comments

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Randall Kenneth Jones / Don Manley/Sun Times

Randall Kenneth Jones' quest to restore and improve workplace civility has gone nationwide.

The Marco Island businessman and Fiddler's Creek resident's pre-recorded commentary on the topic will be broadcast Friday on NPR's "Marketplace" program. This comes on the heels of CNBC.com's April 5 publication of Jones' blog entry entitled "Office Etiquette: Mind Your Manners."

Jones is the owner and creative spark of the MindZoo direct-marketing company, as well as a humorist, speaker, editorial writer and actor who's appeared in productions of the Marco Players, the Naples Players and Naples-based Shakespeare in Paradise.

His blogging activity has taken flight over the last year.

Jones started with the February 2011 debut of "Attack Bunnies, Indecent Exposure, Elizabeth Vargas and other Bumps in the Road" (attackbunnies.com), which takes episodes from his life and uses them as humorous metaphors to impart lessons, provoke thought and to entertain.

Jones then expanded his offerings with the website for his professional courtesy initiative "RediscoverCourtesy.org," which hit cyberspace in October.

Simply put, he champions the cause of making niceness, politeness and being respectful as much a part of the work-a-day world as the lunch hour.

"The adage of 'It's just business' – I cannot accept that the concept should ever apply," said Jones, who cites a decline in such niceties as returning phone calls and emails. "If people stop thinking about professional courtesy, it will go away. I want people to just think about it, their behavior. Did I say thank you? Did I treat that person the way I'd want to be treated?"

Jones described his "Marketplace" piece as "a simple commentary on the state of professional courtesy today's business world" and he is ecstatic to know his message will reach millions of ears around the country.

"To be a commentator on a show that airs daily on public radio stations across the country is insanely cool," said Jones.

Both the CNBC.com and the "Marketplace" opportunities resulted from a press release about "Rediscover Courtesy" that Jones sent to business reporters nationwide.

Jones then had to tailor his submissions to meet the requirements of the website and the program.

"The quality of the editors from both Marketplace and CNBC has been excellent as far as directing me to the content that will appeal to their audiences," said Jones.

One of Jones' hopes is that the heightened profile of "RediscoverCourtesy" will lead to more speaking engagements on the topic and hopefully heightened public awareness and discussion.

Jones has also approached Anderson Cooper's new talk show, "Anderson," about having him on as a guest to discuss workplace courtesy.

"I need national exposure because it needs to be talked about and if it's true that people who actually need this aren't reading it, then I need to get a national platform," said Jones. "I'm not a perfect person and I'm not naïve, but if I can just get people to think about it, then I'm happy."

– Amy Sowder of the Fort Myers News-Press also contributed to this story.



Randall Kenneth Jones / Special to the Sun Times