

Dear Friend,

September 2009



Marketing Minute

A monthly bulletin to friends & acquaintances of *SmartBiz*

Your Prospective Customers Are Busy, Too! Make Doing Business With You Easy!

By Carolyn Touhey

We've all heard the saying, "Out of sight, out of mind." Compound that with the fact that we are all on information-overload and moving at such a hectic pace, with overwhelming demands on our time and attention, that we must put ourselves in our customers' (or prospects') shoes and make it easy to do business with us. To that end, here are three very common "problems" and suggestions to remedy them.

Problem: A person you already know wants to call you to give you business, but can't easily find your business card or remember your business name to search the phone book.

Suggestion: Put your phone number and address in your signature block on all of your emails. If you did your follow-up when you met them, you sent them at least one email as follow-up to making his or her acquaintance. The person who wants to call you may remember that and look you up in the emails, but if your signature block does not have contact information, it's not so easy to reach you without sending an email and waiting for your reply. They may just stop trying.

Problem: You have an automated voice attendant greet callers, requiring that the caller put in the person's last name without an option to leave a message for the individual in the general mailbox. Looks like a lost opportunity if the caller doesn't know the person's last name or how to spell it. Even worse are the systems that won't tell you how to reach a real person, so we try to out-smart it and hit "0" only to be told that is an "invalid extension."

Suggestion: If you must use a machine or automated phone system, make sure it's user-friendly—at least one that either takes a message right away or one that provides an oral directory instead of asking people to spell a name. Another option is a live answering service--weighing the cost of the service with the opportunity cost of losing the business from callers who can't leave messages due to your system. And, if your target markets include seniors, avoid the "press this, press that" entirely.

Problem: A customer is less than happy with a purchase and inquires about making a return only to have a less-than-pleasant employee of yours tell the person, "No."

Suggestion: Be sure you have a "happy customer" policy and philosophy so all staff members know to do almost anything to please the customer. Empower your staff to be accommodating, not policy bound. What you give back in refunds will not exceed what you earn in customer loyalty and good word-of-mouth marketing.

Carolyn Touhey, MBA, is an award-winning marketing consultant who founded SmartBiz Strategy in 2007 when she moved to the Comox Valley. In addition to running her own business in the US since 1990, she was a member of the faculty at Johns Hopkins University and Loyola College in Baltimore. She can be reached at 250-335-2342 or MakeAnImpact@SmartBizStrategy.com.

About This Bulletin

With marketing being a top concern of most business owners, this bulletin is intended to give practical advice for marketing your business. I hope you find it of interest. But, if you wish to be removed from this list, please email newsletter@SmartBizStrategy.com

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News Notes

Get Out Of The Vacuum!

On Wed, September 23, Carolyn Touhey is hosting a no-obligation, information session to explain the details of **My BizBoard**, business-owner advisory groups, which she is introducing to the Valley.

While in Maryland, she participated in these learning-sharing-support groups, especially for entrepreneurs to overcome being in the "vacuum," and found them very beneficial.

These groups gave members time to work on their businesses and not just in them...and gave them easy access to varied perspectives and experiences to apply to their own issues, opportunities, and challenges. The groups will meet monthly. **RSVP by 9/21**. For interested business owners who cannot attend the 9/23 meeting, you can call Carolyn for more information.

Fall Workshops Scheduled

On **October 1st**, Carolyn is holding a workshop on Tradeshow Marketing. The session is at Crown Isle before the **HBBA** meeting; their tradeshow is on 10/17. Call Carolyn for details.

Carolyn will be the featured speaker at the **October 8th** meeting of the Comox Valley **Women's Business Network**. Her topic is **Special Events Add Sizzle To Your Marketing...& Sales To Your Bottomline**. Check out www.cvwbn.org.

North Island College has again contracted with Carolyn to conduct several marketing workshops through their continuing education department. They include:

October 6 — 10am-12 noon
10 Cardinal Sins Of Small Business Marketing

October 20 — 10am-3:30pm
Marketing Bootcamp (write your own plan)

Oct 27 & Nov 3 — 6:30-9pm (2 sessions)
Marketing Bootcamp (write your own plan)

November 17 — 10am-12 noon
Making Your Event A Smashing Success

House Concert To Benefit Local Non-Profits

Country music star, **Jamie Warren**, (www.JamieWarren.com) will be performing on Friday, October 23 and Saturday, October 24 at **Two Eagles Lodge B&B** (Union Bay)--\$25 including apps and desserts. A portion of ticket sales will benefit two local non-profits--the Comox Valley Hospice Society (www.ComoxHospice.com) and Boomer's Legacy (www.BoomersLegacy.ca). FMI or tickets: 250-335-2342.