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Marketeer

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LOOK CUSTOMERS IN THE EYE — AND SAY THANK YOU

This month's tip is simple, yet it is one of the most powerful things you can do to get that all-important repeat business. Most firms get 80% of their sales from return customers. This small action keeps customers coming back.

A local Home Depot has a young man working the contractor checkout who speaks with a heavy Russian accent. He probably has not been in the United States for more than a couple of months. Beyond a few memorized phrases, he speaks very little English, and when he does it is a real struggle for him.

But he does one very important thing exceptionally well.

After he processes your order he looks you straight in the eye, smiles, and says, "Thank you very much. Have a nice day."

Small but effective!

Have everyone in your business look customers straight in the eye, smile, and say, "Thank you very much. Have a nice day." It works wonders to make customers feel positive about you and your business. They'll keep coming back to buy more and your sales will remain healthy month after month.

The Flowers That Bloom in the Spring Tra-La

Business, just like flowers, doesn't just happen. It develops from seeds that have been planted weeks, months, and sometimes years before. It is important to have a consistent program of seed planting if you want your business to prosper and grow. Your marketing plan is your gardener in developing new opportunities. Is your plan up to date? When is the last time you reviewed it? A marketing plan doesn't stay static. It needs to be reviewed periodically as the environment in which it prospers is a changing one. This environment includes the customer landscape, competition, and resources available (time, money, desire and determination).

An annual review is a necessity even if you decide no changes are needed. More frequent reviews are OK, but one should not overly panic and change plans too quickly. As one of the proverbs for business success says, "Give the bird room to fly".

The Spring Equinox has passed and we are headed for the pleasantness of summer. Golf clubs are being readied for that first swing, swimwear is being reevaluated (based on how you did over the holidays) and thoughts are turning to that dreaded 8-letter word—exercise. I often think of exercise, but then I lie down and wait for the thought to pass. Don't do that with your marketing plan. Get it in shape NOW!

Best wishes for a great Spring.

Another technique is to use hand-written thank you notes. They put a personal touch between you and your customer and in today's world of technology serves to separate you and help to create strong customer relations

DID YOU KNOW

If you don't accept the stress of challenges, you may never know the exhilaration of victory.

As of 2000, on the average, for every 100 workers in the United States — 27 have cardiovascular disease, 24 have high blood pressure, 59 have high cholesterol, 26 smoke, 10 are heavy drinkers, 60 don't wear seat belts regularly, 26 are obese and 44 suffer from excessive levels of stress.

For every \$1 spent on family programs, there is a \$2 yield in increased productivity and reduced turnover and retraining costs.

93% of attendees visiting a trade show during the last half-hour of the day say that they found salespeople were not available at one or more of the exhibits they visited. Nearly 90% of exhibitors surveyed said they obtained a sale or met a good prospect during the last half-hour of the exhibit day.

Personality can open doors, but only character can keep them open...

*Elmer G. Leterman
Business Executive*



Why Your Ideas Don't Get Accepted

There are three reasons ideas don't get accepted according to Rick Maurer, author of *Why Don't You Want What I Want?*

Reason #1: "I don't get it."

Reason #2: "I don't like it."

Reason #3: "I don't like you."

Reason #1 "I don't get it." If customers don't understand your argument, they certainly aren't going to buy it. As you plan out your next presentation, carefully analyze your audience and how much they know about the topic. Put yourself in their shoes. Then, think about the best way to explain these ideas to them, based on what they know and who they are.

Consider whether there is a logical flow to your argument. If you are explaining a process, are the steps in the right order? If you are explaining the benefits of a program, do you state your points in the order of importance?

One of the biggest reasons people get their ideas rejected is that they overload listeners with information. The more you say, the less people hear. While you want to create the evidence, three key points are enough. Too much information frightens people. So does speaking in generalities. When explaining your points, don't use adjectives; use stories or examples. This will help support your case and minimize confusion. Word choice is also critical. Simple, clear language, devoid of jargon, ensures that everyone gets the point, not just those with technical expertise.

Reason #2 "I don't like it." When customers don't like your idea, typically it means you didn't show value. You didn't relate your ideas to their needs. You need to give them one good reason to buy. Even if you feel a positive reception is a sure thing, don't overlook the fact that timing may be an issue. The sluggish economy, or a behind the scenes projection, may cause an idea to be rejected today when it might be applauded six months from now.

If there is anyone in the organization who might champion your ideas, be sure to approach that person ahead of time so they can promote

them behind the scenes. An "insider" can also help you to better understand the audience's primary needs and understand where resistance might come from. Once you know this, you can anticipate objections and be ready to answer them.

Reason #3 "I don't like you." First impressions are lasting and are formed within a few minutes. A nervous presenter almost always scores poor marks. If you believe in what you say, listeners need to see it in your body and hear it in your voice. They need to feel you are looking them in the eye so that they can trust you. It is important to get feedback on your delivery style. Video tape feedback is ideal. Sometimes, people can come across as arrogant, insincere or even unfriendly without even knowing it. It is only after they see themselves on video tape that they realize there are some things they need to change.

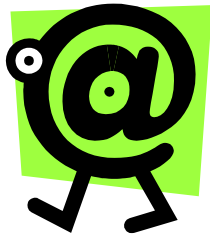
Every speaker has a natural style. When presenters capitalize on their natural style, they win people over. When they try to imitate the speaking style of a boss or colleague, they come across as a fake. Be sure that when you speak, people feel they are getting the real "you."

Selling your ideas requires a lot more than showing up and plugging in your Powerpoint. Doing your homework so that you understand your listeners' needs is critical! So is being a strong communicator and relating to your customers. If your ideas are rejected, take a good look in the mirror. Analyze where things turned sour so that the next time you can convince people to move forward and accept your ideas.

*Judy Filek—President
www.ImpactCommunicationsInc.com*

People will accept your idea much more readily if you tell them Benjamin Franklin said it first....

David H. Comins



Why Internet Business Will Stay Strong Even if The Economy Goes Bad

Day after day news media warns us the world's economy may be in serious trouble. Storm clouds are on our economic horizon. Experts say Japan is now where the United States was at the start of our Great Depression in the 1930s. Russia, Latin America, and Southeast Asia are also having serious economic problems. Hunker down, a world depression could be on the way.

Does this gloom and doom apply to the Internet? Will thousands of small Internet businesses be forced to close down? Probably not.

Internet business is still brand new. Even the old-timers have only been on-line for three or four years. In many ways, we're just now figuring out how Internet business works and it appears to be very different from regular business.

Small and versatile is a big advantage. The Walmarts and MicroSofts have steadily forced smaller, family-owned businesses out of the way. Not so on the Internet. Three out of four Internet businesses are very small, often only one person working from home. Some of the most successful web sites are run by a single person still working a regular job. They take care of the business before work, during lunch, and late into the evening.

Small businesses are versatile. They can change directions at a moment's notice. That's a big advantage when times are hard. You can take down your big website offering investment advice and put up an equally impressive web site showing people how to get out of debt. No employees to retrain and no leases to get out of.

Internet business can personalize. Every indicator of how the future

will be points to a much greater demand for personalized services. Instead of buying a one-size-fits-all service from suppliers, you will enjoy services and products that are closely tailored to exactly what you want and need. Internet leaders, including Bill Gates, have said they believe the future of the Internet lies in personalized services supplied by small companies and individuals.

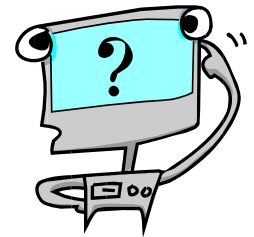
Market economics, the basic principles that govern business, doesn't seem to fit the Internet. Market economics generally encourage big companies to get bigger, buying up and outmaneuvering smaller companies. It may be impossible to build an Internet-based monopoly.

What can you do to profit from coming hard times? Make your Internet presence BIG. Expand your web site. Jazz up the look. Add helpful articles, add links to useful sites, and create alliances with other entrepreneurs. Keep your web site as focused as you can. Let people know you specialize in an area on-line products. When customers need a particular thing, they'll know you're the specialist that can give them personalized help.

Finally, remember, when business is bad, advertise. The Internet shows little honor to those who come in with a lot of start-up money. Instead, the Net rewards those who are popular. The more visitors to your web site and email box the more power you have on the Internet. Publicize your web site, your business, and your name. Distill your name and main benefits down to a short, easy sentence and put that sentence everywhere you can without spamming. Advertise in

email newsletters. Put banners on sites like your own. Send out press releases to media.

Paint your promotional efforts with big broad strokes. Spend as much as half your time promoting. By looking big and providing tightly focused products and services to a well-defined group of customers, you can ride the Internet wave into the future. It may well be a future that gives the Internet new and greater prominence.



- Where do you go when you have a question that needs an answer these days? The Internet, of course.
- Here are some questions found on the Internet and published in the Write File Quarterly, Woodville, Ontario Canada:
 - Why do you need a driver's license to buy liquor when you can't drive and drink?
 - Why isn't phonetic spelling spelled the way it sounds?
 - Why are there interstate highways in Hawaii?
 - If you're in a vehicle going the speed of light, what happens when you turn on the headlights?
 - Why is it when you transport something by car it's called a shipment, but when you transport something by ship it's called cargo?
 - Why is it that when you're driving and looking for an address, you turn down the volume on the radio?



Elliott M. Black & Associates, Inc.

Effective Marketing and
Business Assistance

Your off-site Marketing Department

2511 Windsor Lane
Northbrook, IL 60062
Tel. No. 847-272-2884
Fax No. 847-272-3551
E-mail: eblack@embainc.com
www.embainc.com
Email: info@embainc.com

From the Editor's Desk

April showers bring May flowers...but are they bringing you new business?

We can! We will tend your business garden with care. Call us for a FREE consultation and you will see how we can help your business grow.

MAXINE, Newsletter Editor

*Minds are like parachutes —
They only function when open...
Thomas Dewar*