

## Communicating

**C**ommunicating with customers in any business is essential, so how do you keep in touch with customers without irritating them? Newsletters.

I am a big fan of a newsletter because you can do so much with it. You can inform, sell, educate, and survey all at the same time.

Of primary importance is that the newsletter be useful to the customer. If the customer doesn't find it useful, then you are wasting your efforts. Include information such as tips on how to make better use of common programs; or interesting web sites; or helpful web sites; or whatever would be of use to the "typical" customer. If your customer base has a large percentage of business customers you might have a special section dedicated to useful business information; or even two newsletters, one for business customers and one for consumers.

Don't want to write your own newsletter? There are firms out there that will write the newsletter for you and leave an area for you to insert current company announcements -- such as

special offers or whatever you want to brag about.

Your newsletter can be mailed through the Post Office, e-mailed, or simply on line as part of your web site.

A printed newsletter is the most expensive of the three options because you have printing costs as well as postage costs.

Many individuals like an on-line version, but my experience is that people won't go to it without your prodding them, which means a mass e-mail to tell your customers that the new edition of the newsletter is up, so you might as well just e-mail the newsletter in the first place and be done with it.

My pick is an e-mailed newsletter, but make your newsletter an Opt-in; meaning that people must sign up for the newsletter. However, if you have a large existing customer base and have all their e-mail addresses you can simply start sending it to them on a monthly basis. But please have a way for them to Opt-out if they don't want to receive your newsletter. You will find that very few will, most will accept it gratefully.

Let me explain the how and why of my content in this newsletter to help you get a better idea about the thought process involved in creating a newsletter.

First it is in PDF format. Many people are fearful of opening attachments because that is the way viruses are spread, but you will find that these same people are completely comfortable in opening a PDF file.

Why not do it in Word and send it that way? Because people are reluctant to open many forms of attachments ... even Word documents are sometimes suspect. But I selected the PDF format because many of my readers are techies, and they typically despise HTML or anything Microsoft. So I create the newsletter in Microsoft's Publisher and then convert it to a PDF file. It's an easy extra step for me and it makes my readers more comfortable.

Most residential customers will prefer HTML graphics, so make your newsletter in HTML even if you hate it. After all, you want the customer to appreciate it, and they typically want HTML.

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**Service isn't just a word, it's the right way of doing business.**

### Inside this issue:

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Comments and suggestions on any of the content in this newsletter is appreciated. After all, this is to help you with your business and your marketing, so give me your ideas and suggestions.

## The Most Important Word in Advertising

**W**hat is the most important word in your marketing and advertising vocabulary?

Some would say that it is "Free", and it certainly is a good word in marketing; but so are "New", "Save", "Value", "Easy", "Safe", "Long Lasting", "Guaranteed", and a host more.

But one word stands above all of these. One word really is more important than any other.

It is the word that helps the reader identify with what you are saying. It is the word that personalizes your message. That one word is "**You**".

"You can save money by using our

product" is much stronger than "Save money by using our product."

"You" personalizes whatever you are talking about. The reader immediately identifies with the "you" and quickly mentally accepts the personalization and identifies with it.

McDonalds used to have the slogan "You deserve a break today", well who wouldn't agree? We all feel over worked, even if we aren't. And we all appreciate a break; so how can anyone argue with "You deserve a break today".

See how much stronger that phrase is as opposed to "Have a break with McDonalds". It isn't personal. The "You" makes it personal and allows the reader to accept it and agree with the

statement.

You don't need to make it a big production when using "you". And don't over do it.

"Enjoy the beauty of **your** new windows from Anderson windows."

"Keep **your** family safe buy purchasing our quality tires."

"Improve **your** marketing by utilizing Brock." (grin)

You get the idea. Check all your advertising, marketing literature, and even your Yellow Page ads to see where you can improve your results by making a small one-word change.

## Useful Books

"**How to Become a Rainmaker**" by Jeffrey J. Fox.

A Rainmaker is the person or persons who bring revenue into the organization.

It is the one or two individuals who are really able to bring in the money, (rain), from customers.

While a Rainmaker can be anyone in the organization, (CEO, agent, Managing Director, and etc.), it is typically the salesperson in contact with the customer, and this book is aimed at the

salesperson.

In the book Mr. Fox gives provides the proper steps a good rainmaker takes towards getting the sale.

The first step is to send a short, (4 or 5 sentence), letter that dollarizes the reason a prospect should do business with you.

To quote from the book: "The objective of the letter is to get the customer to



take the follow-up phone call. Good customers don't ignore a compelling dollarization. They will take your call."

The book is just over 160 pages and is as compelling a read as it is an easy read.

## Links & Websites



**W**hen you go to [this](#) web site, enter your zip code and it gives you the price of gasoline at various gas stations in your area.

This site is updated daily, but since some stations have been known to change prices more than once during the day it may not always be 100% accurate.

But it sure beats driving around town all day trying to locate the best place to buy gas.

Also, it may not list all gas stations. The station I normally go to doesn't seem to be listed, but since I drive by it every day that isn't a big concern to me. I can check the web site and as I'm headed out glance at the gas stations pricing

and then make my decision. Take a look at it and see if it helps you any.

<http://autos.msn.com/everyday/gasstations.aspx?zip=&!amp;src=Netx>

I'm always on the lookout for useful or interesting web sites, so if you have one or know of one, please tell me about it.

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Page One of course will have your logo, I'm using an attractive, (attractive to me anyway), Microsoft graphic.

Also, I've got my ugly mug plastered in the upper right corner of the document. Why? Because seeing your face creates a warm fuzzy with the average customer. They like knowing whom they are doing business with – it makes the relationship more personal. This is why Realtors will almost always have their picture on their business card.

Putting a face on the newsletter will go a long way in making your relationship more personal.

On the right, just under my picture are the contents of the newsletter so readers can get an idea of what's inside. It is best to keep each issue virtually identical to the previous in terms of the layout and look. Your readers shouldn't have to re-learn your format every time you

send them a newsletter.

Finally, there is a Feature Article on some business or marketing topic. If the entire article can't fit on that single page it will continue later in the newsletter or there will be a link to the web site where the entire article is posted.

This way I can keep the general format of the newsletter intact regardless of the length of the article.

Once you start publishing a newsletter be consistent. It should come out in the same general time period of every month; it should look pretty much the same from one month to the next; and it should always contain opt-out and contact information in the same place every issue.

I delayed starting my newsletter because I was still working on a couple of design/content issues, but it didn't take

long to resolve those issues.

Which brings me to a final point: don't rush. Fix any potential problems before you start sending it to customers, you'll look like an idiot if it comes out and there are lots of problems with it. Take your time. Send a sample to a couple of trusted friends and ask for their feedback, but be prepared for potentially negative comments. But after all, you did ask.

Have fun with your marketing.

Send your marketing questions to me at [brock@bhenderson.com](mailto:brock@bhenderson.com) and I'll be happy to respond either directly or through an article in the newsletter. Looking forward to hearing from you.

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**Brock Henderson has over 25 years of marketing experience. Not only is he a frequent writer on marketing and business topics, but he also gives seminars on such topics as “Guerilla Marketing”, Selling for the Non-Salesperson”, and “5 Marketing Techniques that Work and One that Doesn't”.**

**In addition to his current role as a Marketing Consultant and writer, he has been the Director of Marketing for two large regional ISPs, taught Marketing and Business at a University, and had his own advertising agency.**

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