

February 2020



# Under *the* Sun

N E W S L E T T E R



## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- PAGE 2**  
Personal Side of  
Business
- PAGE 3**  
Credibility Through  
Print
- PAGE 4**  
6 Tips to Keep Kids  
Practicing
- PAGE 5**  
Catalog Considerations
- PAGE 6**  
Ideas for Starting to  
Exercise
- PAGE 7**  
Becoming a Change  
Agent at Work
- PAGE 8**  
Setting Work  
Expectations



# PERSONAL SIDE OF BUSINESS

The business world can feel impersonal at times, but when you come down to it, it's living, breathing people at the other end of every decision, transaction, phone call, email, and interaction we make. Coworkers become family, vendors become friends, and customers grow into confidants whose lives intersect with our own in unexpected ways.

Personal connections like these often separate successful companies from their peers. When two companies provide similar products or services at similar prices, which one to choose can sometimes come down to intangibles like trust or a sense that one company cares more than the other.

So how can you go about building and encouraging this kind of connectedness at your company? Here are four quick thoughts to keep in mind:

## **Be yourself.**

Authenticity is a characteristic people look for in the companies and individuals they do business with. If you're open and honest, people notice and will trust you when you tell them about your products, services, and company values.

## **Hire service-minded people.**

This should be true of everyone, even those who don't have direct contact with your customers.

## **Go off script.**

Encourage your salespeople and customer-service team to ditch canned presentations and responses. Instead, have them engage with customers one-on-one more conversationally. Provide strong training and have team members practice with each other in various scenarios to help them feel more comfortable and empowered with real live customers.

## **Give it time.**

Connectedness and trust develop organically over time. The longer a customer does business with you, the more they'll get to know you and the people at your company. 



### **More Fun Ways to Connect**

- » Write staff bios for your "About" page, complete with fun photos and interesting facts about each team member.
- » Post photos from team activities and company happenings on your social-media feeds.
- » Share stories about staff accomplishments and recognitions through a newsletter or in social media.

# CREDIBILITY THROUGH PRINT

Credibility is essential to a company's success. Without it, customers look elsewhere, and employees leave for opportunities they feel better match their values. Communicating trustworthiness often starts with print.



## With Employees

Employee newsletters, handbooks, guidelines, HR documents, and company announcements help to keep employees informed. Knowing how much an employer values its mission, its guiding principles, and you—and having all of that in writing with real-world examples of those values in action—helps reassure and strengthen trust among your team members.

## With Stakeholders

Building and maintaining healthy, trusting relationships with partners and vendors is the glue that holds it all together. Well-written communication is key for setting expectations, maintaining focus, and ensuring that everybody stays on the same page.

## With Customers

Your customers need to know you'll be there after the sale whenever issues arise. They also need to know you value them and the trust they've placed in you. Service contracts, warranties, and regular, ongoing promotions provide tangible proof that you take the relationship seriously.

## With Prospects

In some ways, prospects are the toughest audience you face when building trust. A prospect doesn't know you. They've never dealt with you before. Printed testimonials, guarantees, case studies, and product specs offer a peek behind the curtain and a sense of authority and authenticity needed to make the sale. 



"All adventures, especially into new territory, are scary."  
— Sally Ride

"What do you need to start a business? Three simple things: know your product better than anyone, know your customer, and have a burning desire to succeed."  
— Dave Thomas

"Always look for the fool in the deal. If you don't find one, it's you."  
— Mark Cuban

"Leadership comes in small acts as well as bold strokes."  
— Carly Fiorina

"There are no secrets to success. It is the result of preparation, hard work, and learning from failure."  
— Colin Powell

"The competitor to be feared is one who never bothers about you at all, but goes on making his own business better all the time."  
— Henry Ford

"All you have in business is your reputation, so it's very important that you keep your word."  
— Richard Branson

"Only those who have patience to do simple things perfectly ever acquire the skill to do difficult things easily."  
— James J. Corbett

"Problems are not stop signs, they are guidelines."  
— Robert H. Schuller



## Did You Know?

- » Oscar the Grouch was orange in the first season of *Sesame Street*. He became green at the start of the second season, the apparent result of a visit to "Swamp Mucky Muddy."
- » The wave-shaped blob of toothpaste seen on many packages and in advertisements is known as a "nurdle."
- » The two Ms in M&Ms stand for Mars and Murrie, the duo who created the popular confection.
- » According to the FAA, there are approximately 5,000 aircraft in the sky over the U.S. during peak operational times.
- » West Quoddy Head in Maine is the easternmost point in the contiguous U.S. and is also the closest point to Africa.
- » The Kansas Barbed Wire Museum in La Crosse, Kansas boasts displays of more than 2,000 varieties of barbed wire.
- » German chocolate cake was named for its inventor, American baker Samuel German.
- » To check the freshness of a raw egg, place it in a bowl of water. If it floats, throw it out.
- » The human body has more bones at birth than during adulthood.

## The Art of **Family**

# 6 TIPS TO KEEP KIDS PRACTICING

As parents, we want to instill good habits in our children. Practice is one of them. Whether playing the piano, studying lines for a play, working on the fundamentals of a favorite sport, or taking part in whatever activities spark their interests, teaching our children the value of practice will help to prepare them for mastering new skills in their adult lives, too.



Here are a few things to keep in mind as you work at encouraging healthy practice habits in your kids:

1. *Encourage their interests.* As kids grow, their interests often evolve. Encourage your kids in their passions and help them explore new opportunities to grow.
2. *Give them a sense of control.* Let your children take ownership of their practice routine in an age-appropriate way. For younger children, you'll need to provide more guidance and structure, but as your children grow, let them have more of a say in scheduling practice times and sticking to their routine.
3. *Avoid making it a chore.* Getting a child to practice can sometimes be a struggle, even for activities they enjoy. Do your best to encourage

your kids in positive ways, so they don't start seeing this as just one more chore they have to endure.

4. *Reward progress.* One way to keep practice from becoming a chore is to set up rewards your child can earn by practicing hard.
5. *Set milestones.* An upcoming concert, recital, performance, or tryout will keep your child motivated to keep going. If the activity doesn't have these kinds of built-in motivators, come up with some of your own.
6. *Stay involved.* Your interest level can have a significant impact. Sit and listen to your child practice their music, read lines with them if they're practicing a play, cheer them on from the sidelines. Motivate them by being engaged in their pursuits. 🎯

## Featured Product

# CATALOG CONSIDERATIONS

Careful planning can make all the difference between a successful product catalog and a marketing flop.

Today's consumers value convenience and choice. While some prefer online shopping, others prefer paging through a catalog to get a better sense of the products and services available to buy. Smart companies provide both. When designing a printed catalog or booklet, here are some considerations to keep in mind:

### The Cover

While the adage is true that you can't judge a book by its cover, most people do. This is especially true when it comes to catalogs and promotional booklets. A bright, clean, well-designed cover will make a great impression.

### The Inside Pages

Choose a glossy, heavier weight for the pages of your catalog. Papers that are too lightweight and thin tear easier and make a catalog feel cheap. Glossy, heavier-weight papers provide a higher-quality, professional feel.

### The Binding

The binding method you choose will depend in part on the size and length of your catalog. For more extensive catalogs, consider a glue-edge binding. For smaller catalogs, saddle-stitching (folded and stapled in the middle) is a great way to go. 🕒



Business  
Funnies®



## Customer Care

### Onboarding Tips

- » *Look at your top customers.* How are they using your product or service? What are they doing that makes their implementation so successful?
- » *Define a path.* Map out the typical steps it takes to get from initial sale to power user, and plan an approach that touches on each of those milestones.
- » *Set expectations.* Clarity is essential in any customer-service situation. Make sure customers and team members know their roles and what is expected of them throughout the onboarding process.
- » *Take the lead.* Be proactive in your onboarding. Initiate contact and check in frequently. Provide walk-throughs. Answer questions. Make the process as easy and self-evident as possible.
- » *Follow through.* Even after a customer has gone through the process, keep in touch with them regularly to make sure they're still satisfied and haven't run into any unexpected snags. 🕒



Whether you're trying to get more active after a long hiatus or you're returning to exercise after an injury, here are some tips to help make things go more smoothly:

## Ideas for Starting to Exercise

» *Talk to your doctor.* If you're coming back from an injury, make sure your doctor gives you the OK before resuming a workout routine. If you've been sedentary for a while, ask your doctor's advice on how to get started.

» *Strengthen your core.* A strong core will help you with posture, proper breathing, and better overall strength and health. It will also reduce the likelihood of exercise-related injury.

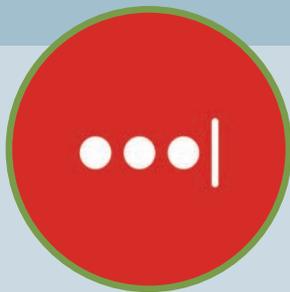
» *Seek balance.* Try not to focus too much on a single activity. Instead, look for a routine that will work for different muscle groups on alternating days, so you don't overwork some muscles while underworking others.

» *Start small.* Start with something simple like walking, even if it's just to the end of the block and back. Once you're used to that, go a little farther or try doing it a little faster. Make gradual changes, adding just a small amount to your intensity or duration each time until you know you're ready for more.

» *Trust your body.* Muscle soreness is normal after exercising for the first time in a while. Prolonged soreness—or soreness outside of muscle pain—is not. If aches persist, slow down. Going too hard too soon increases the risk of injury or injury recurrence.

» *Warmup, cool down, and stretch.* No matter how in shape you are, stretching is essential to injury reduction. Tight muscles are more prone to injury. A proper warmup and cool-down will keep muscles loose and limber, while also promoting quicker recovery. 🕒

## Apps Scene



**LastPass**  
Android, iOS & Web

Trying to remember passwords for every app and service you use every day is seemingly impossible. Fortunately, LastPass makes it easy. The service stores and retains all of your log-in credentials, keeping them securely hidden behind the lock and key of a single username and password. Mobile apps and desktop browser plug-ins make storage and retrieval a breeze. Family and business plans allow sharing of passwords across multiple users.



**Box**  
Android, iOS & Desktop (Mac/PC)

Box is a secure, cloud-based file-management system for teams using multiple platforms and devices. Data synchronizes automatically across all your devices, and integrations with popular business apps and software provide even greater versatility. A free basic individual account offers 10GB of secure online storage.



**TripLog**  
Android, iOS & Web

If you need to keep track of business mileage for work or for tax purposes, TripLog might be your answer. The app tracks mileage, gas, and fuel expenses so you know exactly how you're using your vehicle for work. The system is fully IRS-compliant for added peace of mind. Professional and enterprise users can sync data across multiple devices, plan routes, set up auto-tracking, and even integrate with services such as QuickBooks, Xero, and Concur.



# BECOMING A CHANGE AGENT AT WORK

A wise man once said, "Change is hard. Staying the same is harder." If you're looking to transform your office and the people around you, here are five tips to help:

» *Start with trust.* People are willing to make big changes, but only if they trust the ones leading the cause. Honor your commitments, keep your word, and do everything you can to earn and maintain the trust of those around you.

» *Make a plan.* What changes are you looking to make and why? How do you plan to go about implementing them? Think about how the changes will affect the people around you in the short term and the long term. What do you see as the best-case outcome? The worst-case? What do you plan to do to minimize the risk?

» *Communicate clearly.* Once you have your plan in place, present it to your team. Share the passion and vision that led you to your decisions. Walk them through the steps you'll take in implementing things. Leave time for answering questions and concerns, and encourage people

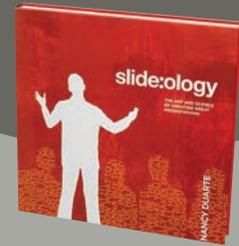
to come to you later if they have anything else to say.

» *Act consistently.* On the surface, this might seem counterintuitive to change, but it's not. People are likely to have concerns about how your changes will affect company culture and the overall value system they've come to expect. Do your best to keep both of those intact. Implement your changes in a way that's consistent with your values, and make a conscious effort to keep everyone informed and in the loop as you go.

» *Stay visible and accountable throughout.* Keep the lines of communication open and as transparent as possible while you work through your transition. Share victories with your team, as well as setbacks that might occur along the way. Check in often to gauge ongoing buy-in and to address concerns head-on as they happen. 📍



## Books in Review



### *Slide:ology: The Art and Science of Creating Great Presentations*

by Nancy Duarte

We live in a world where information is consumed as much visually as it is by the written word. Effective business presentations require visual force and clarity, skills that were not always taught in business school.

*Slide:ology* by Nancy Duarte, president and CEO of Duarte Design, guides the art of visual storytelling for those who have a story to tell and need some help bringing it to life.

The book "is NOT a PowerPoint manual," Duarte writes. Instead, it focuses on the "why" of visual presentation design. A mixture of advice and case studies from her years in the field, *Slide:ology* covers strategies to use for both internal and external presentations.

Duarte offers advice on connecting with an audience, turning ideas into graphics that make it easier to process the information presented, creating compelling presentations, and using technology to your benefit. The result is better engagement, clearer communication, and a more satisfying outcome. 📍



# SETTING WORK EXPECTATIONS

Whether starting a new project or developing a team, here are some tips to help you set realistic expectations and keep everyone working together toward a common end:

» *Communicate your goals.* Lay down some basic guidelines from the beginning. Make it clear to yourself and your team exactly what you're trying to achieve and the steps it will take to get you there.

» *Plan it out together.* Sit down with your team and get their input on their own goals and aspirations. Give each team member a say in the items that will require their particular expertise. Create a plan that's complete, realistic, and workable for everyone.

» *Map out roles and assignments.* Make sure everyone knows the part they're expected to play. Set group expectations as well as those specific to each team member's job. While you're at it, find out what others expect from you as their team leader.

» *Include milestones.* Break goals up into small, measurable, actionable items with agreed-upon milestones to provide a sense of accomplishment. This allows you to gauge progress, so you can fine-tune plans before they get too far derailed.

» *Discuss accountability.* Decide up front how team members will hold each other and themselves accountable. Encourage buy-in and ownership from everyone in seeing to it that deadlines are met, adjustments are made, and goals are achieved.

» *Meet regularly.* Check in with one another daily to see how things are going. Offer advice when team members are struggling, and discuss any roadblocks people encounter along the way. 🕒

## February Birthdays

John Moroz	02/06	Bobby Wilkerson	02/21
Barbara Landers	02/07	Sherry Senn	02/26
Tina McFalls	02/17	Lonnie Dawson	02/27
Gavin Davis	02/17	Darrell Eskew	02/28
Robert Koon	02/19		

## February Anniversaries

Tommy Braswell	3 years	Tina McFalls	5 years
Cat Woodyard	3 years	Bill Worman	10 years

\*Please note that anniversaries are recognized beginning at 3 years, followed by 5 years and then onward in increments of 5.

**SUN SOLUTIONS IS PROUD TO BE A**



## Under The Sun Newsletter

Sun Solutions  
345 Dreher Road  
West Columbia, SC 29169

Phone  
803.791.1786 Local  
800.523.7058 Toll Free

E-mail  
Letters to the Editor  
Jacob.Cook@SunSolutionsUSA.com  
Customer Service  
info@SunSolutionsUSA.com

Fax  
803.794.9487

Web  
www.SunSolutionsUSA.com