

Better Business Focus

Essential reading for managers and entrepreneurs



Better Business Focus aims to be the essential key for business owners and managers. It achieves that aim by focusing on the way in which successful businesses in the UK and elsewhere compete and manage their organisations.

It focuses on how people are recruited, coached and developed; on how marketing and selling is undertaken in professional markets as well as in markets with intense competition; on how technology and the Internet is reshaping the face of domestic and home business; and on how people are being equipped with new skills and techniques. In short, it's a focus on a better way to do business.

June 2006

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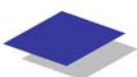
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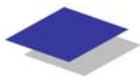
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Opportunity Pursuit – Part 1: Identifying Or Creating

By Phil Shipperlee

Finally! This is the stage where you get to start actually making sales, taking orders and earning money for your business.



Too many interactions between suppliers and buyers are based on individual transactions involving the supplier re-acting to a stated requirement. This serves neither the supplier nor the buyer as the result is invariably a price driven solution with little or no consideration for the added value that could be available or for the potential benefits of a more solid relationship designed to deliver benefits way beyond the single one-off transaction.

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Identifying or creating – is there a difference?

An emphatic yes! Most sales people are OK at identification, reacting to the prospect saying "I want a ..." or perhaps asking "Do you need a new?" This is fine and it will always be a part of the opportunity process, however, the real prizes come when you create the prospect's awareness that they have a problem and that you can solve it.

Having helped the prospect to understand that they have a problem you are in a powerful position to influence the definition of the solution. You are creating the opportunity by identifying the problem and then matching that to a solution that your company can provide. The prospect may well look for solutions from other suppliers but you will have made it harder for your competition as they are effectively responding to a requirement where you have

influenced the specification and contents.

Working with the prospect to develop an understanding of the problem and the format of the solution strengthens the bond between you and them; it makes the outcome more predictable and increases your chance of coming out as the winner.

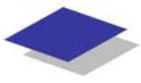
Identifying involves finding out what requirements the prospect has defined or specified, and then reacting to those requirements with a proposed solution. A common example is when companies use formal bidding processes and they issue various documents such as an Invitation to Tender (ITT), Request for Information (RFI) or Request for Proposal (RFP). The document will be accompanied by a clinical process and timetable that must be followed rigidly if you want your bid to be considered. The problem with this is that you have no scope to "sell" to the prospect and you will probably find yourself working through the procurement department who are motivated mainly by price. It is also a problem for the prospect as your desire to win the deal will drive you to quote based on price effectiveness not value.

Even if there is no formal process such as an ITT, you are at a considerable disadvantage if the prospect has already made up their mind as to what they want and how they want it, leaving you to react to that request. They have already gone through the stimulus and specify solution stages of the buying process, which leaves you only with the opportunity to react. In effect, you have no real control over the outcome and you are mainly a passenger in the procurement process.

By acting only on what the prospect has already identified and defined you are closer to an order taker than a sales person. The real issue with this is that you have very little control and it is difficult to produce meaningful forecasts of future work when the customer, and your competitors, are driving the bidding process.






Creating is an entirely different matter as it involves the supplier in working with the prospect to define the problem and specify the desired or required solution. It is often the case that a trusted supplier may be used in this "consulting" role and that the output will be an ITT, RFI or RFP which is sent to other bidders. However, if you are the trusted supplier who helped to shape the requirement and the bidding document then you are on the inside track to win the deal.

We talked previously about creating customers before pursuing opportunities. A real customer is an organisation who sees you and your company as an essential part of their business. A real customer will often contact preferred suppliers, before formal tendering starts, to alert them to an opportunity coming up. They will allow you freedom of access, which will give you the opportunity to understand their issues and problems. By applying your relevant business or technical knowledge to create a solution for them, you are helping yourself into first position in the race, and you are helping them by giving them access to your expertise during their planning stage. A sophisticated customer that I worked with for many years evolved into the habit of asking suppliers to bid for IT projects using a format along the lines of "We need a system to do this ... and we are prepared to spend up to £xxx,xxx". In effect, they were asking: "How much can you give



me for the budget that I have set aside for this project?” This is a far cry from the prospect who refuses to tell you the budget or to discuss your competition but such relationships only evolve if the supplier puts in the effort from the beginning.

TIPS:

-  Develop techniques to get to know the prospect which do not initially rely on talking about specific pieces of work.
-  Research to understand the problems the prospect might be struggling with in their marketplace; competition, legislation, etc.
-  Research to understand the specific problems of the individual prospect.
-  Use your relevant business knowledge to interpret the research to create your approach strategy. They will be more likely to see you and open up if you demonstrate that you understand their pain and that you have a solution.
-  Make it clear to the prospect that the early meetings are designed to understand how they operate. This is a great rebuttal to the “We don’t need any at the moment...” type of objection.

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About the Author:
Phil Shipperlee, CEO and Founder of Performative, the fourth successful company that he has started since 1980. Special area of knowledge covers the creation of high performance selling operations within any corporate environment. Other specialisms; solving the business issues of SMEs, M&A, and the use of off-shore delivery.

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A Vision, The Strategy and The Princess

By Hans Bool

A vision statement should communicate two things. One is open for the public, the other should only be shared within the organisation.

To start with the latter, a vision should elaborate on the uncertainty of the future. Because even though it is uncertain, you should do something with it. You might find scenarios that would sound plausible and then focus on one of them to be the statement of conviction. We all have an opinion about the future. To know it, just talk or write about it, and you will find out what you come up with. This is however not something you want to share with clients.

When you think about the role, place or position of your company in this future you have just pictured, you enter the area of the second aspect of the vision. Brainstorming about this one, would require that the first step is set; you need a vision about the (not too near) future.

A vision may change over time and needs continuous adjustments as new ideas come by or when new truths become clear. The future is made today and each day may bring a surprise, although (real) changes do not come that often.

Discussions about the role of your company in the future are the driving force for any strategy. In this strategy you will outline and communicate how you will get there. A strategy without a vision is a battle (sorry girls) without a princess Marian to fight for...

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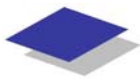
About the Author:

Hans Bools is the founder of [Astor White](#) a traditional management consulting company that offers online management advice. Astor Online solves issues in hours what normally would take days. You can apply for a [free demo account](#).

Don't worry if you don't know what Full List is, here's an explanation:

Full List - The London Stock Exchange is the UK's major stock exchange and the most international of all exchanges world-wide, providing a portfolio of markets enabling companies large and small to raise capital and have their shares traded. The main London market is called the Full List.

Source: Bizezia's Glossary of Key Financial Terms and Business Ratios.



Top Tips: Get The Most Out Of Your Day

By Clare Evans

If you're the sort of person who plans Christmas like a military operation you may already have everything well under control. If you're not so good at managing your time then here are a few tips to help you improve your planning, get organised and start getting more out of your day.

Eager to please and to be seen to be helpful, we often take on things we'd rather not do or don't really have time for. Learning to say No can be useful to stop getting overwhelmed or feeling guilty. Be clear and direct.

1. Daily Planning

Spend the first 10-15 minutes every day planning your tasks and actions for the day. What do you need to complete this week to keep you on track? When are you going to do these? Plan the time in your diary. Book out an appointment with yourself for specific projects. Break large tasks into smaller more manageable chunks.

2. One Diary

Whether it's paper-based, electronic or on your computer - keep all your personal and business appointments in one place - that way you won't forget important dates, children's activities, school events, social gatherings etc.

3. Prioritise

What must get done today? What else needs to be done? Doing the important tasks first can avoid them becoming urgent later on. Be realistic about what you can achieve each day - don't set yourself up with a massive to-do list and only do a few things. Start small and build from success. Be aware of 'time-wasters'.

4. Delegate

Do you really need to do everything? Who else could help you out? Give the job to someone else to do - cleaning, gardening, paperwork. Assign tasks to other family members or work colleagues. If you can't afford to pay someone to do the work for you, what could you do in exchange?

5. Avoid Interruptions

Sometimes we'd have so much more time if we didn't get interrupted. If you have work to do and need some undisturbed time - switch off the phone, ignore the incoming emails. If you're at work, book a meeting room and lock yourself away for a couple of hours. If you can - work from home for the day.

6. Give Yourself A Break

Make sure you plan breaks into your day - even if it's just a few minutes. You will be fresher and better able to concentrate. Get up and stretch, take a few deep breaths, get yourself a drink. Take a proper lunch break - you deserve it!

7. Learn To Say No

Eager to please and to be seen to be helpful, we often take on things we'd rather not do or don't really have time for. Learning to say No can be useful to stop getting overwhelmed or feeling guilty. Be clear and direct. Your time is yours, you are entitled to a say in how you spend it. Don't be misled by other people's expectations - whether that's family, friends or your boss.

8. Reward Yourself

Don't forget to reward yourself at the end of a busy and productive day or when you've completed a particular project. Include it in your plan - how will you treat yourself?

day routine of work? Get organised, get a new perspective. Talk to Clare Evans today.

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About the Author:

Clare works with individuals and small business owners to help them plan and organise their time *more effectively*. Learn how to prioritise, plan and delegate, organise your perfect life, organise it effectively and enjoy the process. Spend your time doing **what matters** and stop worrying about the things that **don't**.

Sign-up for her free monthly newsletter at www.clareevans.co.uk or send an email to claresnews@aweber.com and receive free tips on managing your time.

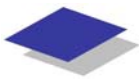
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The three great essentials to achieve anything worthwhile are, first, hard work; second, stick-to-itiveness; third, common sense.

Thomas Edison

Do you need more hours in the day? Are you stuck in the day-to-



The Importance Of CEO Leadership Development

By Ken Blanchard

Having written about, studied and practised leadership for most of my life, I know for sure that good leadership is fundamental to organisational success. I also know that the best leaders can be made, as well as born.

In effective organisations, everyone has a compelling vision and a clear sense of where the enterprise is going and this vision has to come from the top.

Sure, there are those people who have a natural talent to inspire and motivate others to achieve their goals, but many of the books I've written over the last twenty-five years and the leadership models and programmes I've developed with The Ken Blanchard Companies have been about teaching how leadership skills can be honed to perfection.

When it comes to developing leadership skills with top management, I've learnt that CEOs need to focus on two primary leadership roles to build and maintain a thriving and successful organisation.

The Roles of a Leader

Their first job is to establish Vision and Direction. Leadership is about going somewhere. In effective organisations, everyone has a compelling vision and a clear sense of where the enterprise is going and this vision has to come from the top. This kind of visionary leadership comes when top leaders are totally clear about what business they are in (their organisations' purpose); what their picture of the future is (the vision); what will guide the journey into that future (the values) and what their people should focus on (the goals).

Once these are worked out, a CEO can work on the second aspect of leadership fundamental to cultivating organisational success – Implementation.

This involves turning the traditional hierarchical pyramid on its head. Having established the vision and direction, a CEO must have the courage and humility to turn the pyramid upside down and empower people throughout their organisations, allowing them to act as if they owned the vision and direction. Meanwhile, they move to bottom of the pyramid to become head cheerleaders, supporting and encouraging everyone to live according to the vision and accomplish the goals.

It's a radical, but highly effective leadership strategy I call 'Servant Leadership.'

Too many top leaders embrace the first aspect of their leadership responsibilities quite happily, and forget the second. They think it will lead to mutiny. They conjure up images of the inmates running a prison or leaders trying to please everyone and, instead of becoming successful 'Servant Leaders' they become the opposite; they become 'self-serving leaders' who ultimately set themselves and their organisations up for failure because of their destructive influence.

You can often spot an organisation headed by a self-serving leader when you become a customer. The company you approach may have a great mission, vision and values statement, but it can't deliver the kind of great customer service that will keep it in business because leaders don't empower the people at the front line to put that great mission statement into action. The traditional pyramid is alive and well, so leaders at the top fail to set a good example and customers remain uncared for at the bottom of the heap.

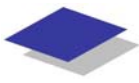
Wayne Dyer, the personal growth teacher, once said there are two kinds of people: ducks and eagles. Ducks act like victims and go: "Quack, quack, quack!" Eagles take the initiative and soar above the crowd. In the customer service arena, ducks, working under self-serving leaders say: "I can't do that. It's not company policy. I didn't make the rules. You'll have to talk to head office. Quack quack!"

Eagle behaviour, on the other hand, comes when servant leaders rule the roost and, for customers, it means a beautiful experience.

I had a great example of Eagle behaviour when I was leaving for a trip to four different US cities. At the airport, I realised I'd forgotten my driver's licence. Not having time to get it and make the flight, I had to be creative.

Only one of my books has my picture on the cover: *Everyone's a Coach*, written with Don Shula, the legendary NFL football coach. I ran into the airport bookstore and luckily, they had a copy. The first airline I was travelling with was Southwest. As I was checking my bag, I was asked for I.D. I said, "I feel badly. I don't have a driver's license or a passport. Will this do?" And I showed the guy behind the desk the cover of the book. He shouted out, "Hey! This man knows Don Shula! Put him in first class!" (No, Southwest doesn't have first class!) Everybody started to high-five me. I was escorted through security and treated like a hero. Unfortunately, things didn't go so smoothly at the other airlines, which were staffed by ducks who quacked: "You'd better talk to my supervisor."

My great experience with Southwest Airlines was a direct result of the impact of Servant Leadership. Herb Kelleher, who co-founded the airline, set the whole organisation up to empower everyone – including the frontline



baggage check people – to make decisions, use their brains and carry out the vision of high quality customer service.

This is how Servant Leaders work: inspiring and exciting people to live according to their vision and giving them the tools they need to deliver that vision.

Cheering People On

At The Ken Blanchard Companies, I call myself ‘Chief Spiritual Officer’ because this is what I do. I’m responsible for cheerleading; values; direction; vision; commitment; all the things that make up the spirit of an organisation.

I make sure I’m there for my people. Every morning, mine is one of the first voices every single employee in our organisation hears. Wherever I am in the world, I leave an inspirational message on everyone’s voicemail so they know where I am, what I’m doing and what’s on my mind. Most people in business have no idea what their CEO does! Everyone knows what business we’re in, because I tell them, every morning. Significantly, I end the message with an inspirational note geared around our four key values – ethical action, relationships, success and learning, so people are constantly reminded of where we are all going.

Any CEO could do the same; becoming a better leader by constantly reminding people where they are going and praising them when they start getting there. They could also become a better leader by reminding themselves that organisations need to make their people feel good about themselves if they are to be rewarded by loyalty, trust and – ultimately - profit. If companies treat their people well, their people treat their customers well. And if they treat their customers well, the bottom line looks good.

I know from experience that effective senior leadership can help companies take advantage of good market conditions and weather downturns. It impacts organisational performance and helps determine organisational

success. And research bears it out: The Journal of Applied Psychology reported that CEOs have tremendous impact on the functioning of their top management teams through the creation – or suppression – of an atmosphere where others are encouraged to succeed.¹

Of all the things I’ve taught over the years, the directive to ‘catch people doing things right,’ is the most important. Too many leaders behave like seagulls. They tell people what they ought to do, then disappear and don’t return until somebody makes a mistake, whereupon they fly in, make a lot of noise, dump on everybody and fly out again. That’s no way to lead. Great leaders are always accenting the positive. If people make a mistake, rather than slamming them, they redirect them back to where they need to be, because the chances are, it was they who didn’t express the vision and the values correctly in the first place.

If you want to be a great leader and develop your leadership skills, work on becoming a Servant Leader. Get up 45 minutes earlier. Take time to get in touch with who you are and what kind of person you want to be, because then, you’ll have a better chance of living it that day. Have the courage to let your people bring their brains to work and give them the power to deliver your vision and your values. Catch them doing things right and praise them. And remember that profit is the applause *you* get for taking care of your people, taking care of your customers and doing a great job.

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About the Author:

Dr Ken Blanchard is the Chief Spiritual Officer of The Ken Blanchard Companies, a best-selling business author and a sought-after motivational speaker.

Famous for his commitment to making workplaces ‘great for the human spirit,’ his performance consulting and training organisation focuses on Leadership, Team Building, Organisational Change and Customer Service. Best known for Situational Leadership® II, the world’s most widely used leadership development process, The Ken Blanchard Companies believes strongly that training people to be the best they can be is the single most effective way to ensure success. The company has global headquarters in San Diego and offices across the United States, wholly owned subsidiaries in London and Toronto and an international sales network in more than 35 countries throughout Europe, the Pacific Rim, and Latin America. It delivers people development solutions in around 20 languages.

As an author, Ken is perhaps best known as the co-writer of *The One Minute Manager®*, although he has written over thirty business and management books including *Leadership and The One Minute Manager®*, *The On Time On Target Manager*; *Gung Ho!*, *Raving Fans*, *Big Bucks!*, *Whale Done!*, *High Five!* and *Managing By Values*.

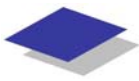
He is available for hire as a speaker.

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¹ Peterson, Martorana, Smith and Owens. “The Impact of CEO Personality on Top Management Team Dynamics: One mechanism by which leadership affects organisational performance.” *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Volume 88, No 5, 795-808

Great leaders are always accenting the positive. If people make a mistake, rather than slamming them, they redirect them back to where they need to be, because the chances are, it was they who didn't express the vision and the values correctly in the first place.



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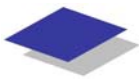
Gadgets in Microsoft Windows Vista

Although the next version of MS Windows will not now emerge until January 2007, there are some tools you can access now. For example, Vista will make use of a new technology called "Gadgets". These are mini applications that appear translucently on your computer screen simply by pressing a button.



You don't have to wait for Vista to start using Gadgets now. Yahoo! Widgets (available at <http://widgets.yahoo.com>) has a free download but it is a heavyweight at 11mb. After you have downloaded the Widget Engine, you are able to download hundreds of free applications.

The great thing about Widgets is that they use live data from the Internet.



Recruiting For Retention

By Simon Hughes

According to a report issued by the Recruitment and Employment Confederation (UK) sales staff has an annual turnover of 30%. An American study in October 2005 revealed that 48% of sales staff fails within 18 months of appointment. Why is this so? Why is our retention of key personnel so low? Are salespeople selected on an incorrect premise?

An individual with all the skills and knowledge but who prefers independence will not thrive in a situation where micro-management exists.

To succeed, Salespeople need selling skills, market and product knowledge and critically, specific personal characteristics and attributes that match the employer's protocol and procedures. This is where employers need to make sure that their square hole is fitted with a square peg.

So how does one interview and select the stars that will not just hit their targets but stick around for long enough to make the investment in their employment worthwhile?

Typical interview process fixates on ensuring that new hires are technically competent and have an understanding of the marketplace. However, an ability to react to feedback; personal motivation and temperament are much more predictive of a new hires' success or failure. Do technical skills really matter if the employee isn't open to improving, alienates their colleagues, lacks drive and has the wrong personality for the job? It is

essential therefore to determine how the applicant's internal motivators fit with the employer unique attributes. Interestingly, the USA survey referred to above also showed that only 12% of those failing in a new job do so due to lack of technical ability.

Before looking at the "how to match personality" to company ethos, let's look at the more technical side of interviewing.

Skills need to be evaluated beyond the reading of a CV. Questioning of past achievements is a good place to start; "tell me about your very last sale" and "what was the very best sale that you have made" or "how would you prepare to meet an important prospect for the first time", "how do you follow up quotations" are all questions that can help you form an opinion on the candidates skills level: there are many more. Why not during an interview hand the applicant a pen and say – "sell me this". It may seem somewhat twee or old fashioned but if one candidate starts by asking what you want of a pen you know that they have a rudimentary understanding of sales. If they start by describing features they are off target. You will certainly see how they respond to pressure. Ask the candidate to prepare a 15 minute presentation on any subject they like, say a hobby or vocation or product with the objective of getting you to gain commitment to buy, join etc. Remember, you are trying to assess if the applicant can *sell*. That someone has a career in sales does not mean that they can sell. Continually raise the bar, test the selling skills: Do they sell, can they sell, will they sell?

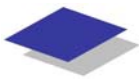
Knowledge is also important. Salespeople should know how many accounts are on their patch, their top 10 customers and prospects, how many lapsed accounts they have had in the last year, how many new accounts they have opened, the average

value of their accounts, who the main competitors are, what their strengths and weaknesses are, product features & benefits and so on. Now not all companies have the wherewithal to provide all of this information and some companies choose not to divulge it so do not be surprised if applicants say "we do not get that information". However, you will soon see how interested they are in their career if they instinctively answer the bulk of these questions. *Are they interested* in their job or do they just want to be employed in any job?

The most difficult aspect to assess is of course their **Attitude** and ability to fit into your company. Unique employer attributes are "the way we do things here", this includes reporting relationships, structures and formats; management information dissemination, control procedures, marketing, sales and admin support, career progression planning etc. An individual with all the skills and knowledge but who prefers independence will not thrive in a situation where micro-management exists.

Likewise, a company that need its sales staff to develop and nurture long term relationships with its customers had better beware the employee who is assertive and driven by results whilst preferring to work at pace; they will probably get bored with servicing existing accounts. Psychometric testing can and does help in determining characteristics but intelligent and focused interviewing will be sufficient to uncover an obvious miss-match.

For example: If your organisation is cautious and conservative in its decision making then you do not need someone who moves at 100 mph and is highly entrepreneurial in spirit. They will likely become frustrated and probably leave (or worse, stay and continually rock



the boat). Interview questions such as “is your current employer quick in its take up and implementation of change” followed with “does this frustrate/please you” and “why” should expose any concerns.

Maybe your salesperson is home based and at the other end of the country from the office. Usually a high degree of independence is preferred, if so you could ask questions such as “Tell me what level of personal input you receive from your current boss” And then “how does this compare with the input received from the best boss that you have worked for” and “Did this meet all of your needs”. The answers to these questions will give you terrific insight into the individual’s preferences without you making comment on how you manage. It is absolutely critical that you understand “how we do things here” and then find out if the applicant’s temperament suits this methodology. It’s called putting a square peg in a square hole.

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About the Author:
Simon Hughes FISMM, is MD of local search & select company, Highveld Select and is the Chairman of the Recruitment & Employment Confederation (North East). He has 20 years industrial business management experience prior to his moving into recruitment.

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Top Three Requirements For A Financially Successful Business



By Terry Vermeylen

Passion

Entrepreneurship is about being truly and fully passionate about a product or service. It doesn't matter what your passion is, whether it's chocolate, IT, cleaning houses, dust balls, cats, video, matchmaking or information. If you have a genuine and heart felt passion that is half the battle in starting and seeing through a business. Go for it! Start now!

Perseverance

Without perseverance an entrepreneur will undoubtedly fail. I believe perseverance is the single most important trait an entrepreneur can possess. And if he/she lacks perseverance then they need someone to inspire / support them. Perseverance includes believing in yourself and rising above the financial challenges, competition, time constraints and dozens of other challenges. Without the support of my wife (who is a successful entrepreneur with two businesses) I would have possibly folded up my business. Since I am now seeing results, that would have been a colossal mistake.

Always Understand The Competition

Bill Gates has stated that the most important contribution to his success is understanding the competition. If you don't understand the competitions focus and strategy, you'll soon find yourself bleeding customers to them. Always, always, keep on top of what your competitors are doing. Never underestimate them.

- 1 Passion
- 2 Perseverance
- 3 Always Understand The Competition

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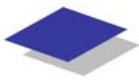
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Terry Vermeylen is one of those rare people that is passionately driven to help others unlock their own barriers toward fulfilment, meaning and purpose. He is the founder of <http://www.mylifechanges.com/>, an Internet value identification and goal setting enterprise.

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How To Profit From Fear And Greed

By Vincent Czaplyski

Greed and fear may be just a couple of the more unsightly blemishes on the underbelly of the human psyche. But they're also two of the greatest all time motivators ever invented. If you want your copy to sell, you need to understand how to put these powerful emotions to work for you in your written copy.

There are many kinds of fear - fear of financial loss, fear of lost health, fear of humiliation, fear of pain, fear of losing out on a once-in-a-lifetime golden opportunity. The list could go on and on. It's the job of the copywriter to identify which will resonate the strongest with the target prospects.

Greed and fear (and a whole bunch of their emotional first cousins) reside inside of everyone. They well to the surface at different times and for different reasons in each of us. When they do, it's as if they grabbed us by our lapels and shook us to get our attention.

And getting your prospects' full attention is a must if you want them to reach for their wallets.

Here's an example of how this works.

Imagine you're walking all alone through a graveyard at night. The full moon disappears behind a cloud as a distant clock tower ominously strikes midnight. Suddenly you hear what sounds like a large stone slab scraping against stone. Your eyes must be playing tricks on you in the gloom, because just ahead, the door to that crypt seems to be opening all by itself...

I'm pretty sure this situation would have your complete attention. In fact, I bet you would be highly receptive to taking action (a headlong race to the front gate?)

depending on what was offered up next. All because of a little fear.

And so it is with a well written sales letter or other persuasive piece of copy. Before any selling takes place, you first have to get the attention of your prospect. You do this by connecting with your prospect on some emotional level. This sets the stage for the selling message, and ultimately the call for action.

While the copywriter has many arrows to draw from in the emotional quiver, greed and fear are two of the most powerful.

There are many kinds of fear - fear of financial loss, fear of lost health, fear of humiliation, fear of pain, fear of losing out on a once-in-a-lifetime golden opportunity. The list could go on and on. It's the job of the copywriter to identify which will resonate the strongest with the target prospects.

Greed too comes in many flavours. While the word itself seems to suggest base human instincts, greed has its positive attributes. Is it greedy to want a better standard of living for your family? Is it greedy to want to advance to the top of your profession, or to be a more talented pianist? A better lover?

If you stop and think about it, fear and greed cover a lot of emotional territory. Again, it's the job of you the copywriter to determine which particular flavour will most likely evoke the desired response in the prospect's heart.

But that's just part of the equation. You also need to paint that fear or greed in ways that are believable to your prospects. And you need to offer a real solution to the emotional needs triggered by your copy. That's what prompts your prospects to buy.

For example, let's say "fear of never finding a soul mate" is the emotional trigger you want to exploit in marketing an online dating service for hopeless romantics.

You might begin such a sales letter like this.

"Dear Friend,

"Last year I received a letter that broke my heart. It was from a woman named Kathy who had completely given up on ever finding true love.

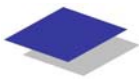
"Life held no special joys for Kathy. Her words on that single hand written page painted a grim portrait of an empty, lonely life..."

If someone reading your letter fears never finding true love themselves, this opening will probably evoke an immediate emotional response. They can identify with Kathy. You have identified with Kathy, now what do you do?

You need to offer a solution, perhaps to Kathy's immediate problem, but certainly to your prospect's problem. (They're really one and the same, aren't they?) And you need to offer lots of specifics to help make it believable. Maybe continuing the letter with something like this:

"But there's a happy ending to this story. Only four months afterwards I received a second, much longer letter from Kathy. She told me about just returning from an incredible honeymoon in Paris, and all about her wonderful new husband Brian.

"She shared their plans for an exciting, bright future together in a picturesque New England town. She told me about some of the little things in life that suddenly held special meaning, like picking apples together and long walks on the beach. About what it meant to



have finally found her true soul mate after so many years.

"I was ecstatic for Kathy of course. But hardly surprised. In fact I could tell you about 5,735 other success stories just like Kathy's. That's how many couples have gotten married after first connecting through Soul Mates Forever.

"And you could be the next success story."

Deciding which emotional trigger to emphasise in your copy can be challenging. You need to carefully study the nature of both the product and the prospects to choose the right one. When in doubt, look to those old standbys fear and greed and you won't be far off the mark.

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www.Article99.com

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Willpower is the key to success.
Successful people strive no matter what they feel by applying their will to overcome apathy, doubt or fear.

Dan Millman

What Do You Really Sell?

By Grant Leboff

All of us in business understand what we do and what we can deliver for the client.

The accountant knows he can ensure his customers are as tax efficient as possible as well as complying with all the current legislation. Meanwhile the I.T maintenance provider understands they are there to prevent any computer problems and help their customer's business run more smoothly.

Many people in commerce are familiar with the idea of a "USP" or "Unique Selling Point" a phrase coined by copywriter Rosser Reeves in 1961. The idea is that you have a benefit which is unique to your product or service that will attract new customers. It is true that being different from the competition will certainly help you stand out. If you look hard enough there is always something special you can offer based on your unique experience, your geography, your background or team, that others won't easily be able to copy and will benefit a client.

Of course coming up with a "USP" in today's market place is not easy. Most of us work in sectors where the competition is fierce. There are more companies offering an increasing amount of similar products and services than ever before. This is due to it being ever easier to start a company. These days all it takes is a laptop and a mobile and you are in business. Moreover, with the advances in technology and globalisation we are not only competing with other local businesses but often with companies all over the world.

While having a "USP" is important I would suggest that today there is something equally

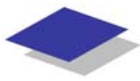
vital that is rarely considered especially by small businesses. I would, in the 21st century, like to coin a new phrase; the "ESP" or "Emotional Selling Point".

Buying is less of an intellectual exercise and more of an emotional one. The reason why some people truly get addicted to shopping is it affects one's emotions as does alcohol, caffeine and chocolate. Scientifically, it is well known that the brain's limbic system which governs feelings is much more powerful than the neocortex which controls intellect.

So how does this affect what you sell and how it is communicated? For every product or service there is an emotional element to the sale. I would argue in many ways it is the emotional essence which is really being sold. Understanding what that is for your customers will bring a new sense of identity. It will give a true sense of purpose to what you do and will give any presentations or marketing literature a clarity that will mean you will stand out from the crowd.

Unfortunately, for most companies their marketing material and message is anything but powerful. This is because people do not understand what they really sell. They are selling the real "emotional" problem that they solve for their clients. It is actually this which is their very essence. Charles Revlon understood the concept fully when he said, "In the factories we make perfume but in the stores we sell hope". Revlon understood he wasn't selling bottles of perfume but something much more powerful. Similarly, why is it that a branded T-Shirt with the Harley Davidson logo or trainers with the Nike tick, will sell for so much more than the equivalent unbranded product?

Harley Davidson understand they don't sell motorbikes but Freedom and Rebelliousness. People will pay more for something with their



logo on because it fulfils an emotional need. The Nike tick stands for Winning. It is about being the best. When someone buys a pair of trainers with the Nike logo they are buying more than a pair of trainers. They are identifying themselves as successful and fulfilling the need to be seen that way.

Although these are consumer examples the same is true in a business to business environment. We are all in sales and marketing. You can be the best at what you do but without marketing no one knows you exist and without sales you have no customers. However, unless you understand exactly what business you are in, you will never get your sales message exactly right and therefore will never be as successful as you could be. This is because you are trying to market yourself without the most powerful tool you have which is your “ESP” or “Emotional Selling Point.”

Think about it. What is the emotional side of your business? What feelings do you want your customers to experience? Do you sell candles or romance, accountancy or reassurance, training or empowerment?

Once you understand the business you are really in, and the emotional problems you solve, you can put a package together that really works. You will be clear about what you stand for and so others will understand that too.

You can ensure your message is consistent. Does your “USP” go together with the emotional promise you have? Do your logo, literature and message work together? Do the problems and benefits you talk about make sense in light of what you really do?

By understanding what you really sell you can transform your proposition into a much more powerful message. This in turn will help all your marketing and give a consistency to how you run the business. It will also help you identify who your target customers really should be and the best way to reach them.

In short it will help you to increase your sales and grow your business. So forget about the product or service that you provide and ask yourself, “What is my “ESP”, What do I really Sell?”

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Grant Leboff is Managing Director of Phone Intelligence Ltd – a company specialising in telesales and telemarketing and The Intelligent Sales Company helping businesses increase sales.

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Bestsellers

1 Freakonomics: A Rogue Economist Explores the Hidden Side of Everything

by Steven D. Levitt, Stephen J. Dubner, Penguin Books Limited
Price: £4.49

2 The Undercover Economist

by Tim Harford, Little, Brown
Price: £11.87

3 Getting Things Done: The Art of Stress-free Productivity

by David Allen, Piatkus Books
Price: £7.25

4 The Money Diet: The Ultimate Guide to Shedding Pounds Off Your Bills and Saving Money on Everything!

by Martin Lewis, Vermilion
Price: £3.99

5 Screw It, Let's Do It: Lessons in Life (Quick Reads S.)

by Richard Branson, Virgin Books
Price: £1.99

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Business Insight... All Good Ideas Should Be Tested To Destruction

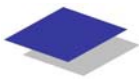
Soon after joining Haymarket Publishing as launch editor of Accountancy Age in 1969, I came up with the best idea ever for a new magazine.

At the time I was a narrow-boat fan and saw inland waterways as a fast-growing leisure industry. So one evening I wandered round to our very youthful business development manager to reveal my brilliant concept.

He was disarmingly brusque: Why would anyone want to read such a magazine? Who would advertise in it? How would it make money?

He was right of course. I learned that every business idea should first be tested to destruction – especially my own. And who imparted this invaluable lesson to me? Someone called Maurice Saatchi. Thank you, Maurice.

Bob Willott became a director of Haymarket Publishing, then technical director at The Institute of Chartered Accountants, then a partner in what is now Deloitte, and then founded Willott Kingston Smith. Now he edits Marketing Services Financial Intelligence.



Customers For Life

By John Boe

The most successful companies place great value on developing lifetime relationships with their customers. In today's competitive marketplace, they're aware that their customers are aggressively prospected and their loyalty cannot be taken for granted. Customer focused companies recognise that relationship building and follow on service are critical components for promoting both customer retention and revenue growth.

Recognise the importance of nonverbal communication and learn to "listen with your eyes." It might surprise you to know that research indicates over 70 percent of our communication is perceived nonverbally. In fact, studies show that body language has a much greater impact and reliability than the spoken word.

First Build a Relationship

Today we have access to innovative tools such as the Internet, cell phones, faxes and voice mail all designed to enhance our ability to communicate. Nevertheless, even with all of these technological tools at our disposal, the alarming number of dissatisfied customers, lost sales and failed relationships all reflect the fact that none of us are effective at communicating as we would like to believe.

Temperament understanding helps to foster effective communication. Research in the field of human psychology indicates people are born into one of four primary behavioural styles; aggressive, expressive, passive or analytical. Each of these four temperament styles requires a unique approach and communication strategy. For example, if you are working with

the impatient, aggressive style, they want a quick fix and a bottom line solution. Under pressure they can be ill-tempered and quick to anger. Give them options so you don't threaten their need for control. Don't waste their time with chitchat, stick to business. While at the other extreme, the stress-prone analytical style requires more information and is interested in every detail. Their cautious and analytical nature makes them susceptible to buyer's remorse. Be sensitive to their need for reassurance and guarantees. Once you learn how to identify each of the four primary behavioural styles you will be able to work more effectively with all of your customers.

Communicate Effectively

Recognise the importance of nonverbal communication and learn to "listen with your eyes." It might surprise you to know that research indicates over 70 percent of our communication is perceived nonverbally. In fact, studies show that body language has a much greater impact and reliability than the spoken word.

Create a favourable first impression and build rapport quickly by using open body language. In addition to smiling and making good eye contact, you should show the palms of your hands, keep your arms unfolded and your legs uncrossed. You can develop harmony by "matching and mirroring" your customer's body language gestures. Matching and mirroring is unconscious mimicry. It's a way of subconsciously telling another that you like them and agree with them.

Improve your active listening skills. To develop and encourage conversation, use open-ended questions to probe the meaning behind your prospect's statements. Occasionally repeat your prospect's words verbatim. By restating his or her key words or phrases you not only clarify

communication, but also build rapport. Keep your attention focused on what your customer is saying and avoid the temptation to interrupt, argue or dominate the conversation.

Little Things Make a Big Difference

Rendering quality customer service is both a responsibility and an opportunity. Often salespeople view customer service as an administrative burden that takes them away from making a sale. The truth is that customer service provides opportunities for cross-selling, up selling and generating quality referrals.

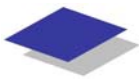
Customers describe quality customer service in terms of attention to detail and responsiveness. Customer satisfaction surveys consistently point to the fact that the little things make a big difference. Not surprisingly, the top two customer complaints with regards to customer service are unreturned phone calls and a failure to keep promises and commitments. Make an effort to see yourself through your customers' eyes. True customer service is meeting and surpassing your customers' expectations.

Successful salespeople "go the extra mile" when providing service and turn the customers they serve into advocates to help them promote their business. Your referrals and follow on business are in direct proportion to the quality and quantity of service you render on a daily basis. Want more referrals? Improve your service!

Here are five powerful customer service tips.

1. Under-promise and over-deliver. Develop a reputation for reliability; never make a promise that you can't keep. Your word is your bond.

2. Pay attention to the small things. Get in the habit of returning phone calls, e-mails and other correspondence



quickly. Follow up, follow up, follow up.

3. Stay in contact and keep good records. Take the time to jot down notes from meetings and phone calls making certain to record all relevant information. Maintain a written record of service. This is especially helpful when clients are reassigned to a new sales rep. Setup a suspense system to track important contact dates such as client review calls and birthdays. Consider sending a personal note or an article of interest every six months.

4. Give your customers a promotional gift. Consider sending them a letter opener, coffee mug or a calendar with your picture and contact information.

5. Establish a feedback system to monitor how your customers perceive the quality and quantity of the service you provide. Service is not defined by what you think it is, but rather how your customers perceive its value. When it comes to customer service, perception is reality.

Progressive companies emphasise commitment to customer service from the top down by establishing training standards and continuously monitoring customer satisfaction. Companies that fail to implement an effective customer service program actually do a disservice to their customers and unknowingly, leave the backdoor open to their competitors. If you do it right, sales and service blend seamlessly and you will exceed your customers' expectations!

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About the Author:

John Boe presents a variety of sales training and motivational programs for meetings and conventions. John brings over twenty years of experience as an award-winning sales trainer to the platform. To have John speak at your next event, visit www.johnboe.com or call (001) 877 725-3750. There is a free Newsletter available on the website.

Why Weird Words Make Great Brand Names

By Phillip Davis

When creating a truly great company name, the number one consideration should be the level of "engagement".

"Engagement?" you ask incredulously.

Yes... engagement.

While there are all sorts of naming strategies... metaphors, acronyms, coined/ invented, key attributes, positive connotations, etc., the one common denominator that separates the mediocre from the memorable, is the degree to which the name engages the mind of the consumer. Most new business owners opt for company names that inform and describe, leaving nothing to the imagination. They often fail to realise that the context surrounding the name (the ad, the store sign, the proposal, the brochure copy, etc.) will define what they do, so the name can be free to describe how they do it. In other words, no customer will hear or see the name in a mental vacuum. Yet this is the way we often judge names when "brainstorming". And it's why focus groups are such notoriously bad judges of good names. It's not the people that are flawed, it's the process itself. Most of the feedback takes the form of free associations, all in an effort to determine if a name is "good" or "bad." It goes something like this...

Interviewer: "What do you think of the name Monster?"

Respondent: "Ew! They're scary and dangerous!"

Interviewer: "What about Amazon?"

Respondent: "Jungle... drowning... snakes... piranhas..."

Interviewer: "Apple?"

Respondent: "A bad apple spoils the whole bunch."

Interviewer: "Caterpillar?"

Respondent: "Squishy, soft, and squirmy."

Interviewer to new business owner: "I think we can safely assume these would be bad brand names..."

So if it's not a matter of free associations, then what determines a good name? Again, it's that all important element known as "engagement." Engagement is what causes you to lean forward, ask twice, invite more information and pursue the conversation. A good name should invite a discussion, start a conversation and "engage" the other person's interest and attention. That's why Amazon, even though it says nothing about what it does, works better than Books-A-Million. Amazon is open and inviting and Books-A-Million is literal and descriptive. Amazon speaks to the process... flowing, easy, abundant. Books-A-Million speaks to the products... books. And while Amazon leaves room for the company to grow in any number of directions, Books-A-Million leaves the company in a bind. I once heard an ad for a company called Just Brakes. Since they had outgrown this narrow niche, they adopted a new tag line... "We're more than just brakes."

Let's take another example. Linens & Things is needlessly redundant since most people, after seeing a newspaper ad, or walking by the store window, will know the company sells linens and things. It would be better to use the name to capture some key strategic position or advantage, or to evoke a feeling or emotion. Is Linen & Things the best, the fastest, the biggest, the most

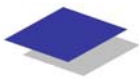
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service oriented, the trendiest? We simply don't know. They have described but they haven't evoked. They've explained but they haven't engaged.

The objection I routinely hear is "But with names like these, no one will know what I do!" And that's when I explain that trust is needed... trust in the power of context to fill in the blanks. That way the name is freed to paint a picture, engage the senses and position the brand to reflect not what you do, but how you do it.

So will any weird word work?

No.

Weird for weird sake will just leave the customer scratching his or her head in bewilderment of moving on in indifference. Bold, engaging names will create the desire to know more, and that's where you need to be ready to tell the story. The name then becomes a segue to a larger story. It starts with the name and tagline and then continues to the :15 second elevator speech and beyond.

One of our clients we named was TKO Surgical. When asked if that's a boxing reference, our client gives an emphatic "yes," explaining that they have a mission to both defend and fight for their clients' needs. They'll

champion their cause and remain in their corner until the last bell sounds. Their tag line? "Technically Superior."

So whether a name is based on a metaphor, a key attribute, an acronym, or a positive connotation, the overarching goal is to create a name that engages. Perhaps that's why Albert Einstein asserted that "Imagination is more important than knowledge." If given the choice of engaging vs. informing, opt for a name that begs for more. It may seem weird, but the results can be wonderful.

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http://EzineArticles.com/?expert=Phillip_Davis

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Phillip Davis is a nationally recognised naming and branding expert with over twenty years experience in naming regional, national and multi-national companies. His branding work includes PODS, TeamLogicIT and CogHead.com, among many others. Phil has written extensively on naming and branding, being featured in numerous national business publications. His company naming work can be seen at <http://www.PureTungsten.com>

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Tax Dodge Of The Week:
What To Do With Your Child Trust Fund Voucher

Source: Money Week

Open a child trust fund – or the Government will do it for you. HM Revenue & Customs has issued more than two million vouchers worth at least £250 each to families with children born on or after 1 September 2002. If you don't use the vouchers within a year of issue, the Government will invest the money on the child's behalf.

The first batch of vouchers was sent out in January 2005, so time is running out. But the latest figures show that only 1.1 million vouchers have been used to open accounts. The money in a child trust fund (CTF) grows tax-free until the child is 18. Parents and other relatives and friends can add top-ups of up to £1,200 a year.

The longer you delay, the more you miss out on tax-free growth. If you had invested your £250 voucher in Invesco Perpetual's UK Smaller Companies fund when CTFs went live in April, you would now have £296 – an increase of 18%.

Had you picked the F&C Emerging Markets investment trust, your money would have soared 51% to £377, says Faith Archer in The Daily Telegraph Money. So go on, what are you waiting for?

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