

Succeed on Integrity

From the largest to the smallest company, the key to longevity and success is integrity. You hear these types of comments all the time about well-established companies: “They treat their employees really well,” “They have the best customer service I’ve ever seen,” or “They go way above and beyond what I expected to make sure I was satisfied.”

I ask you now to take the time to look at your business from the outside looking in. Ideally, how would you want to be treated as a customer, an employee, and a business associate? What standards does a business need to adhere to like super-glue in order to keep you buying from them, or to stay employed by them?

Now, take these external business standards and apply them to your own business model.

For example, if someone takes the time to listen to a presentation about your product, it is essential that you give them the gratitude they deserve, regardless of whether or not they decide to buy or become a business partner in your venture.

This also applies to the people within your organization working under your command. By maintaining an attentiveness to individuals, and never taking anything for granted, you will keep your business in the game for the long run.

The little things, the attention to details are the mortar that keeps the bricks of your business strong. By thinking of people as people instead of potential income, you will build a positive reputation and image for your company. In these volatile financial times, this is as important as ever to maintain longevity for your business.

Here are some important small business care tips:

It’s Time to Leap to the Front

The year 2004 brings not only a new start, but as the first leap year in the new millennium it gives us an extra day to plan and act on our successes. The past year has been a troublesome one for many, but we seem to have turned the corner and the business picture looks considerably brighter. With the changing of the season, it is a good time to reflect and remember those who helped us to achieve our goals and to gain their support for another challenging year.

The stock market is toying with the 10,000 index and it has been a double digit increase for the year. It has been projected that it may hit 11,000 by this time next year. All of these are positive indicators that the business climate is good. It is up to all of us to take advantage of this and make 2004 the best year yet..

If we at EMBA can be of any assistance please let us know.

We will be beginning a CEO mentoring program in 2004, a part of TAB– The Alternative Board. If you would like more information, please let us know.

Thank you for your past support Best wishes for a healthy and prosperous 2004!

FOLLOW-UP NOTES, OR CALLS– Sometimes it’s easy when someone says “No” or “Maybe” to quickly say good-bye, then move on to the next prospect. No matter what the outcome of a sales pitch to a potential lead, always let them know how much you appreciate their giving up their time to listen to you. A simple phone call or thank-you note does wonders to show that.

This may seem like a very old-fashioned approach, but that is the very reason it will work. Because basic manners are becoming so rare in the 21st century, it will be a breath of fresh air for your potential clientele.

MORE THAN JUST A PAT ON THE BACK— Go the extra mile for hard-working associates in your business. If someone is doing exceptionally well, do not fail to recognize his or her accomplishments.

Never let someone who is working hard feel that they are taken for granted. Small gifts, like movie passes, gift certificates, and lunches “On Me”, in addition to the usual monetary bonuses, can do wonders to motivate, and elevate exceptional employees!

DID YOU KNOW

Every photograph of an American atomic bomb detonation was taken by Harold Edgerton.

The topknot that quails have is called a hmuh.

The Dutch town of Leeuwarden can be spelled 225 different ways.

Lucy Ricardo's maiden name was McGillicuddy.

The sea wasp is half an inch long at best and more poisonous than any other jellyfish known to man.

Tigers have striped skin, not just striped fur.

After the Civil War the U.S. sued Great Britain for damages that were caused by them building ships for the Confederacy. We originally asked for \$1Billion, but settled for \$25 Million.

Ben and Jerry's send the waste from making ice cream to local pig farmers to use as feed. Pigs love the stuff, except for one flavor: Mint Oreo.

The first word spoken by an ape in the movie Planet of the Apes was "Smile".



GETTING A SIGN FOR YOUR STORE

Signage, as it is called in retail, can be quite expensive. Those big, colorful, creative signs that adorn the outside of big stores often cost thousands. Yet few things are more important in marketing. Great signage can make or break a business that depends on local traffic.

Here are a few things to keep in mind.

1. The businesses that need a great sign are ones that depend on impulse visitors for lots of sales. If you are one of the only businesses of your type providing a specialized product or service to a very interested group of prospects, you probably don't need much of a sign. Your customers will find you.
2. Think hard about signage while you're choosing your store or office location. Zoning and landlord rules often tell you exactly what kind of sign you will be allowed to have.
3. Prices of signs vary widely. Your best bet would be to get a professional sign company to design AND manufacture a good looking sign.
4. A basic rule of sign designers is the fancier your sign looks, the harder it is to read. If you want people to be able to spot your name while driving by at 40 miles per hour, keep your lettering big, bold, and simple.



How to Hire Creative People

Thomas Edison had a unique way of hiring engineers. He'd give the applicant a light bulb and ask, "How much water will it hold?"

There were two ways to find the answer. The first choice was to use gauges to measure all the angles of the bulb. Then with the measurements in hand, the engineer would calculate the surface area. This approach could take as long as twenty minutes.

The second choice was to fill the bulb with water and then pour the contents into a measuring cup. Total elapsed time: about a minute.

Engineers who took the first route, and performed their measurements by the book, were thanked politely for their time and sent on their way. If you took the second route, you heard Edison say, "You're hired."

Looking to hire creative people? Develop an "Edison test" of your own.



AND LISTEN!

It is ironic that in the field of sales most of us learn to speak in order to gain commitment. Often, that is the worst thing a sales professional can do. It is better to listen more than you talk.

Before you can listen, you need to learn how to ask a question. Your questions should be open ended to start a conversation. In other words, avoid questions that can be answered yes or no.

Think about what you will ask beforehand. Ask about competitors, past purchases, and other important issues. You may want to make a list of your questions and keep a copy with you.

Make sure you pause as you ask each question so you are clearly understood. If you are confused by a reply, you might want to paraphrase what was said so you are able to understand the issue in your own words.

Selling demands much time and effort. However, by learning the basic skills of listening and asking questions, you can become very successful.

How to Win With Electronic Mail



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The easiest method of communication today seems to be electronic mail. (E-mail) It has replaced the memo or business letter. This method of communication is so common that the typical business person easily sends or receives 75-100 e-mails a day. Many senior level executives send or receive 150-200 e-mails a day. That is a lot of information to manage. Make it easy on the people that read your e-mails by remembering a few simple principles.

First, the subject line is very important and easily overlooked, particularly if you are responding to an e-mail that has been sent to you. Because most people get so many e-mails, they scan the subject lines to see which e-mails require immediate attention. If you write your subject line with the intent of whetting people's appetite, you will increase the likelihood of people reading it. Instead of a generic subject line that says, "Friday's meeting," try this: "Things to remember to ask at Friday's client meeting at ABC Corporation." The more specific the subject line, the more you call attention to what is to follow.

Because e-mail has replaced the face-to-face meeting, or even a phone conversation in many instances, make sure any e-mail you send is written at a professional level. This is not the right venue for sensitive information. Your e-mails may be printed and distributed, or forwarded to others. Years ago an e-mail from newscaster, Bryant Gumbel, who thought it was private, was published and distributed, much to his horror. If it can happen to him, it can happen to you. Some people,

in an attempt to be more casual, frequently add what is called emotions, symbols like a smiley face, or numbers or letters to indicate they are upset. Again, it is best to avoid these and be professional.

Being professional also means taking the time to check grammar, punctuation and spelling. If your tool bar offers grammar and spell check, make sure to run it. Be diligent about your grammar as people will notice if you don't.

The first paragraph of your e-mail is critical. It should be clear and concise. E-mails that go on and on often get overlooked. If your e-mail is going to be long, tell the reader why in your opening remarks.

Tell your reader up front if there is an action step you need and the benefits thereof. If you want recipients to call you after reviewing the e-mail, be sure to tell them when you are free. It will help eliminate "phone tag."

To be sure your e-mails stand out, use strong nouns and action verbs. When you proofread, eliminate any negative or tentative language. Words such as "maybe," "hopefully," or "might possibly" are weak and should be eliminated. Be sure you add your full name, title, e-mail address and phone and fax numbers.

E-mails can erode a relationship with a client. E-mail should never replace the personal touch. A well-thought out e-mail will make a positive and lasting impression.



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From the Editor's Desk

Well, another New Year. Did you make a resolution to grow your business? Do you need assistance with that goal? If you do, we can certainly be of help to you. Call us for a FREE consultation. It will be the most important call you have ever made and you will be pleased with the results!

MAXINE, Newsletter Editor

*Happiness is like a butterfly.
The more you chase it, the more it will elude you.
But if you turn your attention to other things,
it comes softly and sits
on your shoulder.*