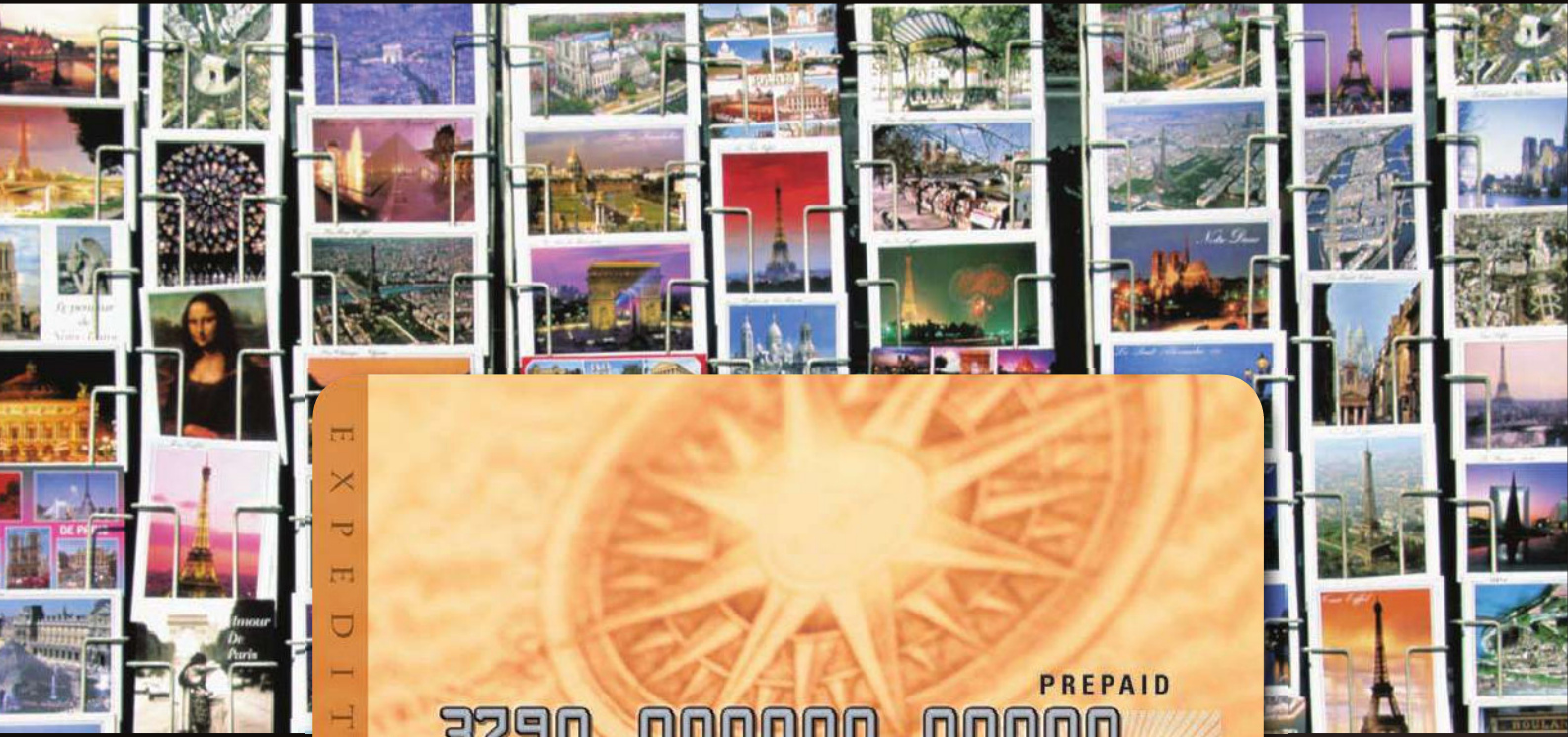


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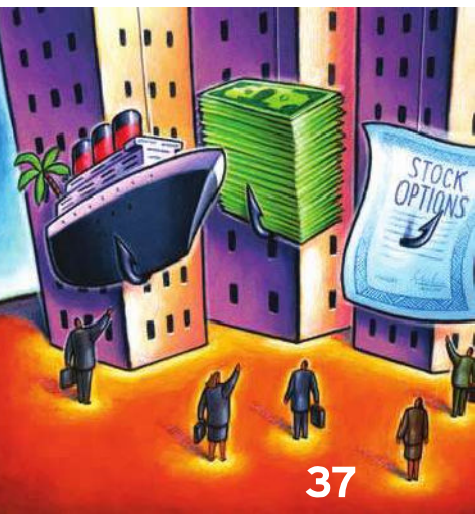
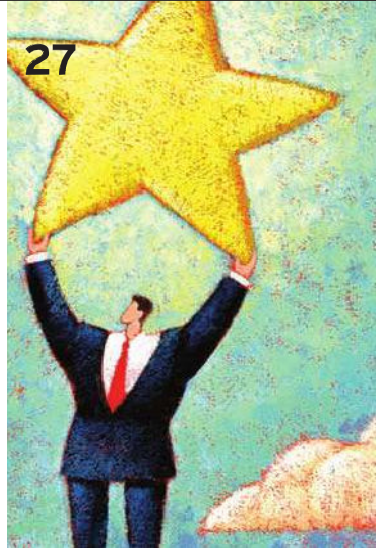
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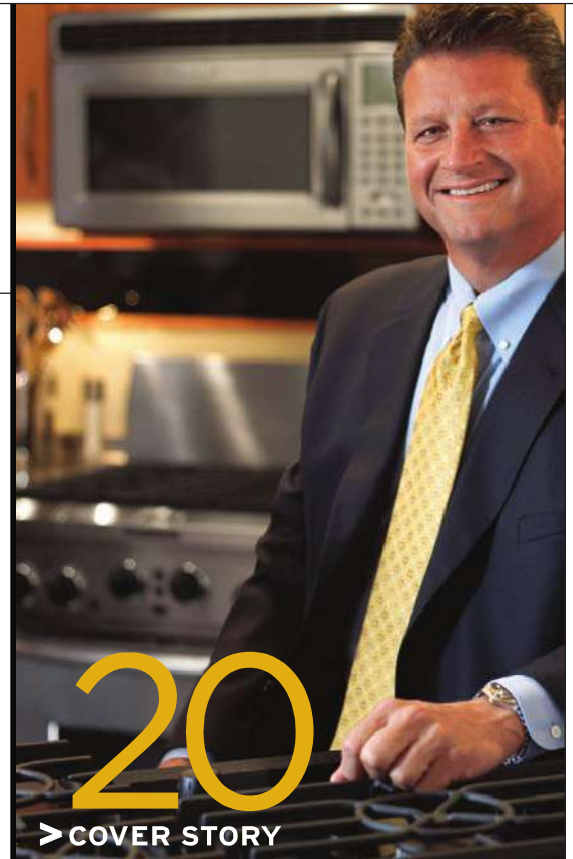
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VP OF NORTH
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MOLDS HUNDREDS
OF FORMER
COMPETITORS
INTO A SALES
FORCE TO BE
RECKONED WITH.

Cover Photo: Courtesy of Whirlpool Corporation; Doug Ingle



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WHAT TYPE OF LEADER ARE YOU?
USING THE ENNEAGRAM SYSTEM TO IDENTIFY AND GROW YOUR LEADERSHIP STRENGTHS AND ACHIEVE MAXIMUM SUCCESS



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> HIRING AS A COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

Unless you are casting extras for a crowd scene in Ben Hur, hire only exceptional people who love the work if you want a profitable company with a sustainable competitive advantage.

mistakes that a great majority of modern brands make.

> LEARNING AUTOMATION FOR BETTER CRM

What helps create loyal, productive employees? Most people would say it is the corporate culture you craft. Ask yourself this question: Are your employees fulfilled, challenged and rewarded? Many companies focus more on customers than employees, but that's like putting the cart before the horse.

> MARKETING LOYALTY: HOW TACTICS KILL STRATEGY

Without a clearly formulated and reasonable advertising strategy, your brand has neither lasting power nor individual character. Unfortunately, this is one of the key

The following were among the most popular and most e-mailed stories on the S&MM site last month:

MOST POPULAR STORIES

- > HOW TO RETAIN YOUR GEN-X WORKFORCE
- > MUST SEE TV: LESSONS FROM NBC'S "THE OFFICE"
- > MARKETING LOYALTY: HOW TACTICS KILL STRATEGY
- > THE TOP 12 PRESENTATION MISTAKES
- > 15 PERSONAL SKILLS YOU NEED ON THE JOB

MOST E-MAILED STORIES

- > SPRINGTIME FOR GEICO: CASE STUDY
- > PUBLICITY FOR NONPROFITS
- > SALES TRAINING: THE POWER OF QUESTIONS

CLOSER

Check out other responses to our May "What Would You Do?" at www.salesandmarketingmanagement.com. Many responded, offering suggestions for Cameron Green, vice president of marketing at Jackson, Inc. Green believes marketing should qualify leads for the sales team but is having difficulty collaborating with the new sales director, Sexton, who believes that marketing should provide extremely detailed lead generation results. To do so would mean to bog down his staff with extra work. How can Green compromise with Sexton and avoid taking the dilemma to their boss?

SOUND OFF!

Have your opinions on today's current sales and marketing topics heard with your very own blog entry on S&MM SoundOff.

E-mail blog submissions to stacy.straczynski@nielsen.com. Include your name, e-mail, location, company and position. Be sure to title your post.

HERE'S WHAT READERS ARE SAYING ON THE BLOG:

> THIS IS A BIT RADICAL IN THINKING. "Leaders don't wear underpants." It is the same thought pattern as "Who moved my cheese." Think of underpants as exposure. How exposed is a leader when leading an organization? If there is an ethical issue pending how will that affect the leader? When looking at underpants in a literal sense it means exposure. Something to ponder—is a leader exposed or not? Additionally, what are the advantages and disadvantages of leading?

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MICHAEL McCUE
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Turning Rivals into Friends

The pace of corporate mergers and acquisitions is much slower than it was in past years, but it's still far from stagnant. Many of you have gone through them, either as acquirer or acquired. The challenges associated with such major business upheavals are many and occur at all levels of business, but combining sales teams is always among the most complicated adjustments. Getting competitive, highly motivated salespeople to set aside years of rivalry with marketplace foes isn't something that happens overnight.

I was unfortunate enough to have gone through just such an upheaval at a previous job. As the acquired company's director of marketing, I knew I would have my hands full, trying to shift the mental gears from exposing a former competitor's weaknesses to becoming one of its cham-



pions. But my staff was relatively small and we'd had little direct interaction with our counterparts at the other company, so our rivalry was more intellectual than visceral.

Not so for Sam Abdelnour, vice president of North American sales for Benton Harbor, Mich.-based Whirlpool Corp. As we talked in his office, taking in the gorgeous view of Lake Michigan outside of his window, I began to appreciate the complexity of the challenge he faced when

Whirlpool, the nation's largest appliance manufacturer, acquired the industry's third-largest company, Maytag (see this issue's cover story on p. 20).

When I say they have a long history of competition, I mean *long*. It might not have been vicious like the proverbial Hatfields and McCoys, but after 100 years of squaring off in the marketplace, the rivalry was old enough to be passed on from generation to generation. No amount of preparation and diplomacy can integrate such deeply held corporate cultures overnight, and Abdelnour admits he's still working to bring everything together, more than 18 months after the acquisition was completed. But he's learned a lot of things along the way, pearls of wisdom gained through research, hard work, and a lot of late nights at the office.

That experience is the reason Sam is on the cover, and it's why I do all of my cover story interviews face to face. There's a certain bond and level of understanding that can never be achieved over the phone. I learned a lot from him, and will learn more during next month's interview, and again the month after that.

I wish you could come with me on these journeys, Dear Reader, but who knows? Perhaps one day I'll be telling everyone what I learned when I visited your office!

Michael McCue
michael.mccue@salesandmarketing.com

Building a Winning Team

Fully 95 percent of your success as a sales manager will be determined by the people you select to be on your sales team. Fortunately, the ability to recruit, hire and build a team of highly effective salespeople is a critical skill that you can learn with practice.

The starting point of recruiting well is to practice “zero-based thinking.” You ask yourself, “Is there any salesperson who, knowing what I now know, I would not hire again?”

If your answer is “Yes,” the next question is, “How do I get rid of this person, and how fast can I do it?”

It is impossible to build a winning team if you try to do it with mediocre sales people—because people don’t change.

The second key to building a winning

team is to develop an objective profile of your ideal salesperson. Start by looking at your top performers. What qualities do they have in common? What background factors do they have in common? What are their ages, education, level of family formation, attitudes, and personalities?

team is to develop an objective profile of your ideal salesperson. Start by looking at your top performers. What qualities do they have in common? What background factors do they have in common? What are their ages, education, level of family formation, attitudes, and personalities?

Here is an exercise for you: Take a sheet of paper and at the top write, “Characteristics of my perfect salesperson.”

Then write down every single quality, trait, and experience that your perfect salesperson would have.

Once you have your list, divide one hundred points among the characteris-

tics on your list. This will enable you to establish priorities on the kind of person that you are looking for, and will make it much easier for you to interview and hire.

For example, out of 100 points, you might allocate 50 points to “proven, successful experience in selling my product for another company.” Once you have a clear idea of the qualities and characteristics that you want in an ideal salesperson, and you have set priorities on those traits and qualities, you then look around in the marketplace and ask, “Where can I find people who fit this description?”

Write out a job description of your perfect candidate and discuss it with your best salespeople, and with other

people in your business. Make whatever modifications are necessary until your description is clear and precise.

A Numbers Game

There is a direct relationship between quantity and quality, so be prepared to cast a wide net. Discuss the job description with your current sales team; often there are excellent salespeople out there looking for something better.

Another source of good salespeople is your existing customer base; ask them to refer likely candidates to you when they meet them during the the course of their business.



One untapped resource for finding ideal sales candidates is your local community college, where the average age of adult learners taking business courses is 28. Their primary motivation: to increase their earning ability.

Career counselors at community colleges have one goal in life—to place their students in jobs after they have completed their education. You can become a resource to them and have them send you a steady stream of candidates who, by virtue of taking college courses, are already ambitious, disciplined and hard working.

Finally, a good way to build a winning team is to offer a bonus to anyone on your staff who can bring you a salesperson who fits the description you have written.

Some companies offer a \$1,000 bonus for referrals, with the first \$500 paid after the person has been hired and the second \$500 paid if the person is still working after six months. This can be both the cheapest and the best way of finding qualified salespeople—and ensuring your own continued success.

Jake Leinenkugel

President
Jacob Leinenkugel Brewing Co.

*"It's a tremendous resort across the board.
The only thing missing
is the Leinie's,
so we bring our own."*

Jake Leinenkugel rewards his "all-Leinie team" — 130 of the top Leinenkugel distributors — with a trip to The Scottsdale Plaza Resort every year. And after 8+ years, he couldn't imagine going anywhere else. As he says, "They're the friendliest and most accommodating group of folks I've met in my 50+ years. They know us so well, they can almost read our minds. It feels like your own little oasis — homey and relaxing. We used to plan off-site activities, but our people would rather just hang at The Plaza. Everything's right here. The setting, the food, the service — it's just a delight to be here."

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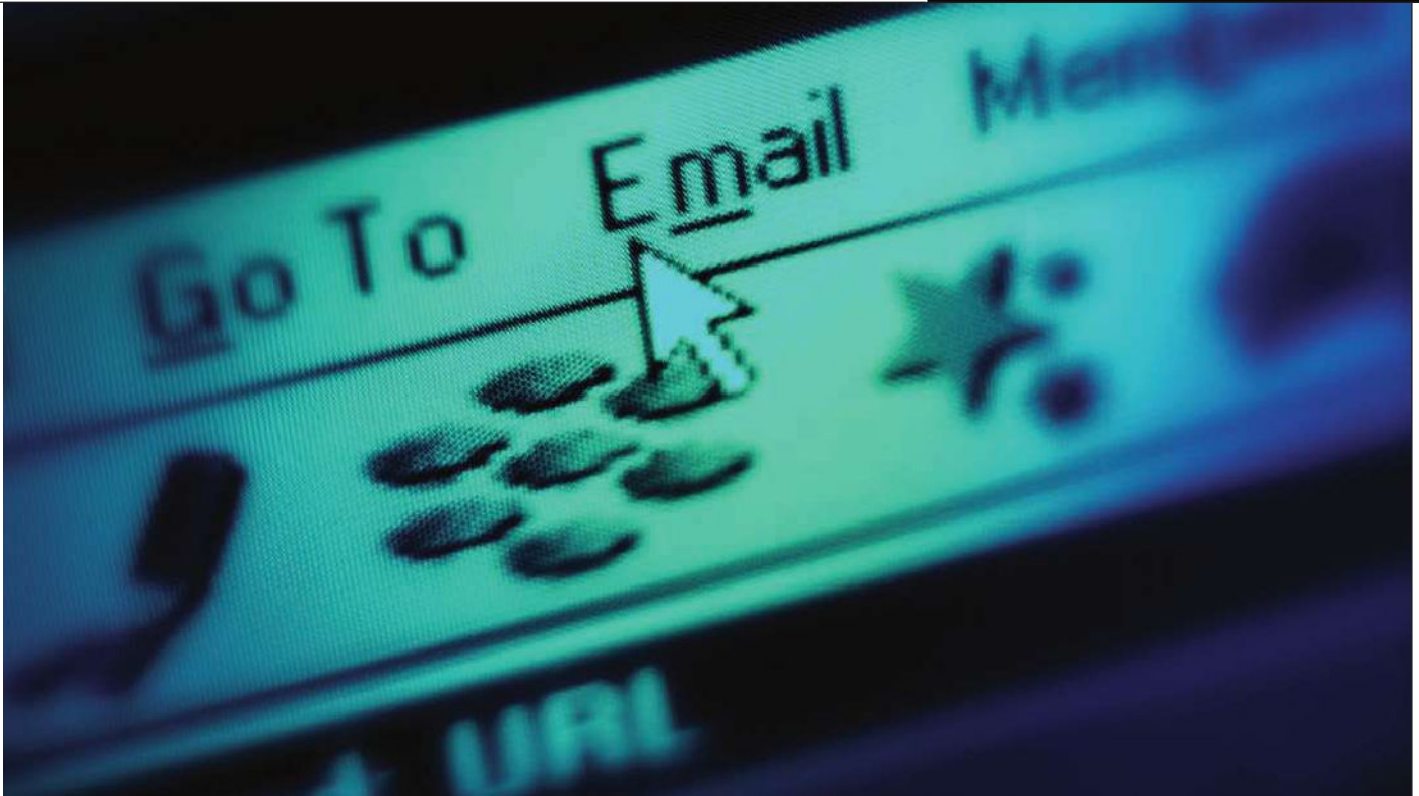
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Are You Taking E-Mail Seriously?

Losing e-mails means losing business

We know e-mail is essential. In a recent Brockmann and Company study of e-mail users, 86 percent of respondents listed e-mail as very important to the success of their business. Ahead of mobile phones, instant messaging and faxes, e-mail ranked as the most important communication service to job performance. And although most people depend on e-mail, only 21 percent of those surveyed are happy with their e-mail service.

One of the biggest problems is spam, which accounts for 15 percent of all messages reaching business users and is the third-largest source of e-mail. Most companies have filters in place to catch spam, but most of those filters are ineffective, according to Peter Brockmann, president of Boston-based Brockmann and

Company. "Whatever people are doing with spam, it's not working," he says.

But catching spam and rerouting it out of inboxes is only part of the problem. While most people focus on how much spam makes it to their inboxes, they frequently fail to consider how much legitimate e-mail is mislabeled as spam.

These false positives can be more harmful than a spam-filled inbox, especially when an e-mail from a new client gets lost in the junk folder. Thirty-six percent of people surveyed have lost business to e-mail.

"The cure is worse than the disease. False positives are having a detrimental effect," says Kelly Anderson, the CEO of Sendio, an Irvine, Calif.-based anti-spam solution provider.

One solution Brockmann recommends is using send verifications, which programs servers to send a "challenge" e-mail to any person who is not in the address book. This verifies that the sender is real and eliminates the threat of mislabeling legitimate e-mail as spam.

E-mail is the most important business application today. Are you doing enough to make sure you're getting yours?

—Rebecca Aronauer

Sales Takes the Point on Product Recalls

Even if it's a supplier's fault, salespeople are the B2B messengers



tires to toothpaste now are being forced to recall hundreds of thousands of products from distributors the companies sold them to over the past several years, and are being put on the front lines to assuage client concerns.

That's as it should be, experts say. In some sense, salespeople should be the first to tell business-to-business customers about a recall because they have the best rapport with clients. And they should do so several days to a week in advance of the recall, according to Alan Shoem, a former staff member at the Consumer Product Safety Commission, and the senior vice president of global product risk practice for Marsh's Risk Consulting, a firm in New York that helps companies assess and avoid business and market risks.

Sellers are key to "carry the brunt of the message" to clients because they have the closest relationship with customers, says Gene Grabowski, senior vice president of Levick Strategic Communications, a communications firm in Washington. More than anything, Grabowski says, sellers are a reassurance tool for clients who want steady answers (i.e., weekly or even daily) about product fixes, market reaction and other factors during a product recall.

For most companies, sellers are a two-way communication tool: They help companies ease client concerns but also help them understand how severely their market reputation has been damaged. One strategy all sales managers should employ, Grabowski says, is to debrief sellers (verbally is best) when they return from sales visits with clients affected by a recall.

—Betsy Cummings

Nothing breaks the confidence of a customer faster than a glitch in the product or service purchased. But when a product recall is the fault of a third-party supplier, that puts sellers in a tough position—trying to explain the failure of a product produced by a company or factory not owned by their firm.

In the past two months, no fewer than 140 product recalls have occurred. "Today you check the weather and then you check what the product recall list looks like," says Harvey Hoffenberg, president and founder of Propulsion LLC, a branding consultancy in New Canaan, Conn.

As a result, sales teams at companies selling everything from



DONE DEAL

OVERCOMING THE PRICE DISADVANTAGE

"We close fifty to one hundred accounts a month," says Marx Acosta-Rubio, CEO and founder of Onestop, an office products firm in Los Angeles. That quick close rate, much of it by phone, has led to sales of \$18 million a year. When your industry is a commodity-based market, winning deals is often driven by price, with the lowest bidder claiming the prize. Not so at Onestop, Acosta-Rubio says. His company's key to closing a large deal recently with a phone headset manufacturer happened not because Onestop lowered its price. In fact, that sales strategy is never a focus for Onestop's reps, Acosta-Rubio says. In his business, "toner cartridges, IT supplies, pens, pencils—it's all the same thing," he says. "So we have to come up with some way ... to uncommoditize our product."

He did that for this West Coast client by tapping into its biggest concerns. When Acosta-Rubio sat down with the company's execu-

tives, he made sure not to ask certain questions. For example, Onestop never asks about what the toner is used for or price, he says.

"I'll never win on price" over big box retailers like Staples or Office Depot, giant companies that can operate on high volume and low margins. Instead, Acosta-Rubio says, he asks only one thing: What are your goals as a company? In this case, the firm had two main operational concerns: To consolidate vendors and be environmentally friendly. Fine on the first point, he says, pitching his firm's ability to supply all products the company needs.

As to the environment, Acosta-Rubio proposed a solution in which Onestop would pick up old printing cartridges from the company and recycle them. That personal touch landed Onestop a \$350,000 yearly contract—a strong showing against the company's average \$30,000 deal.

—B.C.

> PASS IT ON

First Impressions

Testimonials speak volumes during sales presentations—but only if they're used effectively, says Vickie Sullivan, founder and president of Sullivan Speaker Services, a market strategy firm in Tempe, Arizona.

BE SPECIFIC

Testimonials are only as powerful as the information they share. A testimonial that says productivity improved "significantly" doesn't say much. A testimonial that says productivity improved 50 percent and raised sales by \$5 million a year is far more meaningful.

KEEP IT SHORT

A testimonial longer than 30 seconds might lose your audience.

WATCH THE LANGUAGE

That doesn't mean you should purge the testimonial of curse words—although that's probably advisable too. Instead, speak in the level of language your audience does. If they're casual, throw in humor or light-hearted language. Got a formal audience? Make sure the testimonial is told in the same manner.

[THE PULSE]

A recent study reports that

43%

of sellers fail to meet quota. That's improved from a dismal 49 percent in 2004, but a drop in performance from 2006 when 41 percent of the nation's sellers failed to hit their mark.

SOURCE: SALES PERFORMANCE OPTIMIZATION 2007 SURVEY RESULTS AND ANALYSIS, CSO INSIGHTS

> LEAD GENERATOR

Want to generate leads through a teleseminar? Dave Lakhani, president of Bold Approach, a sales consultancy in Boise, Idaho, offers the following tips to create warm leads:

WATCH THE LENGTH

A good teleseminar lasts long enough to entice listeners, but not so long to put them to sleep. Lakhani keeps it to 60 minutes: 50 for data and 10 for the pitch.

KEEP 'EM LINKED

The point is to generate leads. At the end of the teleseminar, point participants to a Web site where they can get more information, and, preferably to a specific teleseminar link where they can provide their own information for future contact.

CHARGE A FEE

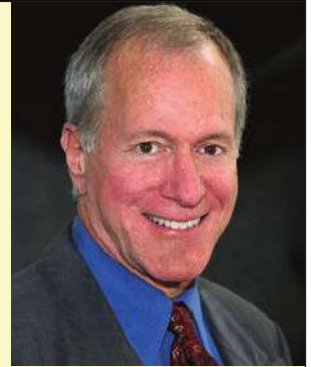
Surprisingly, closing rates from teleseminars go up as much as 40 percent when Lakhani charges a \$20 participation fee. The financial commitment is already in place then, he says, making listeners that much more apt to buy.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Reuse Your Data to Net More Sales

When reps know more than customers, everyone wins

BY DAVE STEIN



With all of the product information available to our customers online, the best salespeople are, among other things, brokers of knowledge. To compete effectively, they must gather knowledge, and more importantly know how to leverage that knowledge to their advantage.

This is often a considerable challenge, forcing reps to rummage through last year's PowerPoints or corner someone from product marketing for what they need to know to advance a sales campaign.

Jeff Whitney, vice president of marketing at OutStart, an established player in the knowledge management space (and a firm with which my company has a business relationship), estimates that 80 percent of knowledge is tacit—undocumented and passed on from person to person.

"What is documented changes frequently, leaving those who need that knowledge with out-of-date, inaccurate information," Whitney says.

For knowledge to be of any use to a sales team it must be relevant, accessible, and have depth beyond what the customer already knows.

Today, the most mature knowledge management solutions connect peers and experts and capture their knowledge for reuse.

Multiple and diverse knowledge sources, internal and external to your company, are indexed to create a single, virtual, integrated repository. Rating mechanisms assure that quality

and relevance are maintained and sales reps gain the knowledge they need to win.

Sales and Marketing Should Collaborate around Customers

Bob Schmonsees, an expert on sales and marketing alignment, has a knowledge management approach that is focused specifically on value articulation and differentiation from the customer's perspective. His patented Value Mapping Process uses a relational knowledge model to assist marketing and sales organizations in capturing and sharing critical knowledge about customer needs and solutions.

Schmonsees says that value mapping can improve revenue performance by increasing the quality of selling conversations, so they are more substantive and business oriented. This can be accomplished through a deeper knowledge of customer needs and solutions and the sharing of that knowledge with the people who sell.

Overcoming the Challenge

We live in an information-based buyer's world. Differentiation and competitive advantage are difficult to attain, so the ability to leverage our knowledge about customers, what their needs are, and precisely how we can help them achieve their business objectives can mean the difference between winning and losing.

Dave Stein is the author of *How Winners Sell* and CEO and founder of ES Research Group, West Tisbury, Mass., www.ESResearch.com. He can be reached at edit@salesandmarketing.com.

Cashing in on the Latin Market

Connect with the fastest-growing demographic in the native language



Here are the facts: There are 45 million Hispanic consumers out there. In 2000, the Hispanic demographic eclipsed the African-American market and remains the fastest-growing population in America. As Cesar Melgoza, the managing director of Latin Force, a consumer intelligence and strategic consulting firm based in Miami, says, “the Hispanic market is large and growing rapidly.”

To tap this demographic, you need to market to it. “Sales organizations need to have a connection with the Hispanic consumer,” Melgoza says. For starters, you have to speak to these active consumers in their language (literally) to reach them. Using Spanish in your marketing materials is the only way to reach Spanish-speaking-only shoppers. For second-generation immigrants who speak English, making references to Hispanic culture in English is a powerful way to make your product or service appear relevant.

In general, Hispanics spend more on certain goods such as beauty products and are less likely to have bank accounts and credit cards. According to David Perez, the CEO of Latin Force, this means that the market can work for you in two ways: “Either they

need your products but don’t have them, or they love your category and want more,” he says.

To make the most of these opportunities, Perez says you have to make an extra effort to connect with Hispanic consumers through their culture, and language is just the beginning. “You want to get beyond simple language,” he says. “You want to segment the market and identify the consumer along age, income, life stage and consumption behavior.” But the extra effort to identify and relate to Hispanic consumers will pay off. “By using culture in your messaging, you’re standing out from the crowd and you’re waving a metaphorical flag to your customer,” he says.

Armando Martin, the Boise, Idaho-based director of multicultural marketing for Albertsons supermarket chain, went beyond simply using Spanish to connect with his Spanish customers. Using Geoscape, a multicultural consumer intelligence and data analytics company that merged with Latin Force in June, Martin was able to segment Albertsons’ Hispanic market by nationality. “We ought to know what country the shoppers are from,” Martin says. “It helps me make recommendations for merchandising, music, and food selection.” For example, demographics revealed that for some stores, as much as 70 percent of the consumers were Hispanic, so Martin decided against buying rights to an English language radio station. Knowing the demographic breakdown of his Hispanic consumers has helped him make key decisions, and Martin says, “I’ve used [the information] in my strategic planning.”

—Rebecca Aronauer



CAMPAIGN CLOSE-UP

GEEK SQUAD

TARGET: Computer users

AGENCY: Crispin Porter + Bogusky, Miami



Geek Squad is a 24-hour technology and computer service component of the electronics retailer Best Buy.

MESSAGE: The closing line says it all, according to Jody Estensen, director of marketing communication management for Geek Squad, based in Minneapolis. Each of the ads for its new television campaign ends with, “When it comes to tech problems, there’s nothing we haven’t seen.”

To drive that point home, these Geek Squad ads start with a tech support person fixing simple things such as wireless routers and installing operating systems, and end with them repairing a whistling mandroid and disabling a giant, asteroid-pulling mag-

net. The ads use hyperbolic problems to show that Geek Squad technicians have seen everything and can fix everything. “If we can help you fix this (mandroid), we can certainly help you with your computer,” Estensen says.

For this campaign, Geek Squad wasn’t going after a single demographic. Instead, it was trying to reach all computer users, from stay-at-home moms to tech-obsessed men. The mandroid ad, for example, features a woman in her 30s who isn’t particularly interested in technology; she just needs her wireless network set up. In another ad, a man who is tech-savvy enough to create his own transporter needs help installing a new operating system. “The ads are targeted at different demographics, but the strategy remains the same throughout,” Estensen says. That strategy is to make people feel comfortable asking for help—Geek Squad’s tagline is “Go ahead, use us”—and confident that a Geek Squad member can fix any computer problem.

—R.A.

3 QUESTIONS

KRISTA BAKER
PRESIDENT
MORNINGSTAR MULTIMEDIA,
A STRATEGIC WEB MARKETING
FIRM BASED IN PHILADELPHIA



Q. Why is it important for individuals to develop a Web presence?

A. If you don't have a Web presence, you are losing business to those who do. Your Web presence is your "virtual office," the place prospects go to research your company, products and services before they ever contact you. About 60 percent of consumers turn to the Internet first when looking for local shopping and business information. That number will only increase over time.

Q. How can a company shape its brand identity online?

A. By putting yourself in your prospects' minds when designing your Web site. Too often, companies decide what goes on a Web site by what the owner, marketing department, or PR staff wants. Yet online, your prospects have 100% control over what they read. If your content is boring, sounds like jargon or hype, or is sparse on details, your prospects will leave. Instead, talk with your sales team and current clients to learn what their top concerns are, how you differ from competitors, and barriers to buying your products and services—then build your site around those issues.

Q. How does a search strategy relate to marketing?

A. About 85% of people turn to search engines to find information, yet most won't click past the first page of search results. If your site isn't listed within those results, it doesn't exist. However, not all searchers are good matches for your company. Your search strategy should identify which keywords are likely to bring in the most qualified prospects and what site content is necessary to persuade searchers to take action. Otherwise, driving Web traffic to your site is futile.

[THE PULSE]

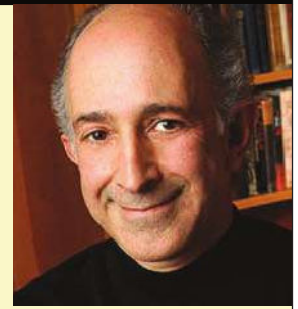
45% of advertisers have trouble tracking the effectiveness of search marketing

SOURCE: JUPITERRESEARCH, US SEM EXECUTIVE SURVEY, 2007

THE BIG PICTURE

Customer Satisfaction Hijacked

BY SCOTT HORNSTEIN



Let's get some things straight:

For the most part, I think a lot of us greatly underestimate the power of customer satisfaction. We sometimes don't define it in terms of profit and loss, but we know it's a factor. We base decisions on self-congratulatory information. Dissatisfaction augers the hole in the bottom of our customer base.

Here are two examples and four suggestions.

1 At the end of a phone transaction the rep asked if I would participate in a short survey. I agreed and was asked about 10 questions. For each I responded on a scale of one to 10, with one being abject despair and 10 being sheer rapture. My responses were sevens and eights. My interviewer asked why I was not satisfied. I responded that I was satisfied—they met my expectations for courtesy, performance and professionalism. I'll be back and I'll bring my friends, but that doesn't by itself rate a 10.

2 It was a very hot day. I was picking up a new car and the salesman was explaining each button and display. As he finished, he (a large man) closed his door and leaned across the console. Reaching into his pocket, he pulled out a piece of paper. With a smile spreading across his face, he put it in front of me. It was a customer satisfaction survey, with a broad highlighter stroke through all the "Outstanding" boxes. Intimidation.

1 Raise your standards. Customers expect to be treated poorly, but that's no reason to fulfill their expectations. Each customer is a guest in your house, not a delivery. You don't get a 10 just because you treat them with the respect they're due.

2 Empower the right stuff. Measure and reward the behaviors that achieve and surpass your definable standards. Tie measurement directly to the bottom line. Publicize how revenues rise and fall based on satisfaction. We know instinctively that happier customers stay longer and buy more, so prove it. Pay attention to the "net promoter"—those who would refer family and friends.

3 Customer interaction is a messy business—take it like a man. Don't manage to the time or number of interactions. Answer the person. Don't just skate on the surface; probe for opinion and nuance. And if they've got something to say, listen, understand, and communicate.

4 Bad news used to travel quick; now it metastasizes. People don't just tell their friends, they post to a blog, or YouTube, or Facebook. Your reputation can be trashed in a heartbeat.

Customer satisfaction is not just a warm and fuzzy; it's a smart business investment. It can make you stand out in a world gone flat.

Scott Hornstein is the co-author of *Opt-In Marketing* and president of Hornstein Associates in Redding, Conn. He can be reached at edit@salesandmarketing.com.

Rethinking Compensation Plans

Boost your bottom line with a profit-margin-based approach



In 2003, after at least 10 years of paying its salespeople the same way, E-Z-GO, a manufacturer of golf carts in Augusta, Ga., changed its compensation plan. Instead of the number of units sold, profit margins would determine a salesperson's commission.

The shift aimed to boost profits and strengthen the company's brand, says Mike Parkhurst, vice president of golf channel and branch operations for E-Z-GO.

With many customers making decisions solely on cost, prices on a year-to-year basis had either decreased or remained flat for the five years leading up the change. Now salespeople who couldn't ask for price increases would feel it in their own wallets. "The president used to say if your knees aren't knocking when your putting the proposal in front of someone, you aren't asking for enough," Parkhurst recalls.

E-Z-GO isn't the only company that has taken a fresh look at its plan. The 2007 Sales Compensation Trends Survey, an annual examination of pay trends by the Alexander Group, a sales growth consulting firm in Scottsdale, predicted that 95 percent of companies would tinker with its sales compensation program this year and 14 percent would make major changes. "Our experience suggests that a sales compensation program—aside from minor changes each

year—should be reviewed fully, from top to bottom, at least every 3 to 5 years," says David Cichelli, senior vice president of The Alexander Group. However, many sales executives fear upsetting salespeople, even though the current compensation plan has become hopelessly obsolete. To realign your plan without causing a revolt, Cichelli suggests publicly stating that the company will "commit to the money, but not the mechanics." In other words, tell salespeople that you'll ensure their earning potential remains competitive, even as performance expectations and measures change from year to year, he says.

Not surprisingly, E-Z-GO's salespeople were less than thrilled with the change. "It put a variable in their plan," Parkhurst explains. "They knew before that if they sold 1,700 units, they'd get X commission." Their fears never materialized; the sales force earned considerably more under the new plan.

Meanwhile, the company thrived. Instead of going after its competitors' accounts, a long-standing goal that typically resulted in slim margins, the sales effort focused on uncovering fertile markets and increasing customer satisfaction scores. In 2003, E-Z-GO reversed its trend of flat or decreased year-over-year prices. In Parkhurst's opinion, that turnaround can be attributed to the compensation plan. "I think our old management would have said if it isn't broken, don't fix it," he says. "But new leadership had a new direction. Sometimes you have to go with that conviction." —Michele Marchetti



POP QUIZ A QUICK TEST OF YOUR MANAGERIAL SKILLS



"DO YOU HAVE SALES MANAGEMENT INTUITION?"

Answers provided by Wayne M. Thomas, a consultant, speaker, sales trainer, and author of the recently published *The Sales Manager's Success Manual* (AMACOM Books).

Intuition is not the same as instinct.

TRUE: Evolution has hardwired instincts into us, so they work just as well with or without experience. You know instinctively, not intuitively, that the heat of a hot stove will hurt you. Intuition is a higher intelligence. Einstein said, "The supreme task is to arrive at those universal elementary laws from which the cosmos can be built up by pure deduction. There is no logical path to these laws; only intuition, resting on sympathetic understanding of experience, can lead to them." His observation defines a critical difference of sales management from other company functions. There are no well-formed processes or procedures for many sales decisions. Sales work is situational

and requires on-the-spot application of intuition.

Sales managers who rely on their intuition for answers are unlikely to succeed in today's world.

FALSE: Your intuition is extraordinarily critical to your success, and you use it almost constantly. Actually, intuition is one of just two ways we think. The other is reasoning. Reasoning requires work, while intuition comes to us naturally and effortlessly. Moreover, even when making a complex decision, intuition is always working in the background. Intuition is usually highly reliable. For example, we drive our cars and respond quickly and easily to questions with the help of our intuition.

Smart, successful people usually have strong intuition.

FALSE: Even a brilliant person's intuition is limited to his or her field of expertise. Sir Isaac Newton, who some believe was the world's smartest man, was suckered into the loss of a fortune in the South Sea scam. Work to develop your intuition in all aspects of your work and life.

THE CORNER OFFICE

> OFFICE VS. THE FIELD

One manager and one salesperson square off on issues facing sales organizations today

AT ISSUE: How much decision-making power should a salesperson have over the course of the sales process?



MANAGER: I don't need to seek approval for most of what I do. I decide which clients I go after, which sector and which specific companies. I decide, more or less, what I present to them and the process of how to move them along and turn them from a stranger into a client. I run the nitty-gritty negotiations of whether the client will use our service. I'll seek counsel from my CEO or other members of the team so we understand the actual costs of what we're implementing or creating for the client are going to be, but I will generally handle the negotiations and close the deal. I feel like I have the trust of senior management. When an organization shows a lack of trust and wants to micromanage, it's generally counterproductive. If you're going to put out speed bumps that hurt the bottom line, it's not really the kind of organization I want to work for. Anyone who needs to micromanage salespeople is taking the wind out of their sails.

—Bruce Ginsberg, senior vice president, business development, CoActive Marketing Group, a marketing and sales promotion company in New York

SALESPERSON: Quite a lot. We have 14 salespeople and they have free reign over just about everything. We provide different kinds of services, and the salesperson can come up with his own package and pricing as long as it fits within the corporate guidelines. The relationship starts with the salesperson and he should be empowered to finish it. We'll help them close the deal if they need it, but the glory and fame should be with them. I used to work for a company that had handcuffs on its salespeople. Every little thing was supposed to go back to the home office for approval. Morale was terrible. I don't remember a single salesperson making his numbers because of the restrictions put on them. You can't lead with a leash and then say you have to perform.

—Paul Schmidman, president and chief operating officer of CenterStaging Corporation, a Burbank, Calif.-based company that provides musical production support and services for live musical performances at televised award shows and events

[THE PULSE]

67% of senior executives and managers say e-mail is the biggest distraction in the workplace today

SOURCE: WORLDWIDE SURVEY OF 228 SENIOR EXECUTIVES AND MANAGERS CONDUCTED BY NFI RESEARCH



Be Creative in Your B2B Lead Generation

There are many ways to stretch your marketing dollars

BY MARY DONATO

One of the biggest challenges facing many marketers this time of year is how to get the most from a limited budget. For many of you, this is a challenge you're faced with every day! Let's assume that you are in the process of planning your marketing programs for next quarter or next year and need to select the best initiatives that will generate the most highly qualified leads for the sales force. With a limited budget, you have to be very smart when maximizing your dollars in the right areas. Here are some tips to consider as you're planning:

Look at recent marketing initiatives to determine what has worked successfully for you in the past. Which programs have generated the most leads that have turned into profitable revenue? Perhaps it's time to ditch the yearly trade show and invest in more search engine optimization. The reverse could also be true; perhaps too much is being spent on your Web site and not enough lead activity is being generated. If you don't have historical lead information, start tracking it now! This information is important when making good decisions and accurately measuring what works and what doesn't.

Are you trying to do too much with too little? If you have limited dollars, you would be wise to select a few key initiatives focused on your largest target markets. For example, if you do well with Professional and Financial Services and you don't have the lion's share of the market, then get focused.

You could do much better by targeting this area than trying to serve a broader market. On the other hand, if your target market is highly penetrated, explore new vertical markets that may have similar applications for your solution.

Once you've decided who you will target, look at both push and pull strategies. Push strategies includes such things as utilizing industry influencers, associations, and channel intermediaries. Pull strategies are more traditional marketing initiatives such as advertising, direct mail and email campaigns. Determine if there are new areas you can leverage that don't have significant costs, such as articles you can submit to trade journals that would be of interest.

Set aside some budget money to test new approaches. Haven't done Webinars yet? Perhaps it's time to test that out. For most new approaches, don't count on a single test as a good measurement. It sometimes takes three or four times to get it right and determine what works the best.

Explore co-marketing opportunities with companies that have complementary offerings and the same target markets. Sharing marketing expenses with a reputable organization can provide additional exposure and leverage your marketing investments.

If you have suggestions on what has worked for you in leveraging your marketing dollars, go to www.smmSoundoff.com and share your ideas.

Mary Donato is president of Applied Principles and Associate Director of the Institute for the Study of Business Markets at Smeal College, Penn State.

'Fun' Is Not a Four-Letter Word

The right company culture can curb burnout and turnover while increasing productivity



The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that the average American worker stays on the job for three years. That's a sobering thought in light of the intrinsic and extrinsic costs of training a good employee.

While reasons for leaving a job are as many and varied as a company's workforce, high on the list is employees' dissatisfaction with the work environment, including morale, recognition and appreciation. Cutbacks, more work for the same pay, and feeling underappreciated breed greater absenteeism, higher turnover, quicker burnout and lost sales. Boil this down further and you might find that all your workplace lacks is fun. "Make work fun and you'll create a culture of creativity where the best people will want to work and customers will want to spend money," says marketing guru Mike Veeck, author of "Fun is Good."

Veeck's premise is that profitability, productivity and fun are not mutually exclusive. In fact, he contends, if work isn't fun for your employees, your business will suffer either from attrition or from your customers not being treated well by happy, motivated employees.

"Somehow in our haste to seize the American dream, we've sucked the fun, passion and creativity out of the workplace. We've forgotten that making a living is directly connected to your soul," Veeck says.

The challenge is even more difficult to overcome when dealing with remote workers. Many sales forces are scattered across the country, leaving them no way to absorb a company's culture. Can a company's fun attitude be disseminated without being around fellow workers at least a few hours a day?

Yes, says Matt Weinstein, author of "Managing to Have Fun," because the first of his four basic principles to help incorporate fun into the workplace is thinking about the specific people involved. That entails getting to know salespeople individually and what types of things they consider fun and rewarding. If the culture is strong enough, it will be spread by employees talking to other employees. It spreads not only by actions, but by word of mouth.

Second, lead by example. Show those in-house salespeople how it's done! You don't have to go to work dressed in a clown suit, but handing a salesperson a gift certificate for dinner at a restaurant you know he likes for going out of his way for a client infuses the workplace with a sense of spontaneity.

Third, if salespeople aren't getting personal satisfaction from what they're doing, find out why. If a manager shows she is genuinely interested in a salesperson's happiness level, it brings a sense of "connectedness" to the organization, Weinstein says.

Finally, don't let yourself get too impatient. "Corporate culture doesn't change from serious to fun overnight," Weinstein says. "Give it time."

—Maureen Hrehocik

[THE PULSE]

30%

of executives cite motivating their staffs as their greatest management challenge.

THE CREATIVE GROUP, SURVEY OF 250 ADVERTISING AND MARKETING EXECUTIVES



BRIGHT IDEA

'SYNERGIZE' YOUR SALES FORCE

To turbocharge your sales team, throw away buzz words like "smart work" and "intellectual capital." Replace them with "synergy," says Anne Bruce, author of the new book, "How to Motivate Every Employee."

Bruce's suggestions for building teamwork:

- Give teams a clearly defined goal and purpose.
- Let the team make its own rules.
- Encourage fun and a sense of humor on the job.
- Give employees the authority to make decisions and act on them.
- Be supportive; do what you promise to do.
- Let the team find solutions to its problems without intervening.

- Allow team members to make financial decisions and create their own budgets.
- Expect ups and downs. Some phases of a project will run more smoothly than others.
- Let the team set up a reward system.

Your employees look to you, the manager, to set the tone. Lead by example and you'll be surprised by the results. "Show you're concerned about your people and their success, that you are glad when they succeed and that you are willing to help them out and go the extra distance when they need it," Bruce says. "The feeling of a caring work environment is the essence of inspiring motivated teamwork."

—M.H.

Reaching the Masses

Multi-generational sales forces assimilate information differently

Picture this: It is 8 a.m. and a sea of disinterested faces sits before you. They're there because Wednesday morning sales training is mandatory. The mixed-age group is thinking, "This hour is costing me money! What a waste of my time." The only things keeping the gathering civil are the urns of hot, strong coffee and a table full of pastry.

As well prepared as you may be, if you don't take into consideration the different generations sitting before you and how they assimilate information, your presentation could fall far from the mark.

It doesn't matter whether your sales force is external or internal; with the average adult attention span clocking in at a mere 90 seconds, you have your work cut out for you.

Baby boomers, Gen-Xers and Gen-Yers may hear the same words, but this heterogeneous group will be processing and reacting to your message differently.

According to Sonya Hamlin, a communications consultant, the lone constant in effectively getting your message across is answering one question: "How does this material fill any of my needs?" Basic and direct? You bet. Easy to accomplish? Not quite.

According to Hamlin, Boomers want information presented to them, Gen-Xers prefer to be proactive and seek out information, and Gen-Yers want control.

With all three groups using different methods to process information, how is it possible to reach all of them in a mixed training session?

According to Walter Sokira, an assistant professor of Marketing and Policy Studies at Case Western Reserve University's Weatherhead School of Management in Cleveland, learning occurs at three levels: visible behavior, conscious thought, and through values assumptions, beliefs and expectations.

"We know that not everyone learns the same way," Sokira says. "The trainer needs to be flexible and use diverse methods."



SOKIRA SUGGESTS:

Managing discussions. Learning from discussions and challenging one another.

Case studies. Both from your own company and others.

Role playing. Can bring abstract concepts alive.

Action learning. Application of knowledge in real time to real situations.

Experiential methods. Relies on data generated during the training rather than data prepared in advance. These include simulations and games (CapSim <http://www.capsim.com>, Interpretive Simulations, <http://interpretive.com/>, MARS Marketing Simulation, <http://shootformars.com>).

Enhancing conversation through audiovisual tools and techniques. Multimedia case studies, synched slide presentations, streaming video presentations.

Counseling, evaluation and feedback. Any good trainer always provides plenty of opportunities to advise, assess and provide feedback.

—Maureen Hrehocik

[THE PULSE]

When you need to communicate a major change, stop communicating values, communicate face-to-face and spend most of your time, money and effort on frontline supervisors.

SOURCE: HARVARD BUSINESS REVIEW ON EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION



CASE STUDY

FROM THE MOUTHS OF BABES

At Rubber City Radio Group, peer-to-peer training grabs attention

What better way to get salespeople's buy-in for training than having them do it themselves?

Mark S. Biviano, senior vice president and executive sales director for the Rubber City Radio Group in Akron, Ohio, says having salespeople conduct training rather than the sales manager does three things: spread responsibility, increase their knowledge base and improve attention.

"Every week a different sales team member presents sales training," Biviano says. "It forces them to get on their game and come prepared. For the audience, it provides them with a different point of view of selling, one from a peer instead of a supervisor."

Topics are chosen by one of Biviano's sales managers, or a salesperson will volunteer to present on an article they read or a topic from a conference he attended.

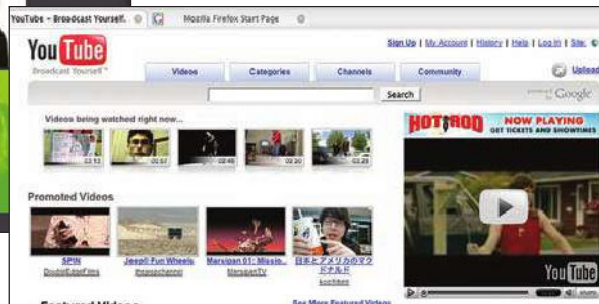
For an online sales training program the company subscribed to, different chapters were assigned to different salespeople to present on different weeks.

The results speak for themselves. "Our salespeople seem to appreciate this approach," Biviano says, "and so do our sales managers. It helps build empathy and a bond for what they have to do to keep the sales force motivated and trained."

—M.H.

Putting Web 2.0 to Work

Innovations such as YouTube offer new ways to reach consumers



opportunity to reach their customers in new ways.

If you're not expanding into new media, you will be left behind, according to Larry Moskowitz, the CEO of Medialink, a video and audio distribution company based in New York. "Companies can't afford not to have a visual presence on the Web," he says. "We're in a visual world now. Clients have no option but to go online. Otherwise they become invisible."

You have an e-mail address, a Web site and a LinkedIn profile, but are you taking advantage of everything the Internet has to offer? Video sharing sites such as YouTube offer new opportunities to connect to consumers and define your brand online.

The second generation of Internet advances, known as Web 2.0, is heavily visual and end-user focused. Web 2.0 is all about interaction, often through multimedia. This trend gives companies the

based in Burlington, Mass., used YouTube to bring its message to thousands of potential customers in a unique and memorable way.

To promote its RealSpeak Mobile service, which allows users to dictate text messages, Nuance held a man vs. machine text-off with the world's fastest text messenger, Ben Cook. RealSpeak won, and Nuance's victory was reported in the Associated Press and

WHEN YOU'RE GOOD TO CUSTOMERS,



FINANCIAL
MANAGEMENT

CUSTOMER
MANAGEMENT

PEOPLE
MANAGEMENT

Sage Software helps Kevin Cantwell, President of Big River Telephone Company, to see his customer relationships from every angle. With a suite of integrated modules, Kevin's Sage CRM Solution manages everything from sales opportunities to targeted retention marketing. It even helped Big River win industry accolades* and glowing customer reviews. And it's just one of our many software

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[THE PULSE]

IM

computers are currently infected by hackers for malicious purposes like fraud and virus propagation.

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

the local news. A few years ago, coverage of the story would have stopped there. But with Web 2.0, Nuance could publicize the win through different channels, according to Kristen Wylie, the company's corporate communication manager. "Traditional broadcast outlets remain markets for us, there's also a burgeoning market for online media," she says.

With the help of Medialink, Nuance put up a satirical video from the event on YouTube. To create a clip that would be popular with YouTube's discriminating audience, Nuance wanted a video that was entertaining rather than a glorified ad. "There's a different approach you can take online," Wylie says. "It allowed us to have a sense of humor." Within a week of posting, the clip had 30,000 views and now has more than 80,000.

By capturing the initial event and putting it on the Web, Nuance was able to define itself online. Wylie says, "We took the content from stage event at a user conference and turned it into something bigger."

—Rebecca Aronauer



TECHNOPHOBIC HELP DESK

> How can I make my battery life last longer?

Stuck in airport for a few hours with your laptop but no outlet in sight? First, dim your screen. Next, shut down any applications that you're not using. The less your computer has to do, the longer its battery will last. USB devices drain the battery, so remove them. Minimize your computer's power consumption by setting its power options (found in the control panel) to "max battery." Make sure your battery's metal contacts are clean so that the transfer of power from your battery to the computer is unobstructed.

Have a technology question? E-mail edit@salesandmarketing.com. Your submission may appear in an upcoming issue.

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WHIRLPOOL IS COOKING NOW!

by mike mccue

SAM ABDELNOUR,
VP OF NORTH AMERICAN SALES, HAS
MOLDED HUNDREDS OF FORMER COMPETITORS
INTO A SALES FORCE TO BE RECKONED WITH

What You Can Learn from Sam

- How to mold former rivals into a cohesive, high-performing sales team
- The trick that breaks bad sales habits every time
- Ways to capitalize on major shifts in consumer demand
- Why variety leads to career success

C

ompetitors always put forth their greatest effort when matched up against their industry's top company. That's the reason why, as difficult as it is for a company to get to that number one position, it's even harder to stay there.

About two years ago, that was the challenge facing Sam Abdelnour, Whirlpool Corp.'s vice president of North American sales. His company was the appliance industry's top

performer, but competition was fierce and its position at the top of the food chain was contested on a daily basis by rival companies such as General Electric and Electrolux.

The situation got even more complex in March 2006, when Whirlpool completed its acquisition of Maytag, the appliance industry's number three company. Eliminating a competitor and increasing the product portfolio has its advantages, to be sure, but integrating two fiercely competitive sales teams and molding them into a single, high-performing unit would be no easy task.

To complicate matters, the entire appliance industry was still coming to grips with a major shift in consumer buying patterns. Once considered reliable but uninspired, appliances suddenly became trendy, fashionable and visually striking—not to mention much more expensive. Providing reliable, feature-rich and competitively priced products was no longer enough to survive.

Retailers needed help dealing with this sea change—especially the small, independent stores—and Abdelnour recognized it as a golden opportunity to use Whirlpool's resources to solidify its relationship with trade customers.



WHIRLPOOL IS COOKING NOW!

MEET THE NEW BOSS

In many ways we define ourselves by our enemies, and that's especially true for competitive salespeople. There was no true bad blood between Maytag and Whirlpool; on the contrary, each company had a healthy respect for the other, Abdelnour says. Still, with more than 100 years of head-to-head competition between them, changing the sales teams' attitudes toward each other wouldn't happen overnight.

"While I didn't think it would exactly be 'easy' to create cohesion among two companies known for such a long and fierce rivalry, I must admit that I thought I could get it done in six months or so," Abdelnour says during an interview at Whirlpool Corp.'s Benton Harbor, Mich. headquarters. "I figured that we'd identify the best of the best from the sales

teams at each company, teach them Whirlpool's vision, strategies, and tactics, and then turn them loose in the market.

"But here we are, almost two years later, and I'm still wrestling with the challenge," he says with a laugh. "I've learned that things are never quite as simple as they seem on the surface."

Part of the difficulty was that both companies were based in the Midwest and had long, proud, successful histories. When an industry

juggernaut absorbs a much smaller company, there sometimes isn't as much resentment from the smaller company's personnel. In fact, they might view it as a positive development because their career options expand significantly in the larger corporation.

But Maytag was the one of the appliance industry's top three companies, with an even longer history than Whirlpool itself, and the "new people" were afraid that after years of hard work, they wouldn't be given a fair chance.

"I didn't anticipate the level of emotion that each team had about their companies and brands," Abdelnour says. "Changing the name and logo on a business card doesn't erase the fact that these people had been butting heads in the marketplace for years—and in some cases, decades. As the guy who was going to run the whole thing, I looked at

the acquisition as an opportunity to build the best sales team in the world. We wanted to choose the very best we could, regardless of which company they'd been with.

"But perception is a funny thing. The Maytag people we didn't keep thought they were never given a fair shake, and the Whirlpool people we didn't keep felt betrayed by a company they gave their blood, sweat and tears to grow. There was no way to convince them otherwise but we had to keep moving forward."

Another challenge to integrations is getting salespeople to sell all of the company's products and services without bias, rather than defaulting to the ones they are most familiar with. If former Maytag employees continued to sell former Maytag products, and long-time Whirlpool salespeople continued to focus primarily on Whirlpool lines, the full benefits of the acquisition would never be realized.

Abdelnour's solution: training, training, and more training. He put his new team through a constant gauntlet of online programs, classroom sessions and face-to-face meetings until every salesperson knew every brand.

"Why fight human nature?" he asks. "We realized that people would inherently choose the path of least resistance, so we made each path equally easy. Once they knew all of our product lines inside and out, and what audience each was intended for, the path of least resistance was to sell the right product in every situation, regardless of which company created it.

"Ultimately, we overcame the problem because we made it easier for our salespeople to succeed by doing what was best, rather than by doing what was most familiar."

As they continued through the integration, another key lesson for Abdelnour was the fact that his sales team could not make this new company a success on their own; they were reliant on all functions integrating effectively and efficiently. "We had so many process changes all at once that it was hard for our salespeople—let alone our trade customers—to keep up with the pace," he says. "We not only had new brands, we had new warehouses, new information systems to implement, new customer service protocols, and a thousand other new decisions being made daily that needed to be executed throughout the sales organization. We had to work closely with all cross-functional teams."

It was easy for customers to get frustrated with all of the changes, so Whirlpool needed to capitalize quickly on the advantages of the new, larger corporation, differentiate itself from the competition, and solve the operational challenges that are part and parcel of an integration.

AT A GLANCE

WHIRLPOOL

HEADQUARTERS: 2000 North M-63
Benton Harbor,
Michigan 49022

PHONE: (269) 923-5000

FOUNDED: 1906

NYSE TICKER SYMBOL: WHR

2006 NET SALES: \$18.1 billion

NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES: 73,416

PRODUCT LINES/INDUSTRIES:

The company markets Whirlpool, Maytag, KitchenAid, Jenn-Air, Amana, Brastemp, Bauknecht, Consul, and other major brand names to consumers in more than 170 countries.



LAUNDRY ROOMS AS FASHION STATEMENTS

In addition to Whirlpool's internal changes, the marketplace as a whole has undergone a major transformation in the years leading up to the acquisition. Home appliances—once considered important and useful, but rather mundane and unexciting—became a highly visible home fashion statement, much like having a Mercedes-Benz in the garage. Consumer perception changed dramatically and people started to buy high-end washers, dryers, and refrigerators based on want rather than need.

“The entire appliance trade seemed a little reluctant to believe that consumers were prepared to shell out \$1,000 for a high-end washing machine at first, but numbers don't lie,” he says. “Changing demand forced us to rethink our market approach—product development, pricing, marketing, and sales strategy, among other things.”

When he began his career, Abdelnour says he and the other executives thought of their company primarily as an appliance manufacturer, which wasn't going to be enough to succeed. They needed to reinvent Whirlpool as a market-

ing company, one adept at providing world-class customer service and developing brands.

“Historically, our business from day one was built on a strong relationship with Sears,” he says. “They were the bulk of our business and we had a lot of success with the Kenmore brand. Through a variety of acquisitions, we developed the strongest portfolio of brands in the industry. We had to reevaluate our pricing and marketing, and because the ‘one-size-fits-all’ concept of appliances was going the way of the dinosaur, we had to start looking at consumer segmentation to match our various brands with the needs of different types of people. As we learned those things about ourselves, it gave us insight into the same needs facing our trade partners.

“We realized that if we could help our customers with the same transformation, we could change our role from an appliance manufacturer to that of a trusted business partner. That's how you add value to a relationship, and developing relationships is how you win all of the ties in the marketplace. It became a very powerful competitive advantage.”



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SHOW ME, DON'T TELL ME

Talking about healthy and productive relationships is one thing; actually demonstrating it is another. Customers don't just want to know what you've done for them lately; they want to know *exactly* what you've done for them lately—and they want numbers, not platitudes.

Some would look at that as a hindrance, but Abdelnour saw it as yet another opportunity to demonstrate Whirlpool's value in a concrete and undeniable way.

"The dramatic change in appliance buying habits was as new and unfamiliar to our customers as well as it was to us," he says, "so we knew there was an opportunity there to add value to their relationship with us."

Detailed data was the answer. Whirlpool could tell a retailer in Detroit how it was performing against its competitors in the local market, and how it was performing against

national averages. (Admittedly, Whirlpool provided that same depth of information to the retailer's local and national competition, but as Abdelnour says, "We want everyone to get better, not just select customers here and there.")

"We can show our trade partners their market share, their average sales price, and whether their advertising is effective. We can tell them what the quality of their lineage is, and if it's driving the kind of results they want in brand mix and product mix. We can even show how their market is performing in those areas."

And those value-added services aren't offered solely to large retailers who move a lot of Whirlpool products. Approximately 65% of Whirlpool's market is owned by four companies—Sears, Lowe's, Home Depot and Best Buy—but Whirlpool's help and analysis is available to anyone who asks for it, including smaller independent stores.

from student to teacher

Sam Abdelnour, a Michigan native who graduated from Eastern Michigan University in 1977, says he really didn't have a set career path after graduation. "After college, I thought I'd become a good insurance salesman, but I met a man—he was Whirlpool's president, although I didn't know it at the time—who encouraged me to attend a Whirlpool program called Market Management Trainees," he says. "Three out of each class of 200 were selected to join the company and become a part of the company's sales organization. I was one of the three selected from my class, and 29 years later, I'm still here."

Abdelnour says that today, many companies seem to put a higher value on marketing as they tried to build their brands, but in those days, "Management thought you had to 'carry the bag' to really understand who the consumer is, and how we as manufacturer interact with the trade."

The high level of performance he exhibited in the training class continued into his professional

career, the first 13 years of which were spent as a sales rep in the northern California market. He was mentored by some of his more experienced peers and four years later, he was their boss.

"Those men taught me the ropes and laid the groundwork for my success, so the transition from being their student to being their boss was really tough for me," he says. "It almost felt like a betrayal. But over time, each one of them came to me and said they were proud of what I'd accomplished and that they'd continue to help me in any way they could."

"That was a huge lesson for me, because salespeople have a kind of cutthroat reputation. I promised myself that I would always remember how dependent my success was on their willingness to help. I never felt like I did this on my own."

Abdelnour returned to the company's headquarters in Benton Harbor and spent the next six years in a variety of corporate disciplines, including marketing, mer-

chandising, product development, finance, strategic planning and operations.

"When I look back at my 29 years in the company, that six-year period—I call them my 'dark years'—was the best preparation I could have had for my current role," he says. "At the time, I didn't know what I was going to be able to take away from the experience. I was already a good sales guy, but that time taught me to be a better businessman. I learned what happens when the company doesn't hit its manufacturing targets, and what impact finances have on the business as a whole."

That was followed by a five-year stint as Whirlpool's national sales director in Atlanta, then back to Michigan to assume his current role as vice president of North American sales.

In the end, Abdelnour simply realized that he was, at heart, a salesman. "I work much better in chaos than I do in calm ... I like to make things happen every day," he says.

The dedicated focus on category expertise and assisting in fact-based decision making were the basis for good working relationships with its customers.

“Ultimately, we decided that the information was something our customers could use to improve their businesses,” he says.

It was a bit of a shock for most of them when they realized Whirlpool knew more about certain aspects of their businesses than they did themselves, but it produced the desired results: They stopped thinking of Whirlpool as a supplier of appliances and started thinking of it as a valued business partner.

“The first time we presented some of this data to a customer, he literally got out of his seat and walked closer to the screen it was projected onto,” Abdelnour says. “He looked at it for what seemed like an eternity but wasn’t saying anything. Eventually he asked, ‘Where did you get this much information about my business?’

“I replied, ‘Through internal and external resources, we can take your point-of-sale information and provide recommendations on what you should do next to drive growth in the category.’”

Rather than pushback, customers responded with a desire for even more information. “The same thing happens every time we go through this process with a customer for the first time,” Abdelnour says. “After the first meeting, there’s shock. That shock is lessened by the second meeting because they know what kind of information we have. By the third time we meet, they want more. They offer to give us even more detailed data so we can give them better insight into the way their business is performing.”

In a truly synergistic fashion, their desire for more and better data has driven Whirlpool to improve its ability to provide it to them. Some customers are so



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intrigued that they ask Whirlpool to help them learn how they can do it for themselves.

That willingness to help has taken the concept of partnership to new levels, because it underlies Whirlpool's sincere desire to help its customers.

Abdelnour says that people see through the traditional sales relationship, which is focused primarily on today's bottom-line results. But if a company puts in the time to develop value-added relationships with its customers, they'll be successful because they will win the ties. "Things like product, pricing, features, and functionality all must be there, of course, but they are just the ante that gets you into the game," he says. "Our competitors make high-quality, competitively priced products, too. So why should Whirlpool get the sale?"

"It's because we build relationships. It's easy to win if you're cheaper, faster, or have higher-quality products and services. When all of those variables are even, you will still get the sale because you know your customers—and more importantly, they know you."

Developing category expertise knowledge that goes

beyond the traditional sales function is not just beneficial to the company, it's a critical factor for an individual's career success, Abdelnour says. As a result, he advises the members of his sales team get as broad a knowledge base as possible, as early in their careers as possible.

"We went through a period of time when we were focused on hiring classic marketers, but they didn't have an understanding of how the order-to-cash process works, or how to drive profitable decisions through category information. It's tough to be successful at a general management level if you come up in a single silo.

"I talk to them about building a career pyramid based on a broad range of experience—such as managing through an integration—and emphasize that whatever their top job desire is today, it will be different in five years. We all want instant gratification ... we all want that big prize to be right at our fingertips. But there is much more available, in terms of incentives and compensation, than what's right at your fingertips. Successful careers last 30 years, not five, and long-term thinking leads to long-term career success."

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find your next star



how to use your intuition and outside help to find your next A-level seller

B Y R E B E C C A A R O N A U E R

They're the driving force of any organization. The best ones are competitive, dedicated and elusive. Finding your next A-level sales rep is the greatest challenge for any human resources department. We talked to the experts to help you find your next star.

TRUST YOUR GUT

Chet Bloom isn't a big believer in tests and intellectual assessments. The president of HFBC Ltd., a staff and recruiting firm based in New York, goes with his instinct. "A test will never show a person's eagerness and motivation," he says. For him, it's all about impression, such as how an interviewee dresses, if he shows up on time, and his confidence level. Education is meaningless to him, but background is crucial. Because a salesperson's salary is determined by success in the field, Chet looks for someone who truly needs to succeed. "I want someone who is eager and focused," he says. "Maybe they have a mortgage and kids ... I look for someone who is hungry."

For other sales managers, relying on instinct is too risky. A candidate who is good at interviewing may not be good at the job. Steve Grossman, the Chicago-based principal and leader of sales effectiveness practices for Mercer, believes that tests are a good way to evaluate a candidate without letting ultimately insignificant factors—such as an ugly tie or an overly firm handshake—overly influence the decision. "Assessment tests get objectivity and data. They take the emotion out of it," he says.



find your next star

TRUST THE TEST

There are a myriad of personality assessment tests out there, ranging from ones that take minutes to those that are extensively customized for the company. It's important to remember that these tests are not pass/fail. The results really depend on the type of sales position. Someone applying for a role within a short cycle should be a fast thinker who can handle rejection well. Longer sales cycles require more persistence and a more diplomatic type of personality to deal with clients. "You need to make sure the profile is a real match [for the position]," Grossman says. Assessment tests can help determine if the candidate has the disposition for the type of sales rep you want.

Stryker, a medical device company based in Kalamazoo, Mich., has been using a customized Gallup assessment for 12 years. "It gives us an additional source of information, and a bit more objective source of data on information on a broader set of characteristics," says Mike Rude, the company's president of human resources. He credits Gallup's assessments with creating a more uniform approach to hiring. "Certain hiring managers have a good gut feel, while others aren't as reliable," he says. "Certain people's gut feels are better than others."

In part, the test is based on Stryker's own corporate culture and is constantly tweaked to ensure it's consistent with the top performers in the company. "It's grounded in success within the Stryker organization," Rude says. This means approved candidates are not only a good fit for the job, but also a good fit for the office.

Because of Stryker's longstanding relationship with Gallup, the company is able to use the results of star sellers as indicators for future employees. Being able to cross-reference old Gallup assessments with new applicants allows Stryker to pick out the candidates who will most likely succeed at the role. "If you answer the question like the best, you'll probably behave like the best," says Randy Beck, regional managing partner of Gallup, who is based in Detroit. "The test is more accurate when it's based on the corporate culture."

Within the company, which has 13 sales divisions, there are different criteria for success. "What makes one sales rep good in one division won't make them great in another one," Rude says. Stryker looks at the Gallup assessment of top salespeople within each division to find the right match for every prospect. "It's incorporated in our day-to-day processes," Rude says. "It's truly why we think Stryker is great at identifying talent."

the 9

FROM THE HR CHALLY GROUP

{ mistake 1 Relying only on interviews to evaluate a candidate

A study conducted by the International Personnel Management Association in February 1999 analyzed how well job interviews accurately predict success on the job. The surprising finding: The typical interview increases your chances of choosing the best candidate by less than two percent.

{ mistake 2 Using successful people as models

Duplicating success may seem like a good idea, but the reasons people succeed are not clear from just measuring the characteristics of top performers. More important are the differences between top performers and low achievers. For example, a comprehensive study of more than 1,000 sales superstars from 70 companies showed that the top three characteristics shared by high achievers were (1) the belief that salesmanship required strong objection-answering skills, (2) good grooming habits, and (3) conservative dress—especially black shoes. Oddly, a study of the weakest performers at those same companies revealed that the same three characteristics were their most common traits as well.

most common hiring mistakes

mistake 3

Too many criteria

Only through a method called “validation” can you make more effective hiring decisions. The government originally used validation research to prove that employment selection practices predicted job success and weren’t discriminatory. Not only does it identify critical job success factors, it weighs each factor’s importance.

mistake 4

Evaluating “personality” instead of job skills

Certain personality traits—high energy, honesty, a solid work ethic—seem to practically guarantee success, but surprisingly don’t. Solid statistical research from many objective sources shows little correlation between any personality factor and any specific job.

mistake 5

Using yourself as an example

Your own sales success might lead you to believe you can spot candidates with potential, but don’t count on it. Many managers who reached their position

by virtue of their sales success believe they can instinctively recognize a good candidate, when they are subconsciously just using themselves as a template. When you use yourself as a model, your ego often gets in the way—and that bias can skew your objectivity when judging others, resulting in a fatal hiring flaw.

mistake 6

Failure to use statistically validated testing to predict job skills most critical to success

In some companies, committees use deductive reasoning or brainstorming to identify criteria for candidate selection. Unfortunately, they focus on attitude and experience rather than ability and skills. The latter, in particular, are a much more significant and consistent indicator of potential. Incentives can motivate a skilled person, but motivation and good intentions won’t improve the prospects of an unskilled candidate.

mistake 7

Not researching the reasons that people fail

Research consistently shows that people fail in a job due to factors

different from the criteria used to select them. Though most managers can list the most common reasons why people have failed, they seldom make that information part of the process of choosing selection criteria for new candidates. Managers who identify these “failure points” and build them into the selection process can reduce hiring mistakes by as much as 25 percent.

mistake 8

Relying on general “good guy” criteria

Everyone wants to hire good people, but being a good person does not ensure success on the job. Sales success skills are now so specialized that you need specialized hiring criteria as well.

mistake 9

Bypassing the reference check

As many as 20 percent of job applicants try to hide some dark chapter in their lives. For some positions, one out of three resumes contain false information. To find out who’s trying to pull the wool over your eyes, verify the information applicants provide.



find your next star

Even a less specific assessment test can have positive results for human resources. LexisNexis, the searchable content provider, has been using the Predictive Index since 1998 with great success. “It helps ensure that the people we bring into the organization are inherently a good fit,” says Tom Rocco, the market vice president of LexisNexis who is based in San Francisco.

The Predictive Index is a universal test that takes less than five minutes to complete; participants check off from a list which adjectives they think people would describe them as, and then which adjectives they would describe themselves as. “People with certain behaviors check certain words and skip others,” says Scott Lappin, president of Performance PI, a Predictive Index licensee based in Danville, Calif. “It tells you who you’re dealing with.”

If a candidate seems promising, but doesn’t score well on the Predictive Index, Rocco might still hire him—with a plan to provide more training in specific weak spots.

“If someone falls short in a particular part, it indicates to us where we’re going to have to provide more coaching,” he says.

Like Styrker does with Gallup, LexisNexis uses the

Predictive Index to compare their prospects with their top sellers. “The Predictive Index helped us determine what kind of salespeople we were looking for as we moved into a solution sale approach,” Rocco says. “It helps ensure that the people we bring into the organization are inherently a good fit.”

TRUST THE EXPERTS

Your sales team is the most vital component to your bottom line. But finding a staff of qualified and hardworking reps is time-consuming. For an overextended boss without an eye for talent, outsourcing the hiring and management of a sales team is a good solution.

Acquirent, an outsourced sales vendor based in Evanston, Ill., can handle all of the headaches of finding and managing a successful sales team. Their roster of sales reps reports directly to Acquirent, but they carry business cards and use e-mail addresses for the company they represent. The company takes care of everything from hiring to pay structure to office equipment. “We’re a full-cycle solution,” says Pete Kadens, the founder and CEO of Acquirent.

Are you sure this is what the boss wanted me to do?





One common mistake when hiring sales reps is looking for new talent only when there's an opening rather than continuously making connections with A-level sellers. Most managers are too bogged down with the logistics of running a business to network at sales events and speaking engagements—which is what they should be doing, according to Ray Taylor, senior vice president of sale for Signature Worldwide, a business solution firm based in Dublin, Ohio. "Too many people don't interview until they have an opening," he says. "You want to have a group of people to go to if a spot ever opens up."

Acquirent takes that approach to finding salespeople, and has a network of thousands of top sellers. "I've been interviewing 50 salespeople a week for four years now," Kadens says. "We've built a very powerful database."

For growing companies, hiring and managing a sales fleet is too much of a burden. In the case of Sittercity.com, a Web site devoted to connecting babysitters and dogsitters with parents and pet owners, outsourcing the sales department was the most efficient way to ensure it had a high-performing selling team.

"It's really hard to find, hire and properly staff a sales department, especially when you don't have a lot of experience doing it," says Genevieve Theirs, CEO of the Chicago-based company. "Acquirent can keep your sales staff happy much better than a lot of the core members of the company could."

Theirs still meets with her sales staff once or twice a week and talks to them every day, but Acquirent deals with all the logistical headaches of managing a sales team.

ACCEPT HELP

A good salesperson is only as good as his manager. When hiring, you need to be honest with yourself. Does your gut instinct fail you every time? If so, maybe it's time to look into assessment tests. Are you too overloaded to find the best possible sales team? Outsourcing the hiring of your sales team might be a good decision. Knowing your limits as a talent scout and accepting help will make the hiring process smoother and more effective. As Theirs says, "You trust the experts. It's not possible as an entrepreneur to be an expert in everything."

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BIG CITY NIGHTS or deep blue SEAS



Options for meeting locations vary from the tried and true, to familiar places with new faces, to one-of-a-kind odysseys



by Izabella Iizuka

In the budget-constrained reality of today's corporate world, person-to-person contact with customers—and even fellow employees—is among the first expenses to be eliminated. As a result, traditional meetings often are replaced by faceless conference calls and semi-faceless Webinars in order to meet budget constraints. Nonetheless, companies still need to train their people and offer perks that can attract and retain top sales professionals. What can a meeting planner do to make everyone happy?

The tried-and-true option of the traditional meeting is still available, and from New York to San Francisco, there are plenty of suitable destinations. Smaller cities like San Antonio or Cleveland offer lower costs, while more unorthodox destinations such as China or an island in the Caribbean are top choices for creating unforgettable experiences.

When it comes to choosing the best destination for a

sales meeting, Las Vegas still comes to mind first. But is it really your best choice? Your attendees might be energized by the action, but it might also distract them and give them a reason to leave the meetings early.

According to Brad Weaber, executive vice president and CCO of Twinsburg, Ohio-based event planning firm Experient, "Chicago and San Francisco have shown a lot of activity lately. On the East Coast, Boston, New York, and Philadelphia are always good choices for corporations that are located in that region and don't want to go far for their meetings."

The most important thing for event planners is to keep in mind the objective of the meeting. "Start with the end in mind," Weaber says, echoing the sound advice given by Dr. Stephen Covey in "The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People." Determining what you want out of your meeting beforehand will lead you to make the ideal location choice to meet those

objectives down the road, he adds.

Keep in mind that sales meetings are different from incentive trips and require a completely different mindset. Locations for incentive trips, even if they are disguised as seemingly formal meetings, must offer a large quantity and variety of entertainment. Unfortunately, meetings whose primary goals are training, team building, or other intra-company activities have had their budgets consistently cut as companies look for a better return on their investment.

“Ask the right questions inside the organization to make sure the goal of the meeting is clear and everyone is in agreement, and keep your budget in mind,” Weaber advises. “A lot of companies are re-evaluating the cost issue and choosing to stay local. Cost, rather than seasonality and entertainment, is driving a lot of the decisions today.” Weaber also says that overseas meetings

Egypt to the ruins of Rome, all in about five minutes. In addition to the glitter, Las Vegas also offers great choices for half-day trips, such as the Hoover Dam and the Grand Canyon, which are great entertainment for the occasional accompanying family members.

If you prefer a more secluded option that still offers access to the Las Vegas playground, there are plenty of unorthodox choices such as the JFDI Executive Retreat Ranch, which offers a positive learning environment in a 70-acre natural setting away from all of the distraction of the city but still close enough for a night of gambling.

MIAMI

Miami’s sub-tropical climate, azure sea, golden beaches, and eclectic mix of cultures could be a great choice for that winter meeting. Golf and tennis



haven’t been as popular as they used to be, except for locations such as China and Brazil, which offer a financial advantage due to the currency exchange rate and local cost of living.

One way to cut back on expenses is to choose meeting locations that offer inexpensive, easily accessible entertainment that attendees can undertake on their own. The more planning your staff has to do, the higher your costs are likely to be both before and during the meeting.

the usual suspects

LAS VEGAS

Las Vegas is one of the top 35 largest metro areas in the country, with more than 50,000 new residents a year. Its dazzling lights and glittering resorts makes it the ultimate playground for adults. While on the Vegas speedway, you can go from Paris to New York, from the pyramids of

fans would be attracted by the PGA Tour and the NASDAQ 100 Open tennis tournament. If water is your element, Miami’s world-class sport fishing, beaches, and boating will keep you interested. At night, simply sitting at an outdoor table in the Art Deco or South Beach districts can provide hours of people-watching entertainment.

Disney World, about four hours away by car, is the obvious choice for a day trip with the family, while the Everglades National Park, an untamed ecosystem unlike any other on earth, might fit the bill for the more adventurous.

Meeting venues abound, including Miami Beach Convention Center in Miami Beach, the Miami Convention Center in the heart of downtown Miami, and Coconut Grove Convention Center on the banks of Biscayne Bay. For smaller meetings, popular venues are the Biltmore Hotel, the Miami Beach Resort & Spa, and the Ritz-Carlton in South Beach.

ISTOCK PHOTO

BIG CITY NIGHTS or deep blue seas



SAN FRANCISCO

Referred to as “Everyone’s Favorite City,” San Francisco is consistently ranked among the top international cities by travelers and planners. San Francisco, all by itself, could produce record-breaking attendance for your meeting. Even with the higher California prices, San Francisco can be inexpensive for your company due to all of the inexpensive entertainment, including many family-friendly options, both in and out of the metropolitan area. Just hop on a cable car, stop here for a strong cup of famous Peet’s Coffee and there for a bowl of world-class clam chowder. The sights and sounds, in the delicious context of San Francisco’s laissez-faire attitude, can satisfy even the pickiest of attendees. The nearby Napa Valley is a good choice for a day trip.

NEW ORLEANS

The soul is back! New Orleans is still a great place to visit, with its unique mix of blues music, rich history and eclectic culture, and the Big Easy is gradually recovering from the fury of Hurricane Katrina. The music and cuisine of New Orleans have few legitimate rivals, and its weather makes it a perfect destination any time of year.

Conventions and meetings are returning to New Orleans due to many cost-reducing promotions meant to stimulate the city’s economy. “As an event planner, you have to go and see the city in person,” says Experient’s Weaber. “Flights are coming back, there are many promotions and costs can be negotiated. Right now there is value there, and I recommend it to meeting planners frequently.”

The core of New Orleans was not flooded and is mostly debris-free, open and thriving. The French Quarter is practically intact, the Warehouse Arts District is open for regular business, and the historic Harrah’s Casino offers a taste of Vegas. The famous Aquarium of the Americas and Café Du Monde remain must-see attractions. The Superdome and Convention Center are in full operation, and the cruise ships are back in port. There’s even a post-Katrina advantage few know about: According to the New Orleans Police Department, overall crime is down more than 50 percent.

SEATTLE

While the weather could put a damper on your meeting during certain times of the year, Seattle is anything but dreary. The origin of world-changing cultural movements like grunge rock and commercial success stories like Starbucks, the city feels slightly European, with plenty of pedestrians and outdoor cafés. Seattle holds special appeal for the adventurous, offering beautiful views of the Pacific ocean, the opportunity to hike up Mt. Rainier or take a walk in the Olympic rainforest. A short drive awaits those willing to cross the border into Vancouver, one of the top five highest-scoring cities in the world on the Quality of Living index.

for the city folk

Companies located in large metro areas that want to stay local will have to contend with the higher prices, but might be able to offset some of that expense by providing free time for attendees to find their own entertainment. With built-in cultural, culinary and architectural options, Boston and New York are natural choices for a productive summer meeting. Chicago, although thought of as a working city by most, offers extensive culinary and cultural entertainment as well as Lake Michigan, with its high-end marinas and lake cruises. Don’t miss the Magnificent Mile, where you’ll find some of the world’s finest restaurants, hotels, and several of the world’s tallest buildings.

captivate your audience

If sharing the same space throughout the meeting will serve your purposes better, you might want to consider less traditional options such as a winter meeting in the mountains of Colorado or Vermont. According to Brad Weaber, “We held a very successful meeting in Quebec City once, with all activities revolving around the winter—skiing, dog sledding, and such.”

For any season, except perhaps the hurricane season, a cruise is a very interesting choice that has been around for more than 30 years but still sounds fairly eccentric. Offering the first-class treatment of a resort combined with the excitement of exotic travel, these seafaring adventures are becoming more popular. A cruise offers a very controllable, self-contained process, and your audience will be completely involved in the



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meeting. Further, because it's a ways off the beaten path, people will be excited to go. If you pick your ship and itinerary carefully, you're sure to have all the necessary equipment and space, as well as an environment that is not disruptive to your goals.

Richard Weinstein, vice president of corporate and incentive sales for Miami-based Carnival Cruise Lines, says, "In the past five years, we've seen a lot of growth in the meetings segment. Ships now have dedicated spaces and pay closer attention to what meeting planners want and how some meetings differ from incentive programs—particularly with the dedi-

charging the attendee fair market value; they pay the tax themselves, and you give them money to cover it." Some companies choose not to deduct cruise meetings at all because they offer such good value compared with land meetings. "With all of the entertainment and meals included and the easier planning, it tends to be a 30 percent savings over land-based meetings. The savings are worth the non-deduction," Weinstein points out.

There are some risks associated with cruise meetings, however. In addition to possible seasickness, there also might be fewer breakout rooms available. But for general sessions, the showrooms—with their

great audio visual setups already in place—offer the best production capabilities that any meeting planner could ever want.

Planners can choose different lengths and itineraries to suit various types of meetings. The cruise setting is ideal for meeting programs that don't require 24-hour



cated meeting space, the equipment onboard, the setup of the room, and the availability of a convention services coordinator."

Cruises provide a major change of scenery for those who always have held their meetings in the more mainstream destinations. But that's not even the greatest advantage that cruise ships offer.

In addition to the fact that your audience can't stray very far, all of the meals and entertainment are included in the package, which makes planning much easier and almost completely eliminates unexpected expenses.

"Menu planning is much easier, with vegetarian or low-salt options for those with special dietary needs. All of those contingencies are covered," Weinstein says. "With all of the entertainment and food included, your cost per person tends to be a lot lower." With all that work off their hands, meeting planners can dedicate more of their time and attention to the other aspects of the meeting.

"Before 1985, meetings on cruise ships were fully tax-deductible, but changes in the tax law disallowed these deductions," he continues. "However, although cruises are not directly tax-deductible, you can gross up the cost,

space holds and can use unusual rooms such as the bars and smaller reception rooms. Group sizes range from 50 for a seminar to a full ship charter, which can host as many as 3,000 people.

"If your group will take more than half of the ship, you have to charter the whole ship," Weinstein says. That is because passengers usually are split into two groups for several activities—when one half is dining, the other half is at the shows, and vice-versa. This reduces the possibility of disruption from the other ship guests because the different groups won't run into each other all that much, except for the "after hours" activities.

In addition to being very impressive, a privately chartered ship allows you to have virtually every aspect of the cruise customized for your group. You can decide which ports the ship will call on, what dishes will be offered on the menu, and which shore excursions will be available. The most important thing is that your guests enjoy the meeting and look forward to coming back for the next one. No matter what your meeting recipe calls for, all ingredients are available in different sizes and packages, on land or water.

s&mm

choice is everything

Companies achieve better results when they offer salespeople reward options and tie the incentives to percent of improvement rather than a budget number

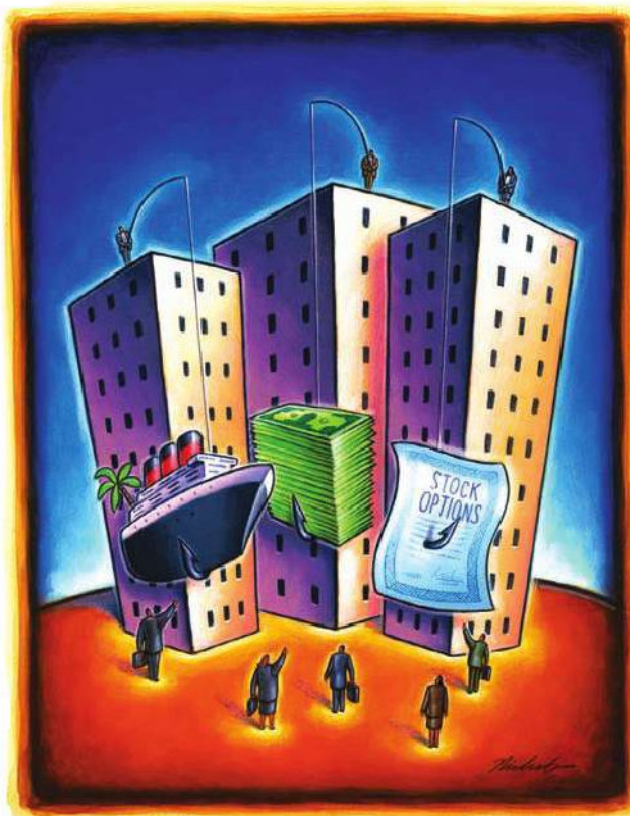
“the same carrot don’t move all donkeys,”

Even though it’s been more than 30 years since Mark S. Biviano heard that adage from a college professor, he still remembers it today when trying to incentivize his sales force at Rubber City Radio Group in Akron, Ohio.

The senior vice president and executive sales director says some of his salespeople want money or goods, others recognition, and others want time off.

“I learned early on that to have a successful incentive program, you need to let people choose the reward as much as possible,” Biviano says.

Louise Anderson, president and CEO of Anderson Performance Improvement, an incentives firm in Hastings, Minn., agrees. “Guilt-free recognition is what a lot of people are looking for,” Anderson says. “We found most employees want a choice. “For one company we worked for, we had five black BMWs to give away,” Anderson relates. “Not one of the recipients wanted the cars! One wanted a Harley-Davidson, one wanted new landscaping, and one chose a cruise. Choice is



by
maureen
hrehocik

Anderson says, referring to those salespeople who may not have large accounts and who can become demoralized by the 20 percent of superstars who always seem to claim the biggest rewards.

everything.” (The Harley-Davidson winner didn’t want his wife to know he chose the motorcycle instead of cash. He told Anderson his wife would’ve wanted him to invest the money rather than buy his dream hawg.)

spread the wealth

Anderson says incentive strategies have changed over the last five years. Instead of rewarding for sales, companies are now rewarding for improvement.

“Rewarding for improvement drives money to the bottom line,” she says. “I have seen companies’ sales quadruple when sales incentives were given for percent of improvement.”

By incentivizing on improvement, the “80 percent club doesn’t get left behind,”

Many companies are moving toward a “token economy” to facilitate guilt-free rewards.

Instead of working toward winning a car or a trip, salespeople earn points that can be redeemed from an incentives catalog for everything from cars to cutlery. It’s up to the employee at what point he or she redeems the points. “This gives the employee the power to choose his own goal,” Anderson says.

Another factor that can influence how successful your incentive program may be is knowing the demographics of your employees.

According to Dana Slockbower, director of marketing for Rymax Marketing Services, Inc., Pinebrook, N.J., older employees and Generation-Xers are



motivated by different things.

"We've found aging employees like the more traditional awards such as merchandise," Slockbower says. "Generation X wants more experiential awards such as snowboarding trips or high-end spas. They're very brand-savvy."

Adrienne Forest, assistant vice president of special marketing for New York-based Bulova, understands the lure of high-end brands. "Luxury brands are very popular," Forest says. "Watches aren't just used to tell time anymore. They are fashion accessories for both men and women." She says that Bulova's Swiss brands, Accutron and Wittnauer—especially those accented with diamonds—are the strongest of all as incentives.

Slockbower says her company's incentives are all offered online rather than in print, in keeping with the "instant communication" and constant updating that can be accomplished.

"The bottom line is that cash equals compensation for most employees," Slockbower says. "Companies no longer want to commit to a [monetary] number anymore because that number has to be increased from year to year. They are looking for aspirational rewards that are above and beyond the paycheck."

Slockbower says her company believes in an "out-of-box experience" for rewards. "If employees get a camera, they should also get the memory card, the case and anything else they need to start enjoying the award the day they get it," she says.

The proliferation and popularity of gift cards continues, with benefits to the salesperson as well as the company.

"There are some important differences, though, with incentive gift cards," says Bill Wehrman, director of marketing and corporate communications for American Express Incentive Sales in St. Louis. "Reloadability, where funding can be added to a card at any time, is very

attractive. Also, with universal gift cards, a company can't control the spin."

American Express' Direct Spend program offers themed cards and custom cards offering brandability and "spin control" to focus the recipient's attention on a certain category of products, thus influencing behavior.

"Companies can design the card so every time the salesperson pulls the card out to use it, he's reminded of who gave it to him," Wehrman tells *Sales & Marketing*

Bag" when he wants to generate new business. Inside the bag are envelopes with various denominations of cash, from \$5 to \$100.

Anyone who brings in new business gets to choose an envelope, in front of the sales team, which also gives them peer recognition. "It's very simple but creates a lot of buzz, and the nice thing is you can do it anytime," Biviano says.

Another program is "Everyone Sells." This incentive rewards everyone in the

“instead of rewarding for sales, companies are now rewarding for improvement,”

Management. "It becomes a small billboard in the salesperson's wallet."

thanks for the memories

To ensure incentives are being spent on something motivational and not a day-to-day expense like groceries, American Express has "theme" gift cards that allow the incentive-giving company to choose from groupings of stores—such as high-end electronics, home solutions, apparel, mall-type stores, a lifestyle card or travel—for their salespeople to choose from.

"Expeditions is a new gift card we're debuting at the Motivation Show (Sept. 25-27 in Chicago). The recipient can choose from more than 60 travel-related vendors, destinations, and hotels. We think this will be extremely popular."

For some companies, directing where a salesperson can shop can help drive business to stores that support the parent company's business or companies it does business with, according to Wehrman.

If you're looking for some simple, on-the-spot type incentives, Rubber City Radio Group's Biviano breaks out "Biv's

department, including support staff, and drives home the idea that everyone is a salesperson for the radio station.

"We divide the radio station into four teams," Biviano explains. "Each team has two salespeople and a random mixture of five other employees in the office. The non-sales employees pass out business cards from the salespeople on their team when they visit their dry cleaner, attorney or any other business. They simply ask if the business would mind if that salesperson calls them. It's a great way to generate leads in my business."

The team with the most new business wins prizes ranging from trips to the Bahamas to televisions. One team brought in \$110,000 in new business.

Incentive programs are as varied as the recipients who receive them. Experts agree that what incentivizes one employee may turn off another. Some people like goods and some like money, while others want time off. The important factors: know your salespeople, reward on improvement and whenever possible, give a choice of rewards. **s&mm**



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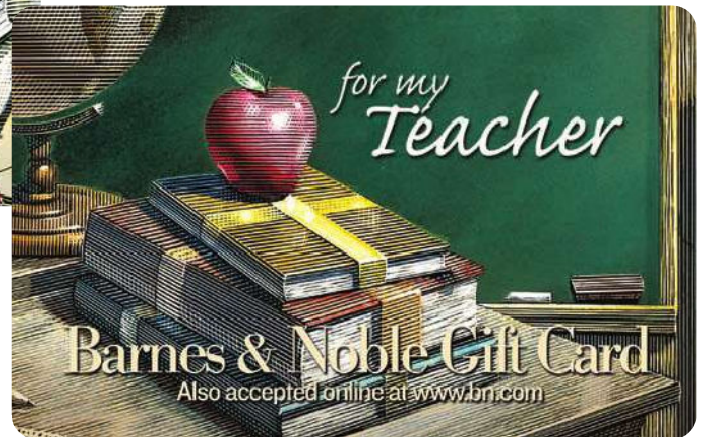
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SEAL OF APPROVAL www.elitemeetings.net

With a database of hundreds of resorts and hotels, this new site offers tools to assist users in property searches by features such as meeting space, number of guest rooms by type, transfer time to and from nearby airports, and food and beverage offerings. The site promises that properties featured on searches have been approved by its advisory board, comprised of professionals in the corporate planning and hospitality industries. With the "Speed RFP" option, planners can request simple dates as well as detailed proposals, and the "Click to Talk" button, available at each property profile, allows planners to connect to the hotel's sales department. Another relevant piece of information the site displays is the value dates that hotels need to fill throughout the year.

MATCH GAME www.hotelplanner.com

Before a face-to-face or even an over-the-phone negotiation with select hotels, planners can post hotel booking requirements here that will be matched by hotels willing to fulfill them. Affiliated hotels in the destination are notified and place bids on a secure page. After the bids are reviewed, planners can contact sales managers directly or have the system notify those managers of their interest in booking rooms and services. Although most of the 400 requests processed daily by the four-year-old site are for hotels in the U.S., the site also can be used for bids from international properties. Users can also search for price quotes on car rentals, airline tickets, cruises, and other entertainment options.

MEETING BAZAAR www.buyerzone.com

This site's purpose is not solely providing tools for meeting planners; it is a marketplace for buyers and sellers of business products and services. Through a bid-based process, BuyerZone connects buyers to a network of suppliers across more than 125 product and service categories, with more than 8,000 participating suppliers. The site launched in 1992 and claims to have "facilitated more than \$5 billion in purchasing transactions since 2004." In the case of meetings and events, planners can request quotes online, with pointers to narrow down the matching process according to the type of event, number of guests, type of venue, number of overnight accommodations required, catering needs, and services such as advertising, guest speakers, music and entertainment, guest transportation, and audiovisual.

—Mariana Lemann

ON THE ROAD AUSTIN

Austin may be the capital of Texas, but it's unlike any other city in the state. Home to University of Texas and a thriving music scene, Austin is one of the fastest-growing cities in America; last year, *Money Magazine* named it the second-best big city to live in. To help you navigate Austin like a Texan, *S&MM* spoke with Sarah McCabe, the director of Midwest regional sales for the Austin Convention & Visitors Bureau, who visits Austin regularly for work.



> WHERE DO YOU STAY?

I usually stay downtown within walking distance from the Austin Convention Center and built-in entertainment districts. The Hilton Austin currently serves as the headquarter hotel for many large conventions so it is a prime focus for my clients.

http://www1.hilton.com/en_US/hi/hotel/AUSCVHH-Hilton-Austin-Texas/index.do

> WHERE DO YOU HAVE A BUSINESS DINNER?

My favorite location for a business dinner is Lamberts Downtown Barbecue. Deemed "fancy barbecue," Lamberts offers a sampling of everything that is Austin. Live music can be enjoyed in their 2nd floor bar and heard throughout the open-air dining room, the service is top-notch and the barbecue options are classic yet offer a subtle contemporary twist.

Lamberts Downtown Barbecue: 401 W 2nd Street, Austin, Texas, 78701

> WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE AFTER HOURS SPOT?

The Belmont restaurant's rooftop allows guests to step back in time. A crisp, cool setting immediately transports guests back to Palm Springs in the 1960s.

The Belmont, 305 W. Sixth St., Austin, TX

> HOW DO YOU SPEND A FREE DAY?

"I spend my free time outdoors. A jog along Town Lake's hike & bike trail will lead you into Zilker Park where you can go for a dip or simply enjoy the setting of the Barton Springs pool. A stop into the flagship Whole Foods Market (80,000 sq.ft.) could keep me occupied for hours. After a bit of browsing through the West End 6th Street boutiques & shops, a visit to South Congress (SoCo) is a must. There is a new boutique or café opening in SoCo each time I am in Austin.

MDR-NC60 HEADPHONES FROM SONY

For tuning out noise while still providing crisp and powerful sound, these around-the-ear-style headphones from Sony do the trick. They feature a noise-canceling circuit that uses built-in microphones to detect outside noise and send an equal-but-opposite canceling signal to the headphones. When switched on, they reduces outside noise by as much as 85%. The headphones come with a travel case and an airplane adapter. To conserve the AAA battery (which lasts up to 30 hours), the noise-canceling effect can be turned off in quieter environments. **\$199**



K 440 NC HEADPHONES BY AKG

Whether you travel by planes, trains, or automobiles, distractions abound. When you're trying to escape the noise to concentrate on work or catch a quick power nap, these lightweight, noise-canceling headphones from AKG silence the static. They feature an integrated, active electronic noise filter to achieve optimum ambient noise attenuation and take up a minimal amount of space in your travel bag, thanks to their unique 3D axis folding mechanism. The K 440 NC headphones come with a traveling pouch and adapters for use with stereos and on airplanes. **\$99**



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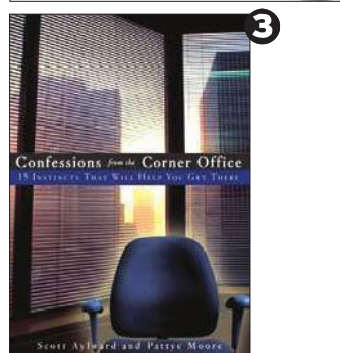
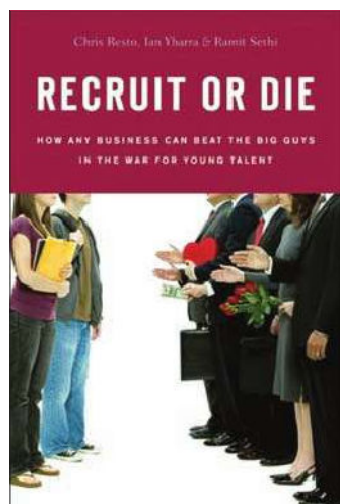
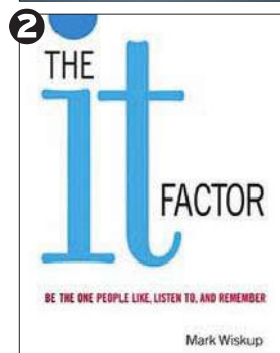
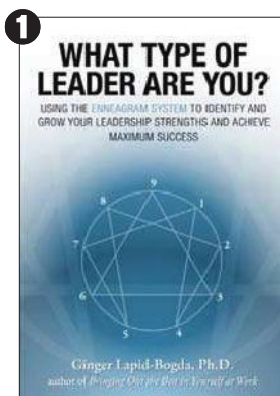
Offering all of the benefits of Bose's acclaimed QuietComfort 2 version in a smaller package, these on-ear headphones feature a proprietary acoustic design that blocks out external noise while preserving the quality of the music. Featuring a memory foam cell structure and an air-restrictive outer covering, the cushions automatically conform to the ears, providing a seal that blocks unwanted noise without creating irritating pressure points. **\$299**



PLANE QUIET NC-7 NOISE CANCELING HEADSET

The newest on-the-ear headset from Pro Travel Gear aim to provide the best possible sound while offering maximum comfort and convenience, with a head weight of only 2.5 ounces (7.8 ounces for the complete set, including travel case). Even after the single AAA battery is drained and can no longer power the active noise-canceling technology (it provides approximately 14 hours of peace), the unit can still play music and its on-the-ear fit provides passive noise canceling benefits, while its three sets of folding hinges make it easy to fit in any bag. **\$79.95**





RECRUIT OR DIE

How Any Business Can Beat the Big Guys in the War for Young Talent

BY CHRIS RESTO, IAN YBARRA AND RAMIT SETHI
PORTFOLIO, \$24.95

Even when you're running as smoothly and efficiently as possible, it's hard to win in today's marketplace if you don't have the best horses. Many sales managers concede that nothing is as critical to success as creating a pipeline for talented young workers, so winning the recruiting battle can't be overemphasized. The authors, who co-founded an influential internship program at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, know what makes entry-level recruits tick—and more importantly, what it takes to get them into your organization rather than the competition's. Based on surveys and interviews with more than 1,000 students, the authors show techniques that help you build your brand among these up-and-comers, improve your performance at career fairs and info sessions, and ways to win at "the gossip game." Learning to attract these future sales stars takes a little time and effort, but by following this proven game plan, the recruiting success you have today will pave the way for years of success in the future.

1 WHAT TYPE OF LEADER ARE YOU?

Using the Enneagram System to Identify and Grow Your Leadership Strengths and Achieve Maximum Success

BY GINGER LAPID-BOGDA, PhD
MCGRAW-HILL, \$18.95

There are many paths to being a good leader, and they aren't one-size-fits-all. To be at your most effective, according to author Ginger Lapid-Bogda, PhD, you need to determine your personality type and align it with your leadership style. The book's fill-in-the-blank format is engaging and easy to read, focusing on developing capabilities in six key leadership competencies, including results, communication, strategy and teamwork. The nine Enneagram style descriptions are explained in depth, complete with detailed questions that help readers determine which are the closest match for their personalities. By identifying their core competencies, managers will learn not only how to maximize their innate strengths, but also how to shore up their weaknesses.

2 THE IT FACTOR

Be the One People Like, Listen To, and Remember

BY MARK WISKUP, AMACOM, \$14.95

Remember how important it was to be liked by your peers back when you were in grade school? The quarterbacks and cheerleaders weren't just popular; they were powerful. They had "IT," and "IT" is a hallmark of success in sales—and most other aspects of life, for that matter. But as author Mark Wiskup points out, even if you were stuffed in your locker by the bullies every morning as a teenager, you can still learn techniques that will allow you to take over any conversation, meeting or networking encounter. From perfecting the "elevator pitch" to grabbing control of a business meeting, readers learn that IT is not always something you're born with—IT is also something you can learn, and IT will pay off in terms of concrete results in the workplace. Just remember to use your newfound power for good rather than evil, or the next person whose lunch money you steal might grow up to beat you for that fat new account.

3 CONFESSIONS FROM THE CORNER OFFICE

15 Instincts That Will Get You There

BY SCOTT AYLWARD AND PATTYE MOORE, WILEY, \$24.95

This is not your standard business book penned by executives who are many years removed from the challenges, trials and tribulations that got them to where they are. The authors, sometimes referred to as the "Will and Grace" of the business world, focus on leading with integrity. Most of the lessons that formed the basis of this book were learned on the way to the corner office, not once they got there. Their concept of a finding and bonding with a "corporate soul mate" goes far beyond the traditional student/mentor relationship, serving as their secret weapon for success. Aylward was CEO of the nation's largest employee-owned advertising agency and Moore was president of Sonic Corp., parent company of the biggest drive-in restaurant chain in the United States, so find out what you need to get to the corner office—and stay there.

The 7 Fundamental Management Skills

FOR LEADERS AT ALL LEVELS

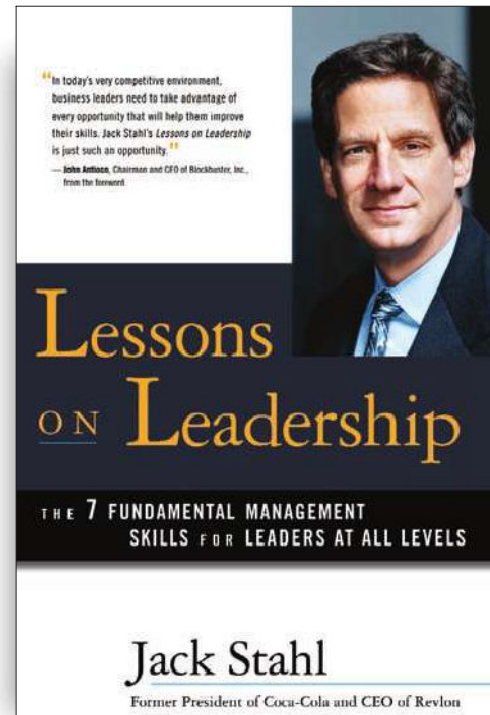
Excerpted from:
Lessons on Leadership

By Jack Stahl,
former President of Coca-Cola and CEO of Revlon (Kaplan, 2007)

At the heart of creating value and long-term success for most organizations is the ability to design and develop a product or service to serve a targeted group of end users.

For purposes of this discussion, we will call those end users “consumers.” In most cases, consumers are people like you and me who buy items for our personal use. An end user also might be another company that buys your product or service for its own final use or to use in producing some other product to be on-sold.

A “brand” represents a promise to consumers of what to expect from a product or service. Brand positioning is the process of establishing that promise in the minds of consumers. Through effective brand positioning and related marketing actions, your product or service can become a recognized and valuable brand, known for delivering real benefits to consumers that are distinct and different from your competition. When brands deliver on their promise, they can create real power in the marketplace—and share-owner wealth. Think hard about what each of your products or services uniquely delivers to your target consumers. Write it down in a paragraph or so. These key



words and ideas will be at the center of how you market your product or service. Ultimately, they will become a focused corridor from which to build strong brands.

Consumers understand that the brand Coca-Cola, or Coca-Cola Classic, delivers three things: genuineness (which translated into “The Real Thing” advertising campaign), its ability to help make special times with friends and family even better, and great refreshment. These key points guide all marketing actions. It’s interesting to note that Coca-Cola’s original brand positioning in the late 1800s indicated that Coke was a headache or brain tonic. The product was sold in the “drugstores” of those days and was positioned to relieve symptoms of a headache and provide an emotional lift. Point-of-sale material, signage, and billboards reinforced these benefits, and the Coca-Cola brand grew to be recognized.

What functions does your brand perform? How does it help its ultimate consumers function better? What exactly

does your brand deliver—physically or emotionally—to those consumers? The sum total of your marketing actions (advertising, packaging, promotional materials, in-store merchandising, etc.) should answer these questions for your consumers.

As women grew tired of the fashion industry's unattainable ideal of beauty, Kellogg of Canada launched an unusual ad campaign in the fall of 1996 to promote their Special K® cereal. A series of advertisements attacked society's obsession with "thinness," while positively stressing fitness and health—including Special K as part of your diet—as the keys to a positive body image. This emphasis was very successful—so successful, in fact, that Kellogg's continues to use positive body image in the marketing campaigns for Special K cereal. Although fashions and diet trends have changed since 1996, the idea still resonates with today's health and fitness conscious consumers. It works because it provides a solution for their target consumers' need or problem.

Always think about your product as a potential solution for the consumer. Furthermore, always understand that this focus is entirely different from being centered on the internal attributes of your product, such as its technical makeup or how it is manufactured. Those factors may be foremost in your mind about your product, but they are important to consumers only if they are translated into a solution that they value, and are willing to pay to have. Consider that manufacturers such as Nike no longer appear to be selling just shoes and apparel to women; they are also selling the image of empowerment through personal strength, which is a "consumer solution"—offering women the chance to gain the ability to defy entrenched stereotypes.

When I came to Revlon in early 2002, we conducted consumer research to understand the current positioning of the Revlon brand in the minds of its consumers. Based on in-depth consumer interviews (done both on a one-on-one basis and in focus groups), we learned that the Revlon brand was indeed recognized and well known worldwide for its outstanding color cosmetic offerings, innovation, and excitement. It also was thought to be the "glamour brand" among mass-market color cosmetics. However, based on our market research, we concluded that we needed to take additional actions to reinforce our positioning. To do that required articulating better what the positioning should be to attract today's cosmetics consumers. We ultimately chose to position the Revlon brand as the brand that will create feelings of confident sexiness in our target consumers. This positioning of "confident sexiness" then became the core centerpiece of all of our marketing efforts. We based our print and television advertising

around it. "Confident sexiness" would translate right through to our point-of-sale materials, our packaging, and every touchpoint with the target Revlon consumer. Once we were focused on the idea of confident sexiness, our marketing actions became more focused too. They became clearer, and more streamlined, and we were able to create a very positive impact for the brand with our consumers.

Your brand positioning must be clear and straightforward. You should be able to define for others what your brand represents in a simple statement. It must ring true to you and be stated in a way that consumers understand. Only then will your people have a clear positioning around which to build effective marketing programs that strengthen your brand in the eye of your target consumers. Unclear brand positioning leads to fuzzy direction for your marketers. That in turn results in a scattered and very expensive approach to the development of your marketing programs. It is amazing what happens when you can describe what a brand means in just a few words (i.e., "confident sexiness" for Revlon, "exhilarating to drive" for BMW, or even the word "search," which to many users is the meaning of the Google brand) and when your organization rallies around that positioning to develop targeted brand and revenue-building programs. This saves time and money. It also avoids useless effort. To an organizational leader or general manager, it's a dream come true. An organization is then positioned to deliver on the brand's promise! If you are selling washing machines and your brand positioning is one of reliability, such as Maytag's brand, then your marketing should reinforce reliability as theirs consistently does. If your brand positioning is about the low cost of your product or service, then say it! If your brand is uplifting emotionally, then show it! One way to define what your brand delivers to your consumers is to have a clear understanding of those consumers' habits as they relate to your product.

At Coca-Cola, for example, we took a hard look at the way our consumers moved through the course of their daily activities, how they spent their time from morning until night. We then identified the related "thirst occasions," an industry term for the moments during the day when consumers were most likely to want to consume a beverage. For example, a thirst occasion might mean wanting something to drink that provides a "pick me up" in the morning, like coffee, or it might mean needing to rehydrate after a workout in the late afternoon, or maybe seeking a final caffeine-free drink late at night. We mapped these thirst occasions, and then asked ourselves the question, "What products or packaging would be best suited to meet these various thirst occasions in the best possible way for consumers throughout their day?"



READERS RESPOND TO SALES AND MARKETING CHALLENGES

> PREVIOUS DILEMMA

JULY/AUGUST RECAP

Jackson Inc. Vice President of Marketing Cameron Green has had great success funneling leads from trade shows, online marketing and advertising to the sales department. But the department's new sales director, who comes from a company with a rigid corporate culture, expects marketing to qualify those leads in greater detail before they are sent to sales. Green wants to start the new relationship off on the right foot, but fears the additional work from further qualification will bog down the marketing department.

> JULY/AUGUST WINNER

DENNIS JOHNSON
Branch Manager
Roberts Home Medical, Inc.
Harrisonburg, Va.

Mr. Green should meet with his new sales director so together they could outline the sales goals for the upcoming quarter. He then should let Mr. Sexton know how excited he is over his new ideas and hopes the changes will add revenue to the proven sales program that they currently use. He should then ask the new sales director how much territory should be invested in this new sales approach—a quarter, third or half—for the quarter. They would then meet at the end of the quarter to measure their results.

This approach will empower the new sales director to move forward with positive energy to prove his theory of sales to Mr. Green and his new staff.

He will have to decide the amount of risk he is willing to put forth, knowing the past sales approach has been a winner. The conclusion will be that they will both find the correct answer to the sales direction, the VP will manage within reason the vulnerability of a new approach and the new sales director will be empowered to make important decisions to prove his new marketing/sales theory. In the end, all sides—including the company and its employees—will win with a proven modality for future success.

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Putting Project Management Principles to Work for You

The project management techniques used by large corporations can help home-based entrepreneurs, too

Major corporations place great emphasis on continual training of their leadership resources in the principles of project management. Large successful corporations recognize that complex business processes require not just time management and basic business skills, but a broad skill set that includes a balance of priority setting, resource identification, and schedule discipline.

A successful project manager is able to set priorities, identify and assign the right resources to the job, and develop a disciplined schedule to drive forward and measure progress. You can benefit from the following project management principles of large corporations by applying them to your own home-based business.

PRIORITY SETTING

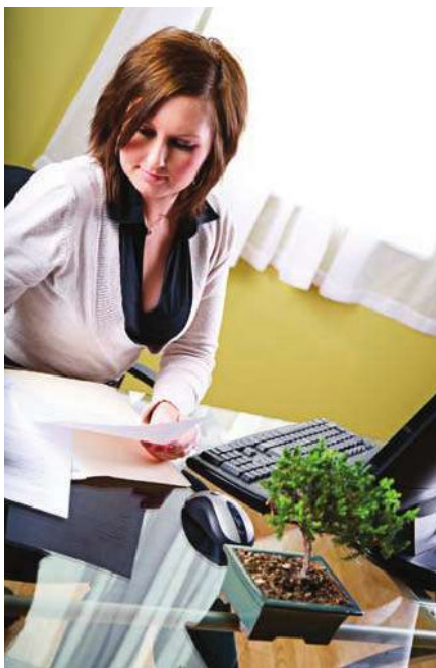
Paul LoNigro, principal architect for his own architectural firm in Southern California, says, “‘Important’ is what I need to get done. ‘Urgent’ is what other people think I need to get done. It is critical to understand the difference between important and urgent. Urgency is dependent upon one’s point of view, and it typically comes from a lack of understanding of the issue.”

Priority setting can be as basic as making a list of the important issues that need to be addressed and determining how much each issue impacts your home-based business. Is it more important to get the package to your long-term client on time, or to spend that time in a meeting with a potentially new client? You must decide.

Bob is a financial analyst for an engineering/construction company who deals with competing priorities almost hourly. “Maintaining your focus on my top priorities and the required schedule dates allows me to complete the important tasks and respond to those important, urgent tasks that pop up all the time,” he says.

RESOURCE IDENTIFICATION

Once the important priorities are set, it’s necessary to identify and assign the proper resources to the tasks that need attention. Resources can be those things that help you to accomplish your tasks: your



own time, your business staff, the FedEx guy, or even your answering machine. Ensuring that the right resources are assigned to the job is as critical as any other aspect of your home-based business. The successful project manager identifies and assigns resources early on, anticipating the priorities that are expected. You can’t hire and train a person on the day that you need him.

SCHEDULE DISCIPLINE

After identifying and assigning resources, it’s essential to develop a disciplined schedule to drive forward and measure progress. Take the following examples:

Brenda manages major marketing projects for a healthcare organization, and she relies on schedule discipline to keep her projects on track. “I have multiple vendors, and each of them has scheduled deliverables that are critical

to subsequent tasks and priorities. If one of them falls behind schedule, that will ripple throughout my projects.” She tracks each vendor’s schedule progress daily and can identify early on when there is a potential problem. This allows her to work directly with the vendor to determine options for getting back on track. “I look at my entire project and work backwards to create my schedules. When I know my end date, I can build in some extra time in my schedule before I negotiate with my vendors,” Brenda says.

Stacy runs a home salon and knows that it’s critical to maintain schedule discipline. “Some new clients call me at the last minute, but it’s more important for me to accommodate my long-term relationships and honor those excellent clients that understand the need to make and stick to appointments,” she says. Making and communicating her appointment policies in the early stages of her business was actually well received. “I was pleasantly surprised,” Stacy says, “but most of my clients are highly successful businesswomen who appreciate the fact that when they arrive for their appointments, I can seat them immediately. That’s schedule discipline, and it’s good for my business.”

—By Gregory Grabowski

Originally published in Home Business Magazine (April 2007). For more information, visit www.homebusinessmag.com.

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