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"The secret to happiness is freedom and the secret to freedom is courage."

» **Thucydides**



Channel Changing

I've had chats with dozens of bankers over the past few weeks about the ways they are dealing with new working arrangements.

One friend trying to adapt and noting that I've been a "remote worker" for twenty years asked my advice on staying sane.

First, I thanked him for calling me sane. I'm not sure he is an expert on the matter, but I'll take what I can get these days.

I asked about the things he is struggling with. He said that while he's communicating with his teams, he worries they are losing cohesiveness.

He shared, "I just find it hard to gauge how folks are feeling. Video conferencing is okay, but I don't feel like we're connecting like before."

I'm not sure I initially made him feel better when I said, "Well, you're not." When he said, "Well, thanks for the pep talk," I assured him I wasn't taking shots.

He and most leaders I know are communicating as much and as best as they can.



Help Others, Help Yourself

A radio commercial came on a week or so ago that just struck the wrong note with me.

I won't share the company's name, but the ad basically promoted weight loss as a key to Covid-19 survival.

And, of course, their weight loss product was the key to protecting yourself. While some of the "facts" cited may have been true, I had so many problems with the heavy-handed sales approach used that I began talking back to the radio.

Thankfully, with Bluetooth phone systems in our cars today you can do that and not look totally unhinged. (Well, not totally.)

Truth be told, I am conflicted by some of the seemingly opportunistic sales pitches I see popping up more and more.

Part of my brain instantly resents the appearance that a person or company would be capitalizing on an anxious populace.

I also realize it may be a bit hypocritical of me to think that.

After all, one of my most used mantras has always been "Sales is oxygen." Why would I

Yet, while some argue that we are every bit as able to connect with our teams during this period, I would suggest that effective communication requires more than information transfer.

The same statements in print, on audio, on video, or spoken in person can be received differently.

As important, our ability to accurately gauge if and how messages are received differ greatly depending on the channel, as well.

I'm a believer in utilizing all channels of communication at our disposal. I enjoy writing columns, recording audio podcasts, producing short videos, and addressing live groups.

Each has its advantages and disadvantages and different people prefer different channels for various reasons.

That said, I am optimistic that this disruption is helping us recognize the things that live meetings deliver that other channels cannot, while also showing us where other channels are advantageous.

I believe that as we return to a more "normal" normal, we will have renewed appreciation for the team building elements of face-to-face meetings.

We'll also better appreciate the tremendous efficiency and flexibility provided by technologies that have been around for a while, yet were never really leveraged by many of us before now.

Whatever channels available, dedicated leaders stay committed to keeping their lines of communication open.

Strive to be one of those leaders.

fault anyone for (legally) trying to grow their business during a distressed time?

I've had several bankers share concerns with me recently about the fact that their production numbers for everything but PPP loans were going to flatline.

Many are struggling with even talking to their teams about anything to do with sales production during this time. That's completely understandable.

Yet, in this time of nearly unprecedented upheaval, business is getting done and more will be coming online soon.

Small businesses and regular folks will be reassessing many aspects of their lives, including (especially?) their financial situations.

There will absolutely be no shortage of people who are confused and needing help.

Some will be your existing customers, many will not.

I've been suggesting to friends that the best marketing/sales approach now is a concerted effort to help people, while continually encouraging folks to ask for any further assistance they may need.

Marketing messages reminding people that they can rely on you to be there for them when they need it most are always appropriate.

In uncertain times, people are more attuned than ever to who "the good guys" are and who aren't.

Simply striving to help the people you interact with in as many ways as possible is always a solid growth strategy.

It is even more so right now.

"Just assume you're wrong, and your goal is to be less wrong."

» **Elon Musk**

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.

For more info about having Dave or an FSI Consultant speak to your group, email Tina Coleman, tcoleman@SupermarketBank.com or call 800-992-4978.

Financial Supermarkets, Inc. • fsi@supermarketbank.com

383 Clarkesville Street • PO Box 1450 • Cornelia, GA 30531

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