

"Your passion is waiting for your courage to catch up."

» **Isabelle LaFleche**



A Different Kind of Spring Break

I walked out to my garage last week and found that the garage door had become inoperable.

The large spring that is necessary for a door to function properly had broken.

Suffice it to say that garage doors with broken springs are difficult to use at best and pretty darn dangerous at worst.

I was pleasantly surprised to learn that garage door companies are included on the essential business list that are allowed to operate during a quarantine. Hey, who knew?

As I reached for my phone to Google "garage door repair", I remembered that the repairman who fixed the sensors on our door a bit over a year ago had affixed a business card to the wall near the wall push button.

I couldn't remember the name of the company, but I knew there was a card there.

As I dialed the number, I reflected on how many times I've preached to bankers about the power of business cards.

Everyone has the contact information to every service provider in the world in the



You Earn Future Business Today

A friend of mine forwarded a link to a story this week about the folding of a company he and I have discussed for a few years.

This particular failure was not the result of recent economic events.

He sent me the story because I had been open about my disagreement with some of the statements leadership of this company have made about competitors in their industry.

They consistently intimated that they were more knowledgeable than the legacy companies in their trade.

They were new. They were cutting edge. They were visionary.

Now, they're gone.

Reading the story, I was a bit irked by comments suggesting their strategies were fine. Management claimed they were just "too early".

I'm annoyed when I hear those types of excuses. They're self-aggrandizing.

It basically puts the blame on customers for not choosing them.

palms of their hands.

It's likely that they only have a relatively small number of business cards.

I also remind folks that, of course, it's not an either/or proposition. Business cards are not a substitute for an online presence.

They can, however, help move you to the top of the consideration list.

As I called and navigated the short phone menu, I thought back to how I had found this company in the first place.

As best I can remember, I had texted a friend of ours who I knew had a garage door repaired.

I remember him responding, "I think I have their card out in my garage."

He texted it to me and said, "They're reasonable and do good work."

After lining up a repair for later that morning, I reflected on the fact that it was a word-of-mouth referral and a business card that generated this project for that company.

Out of curiosity, I did a few Google searches using common terms, and they didn't turn up on any of the lists.

For all intents and purposes, that company would have been invisible to me online. Instead, they were the first call I made.

In a world of limitless online banking options, how many folks in your markets have your business card?

How many customers have you checked in with this month?

Increase those numbers, and you'll open a few more doors for yourself.

I've suggested to bankers for a couple of decades now that I doubt anyone can tell you exactly what customers will want from us in 10 years.

We suspect we know, but no one knows for sure.

It's a little easier to know what they'll want in 10 months. It's clearer still to anticipate what they'll want in 10 weeks.

And, oh, there are people in our lobbies, in our drive-ups, on our phones, and on our apps that want things in the next 10 seconds.

You earn the right to have a future business to run by how you serve customers today.

And sure, we want to educate and motivate our customers to use improved tools and methods to conduct their banking. Helping people save time, effort, and money will always be a winning strategy.

That said, I've long suggested to bankers that if a significant part of your pitch to prospective customers is highlighting what's wrong with your competitors, you might want to question your own value proposition.

You can bet that customers assuredly will.

When asked by industry observers about the organizations I predict will be the leaders in the next phase of banking (however you define it), I suggest that the list will look very similar to what we see today.

Companies focused on serving customers where and how they prefer today are going to be the ones customers stay with as their preferences evolve – and their banks evolve with them.

How will you maintain preferred status today?

"When you expect a painless life, you will be in pain."

» Dennis Prager

Dave Martin, author of The In-Store Advantage, has become one of the most prolific writers in the banking industry. His keynote presentations, seminars, and podcasts have an authenticity and humor that brings teams of all sizes and seniority levels together.

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