

"Either move or be moved."

»Ezra Pound

But Enough About Me...



I sat in on a solid coaching session with a regional manager and two area managers while traveling last week.

Okay, to be honest, I sat near the session and not "in it".

The hotel I was staying in was under construction and the temporary dining area was not very large.

I was given the one open table near three guys having dinner and talking shop.

Not having earplugs or a television close enough to focus on, their conversation became the soundtrack of my meal. Thankfully, the most senior guy in the group doled out some pretty good advice.

Beyond the nuts and bolts of their particular business (some type of manufacturing), there was a more general piece of advice he gave that had me

What Chapter Are You On?



Over the years, one of the frequently used terms that has troubled me is "mature branch."

I don't believe "mature" is necessarily a negative distinction. Mature things are established, solid, dependable, etc. That is all good.

The problem I have run in to is that some bankers seem to use the word "mature" as an alternative expression for "It is what it is."

In other words this branch, in this market, at this age, is what it is going to be. Granted, that is not necessarily a negative thing.

Many folks will tell you that the mature branches pay for everything else. I totally get that.

My concern is that we too often take for granted that markets – whether that

smiling and trying to see the reactions from his mid-30-years old dinner mates.

He told them, “Don’t take this the wrong way, but I heard way too many complaints about First World problems in front of your teams today.”

As his dinner mates smiled sheepishly, he continued, “You guys are doing well. I know you work hard and believe me, I’m proud of our results. But your teams don’t need to hear about how much your kids’ private schools cost or how frustrated you are with the guys putting in your new pool.”

I will give him credit.

He made that point in a clear, yet non-scolding way.

As they joked around a bit about not wanting to sound like “that guy”, the senior manager put a nice ribbon on the subject.

He told them, “Look, sometimes the difference between the boss that you are inspired by and one that you resent is what he or she talks about most. If you are always talking about yourself, they see you as a ‘me first’ person.”

He continued, “If you are asking questions about their jobs, their families, their goals... they’ll walk through a wall for you because they know you are interested in their success...not just yours.”

I fought off the urge to lean over and high-five that senior manager.

Well, mostly because that would have been really weird.

market is within the four walls of a grocery store or several area codes wide – are principally static.

We somehow feel that after a certain period, we are established and a fixed part of our market’s consciousness. We’ve talked to most everyone who shops our stores.

We’ve attended Chamber of Commerce meetings. We know the businesses in our areas and who runs them.

We seemingly recognize 99% of the faces we interact with each week.

I frequently suggest to bankers that while the faces they may see on a weekly basis look the same, the people behind those faces are different.

And no, I’m not suggesting a body-snatchers script.

Each person you see today has had new chapters written into their personal stories since you’ve seen them last. Maybe that recent chapter has been a few days in the making, or a week, or a month or more.

Maybe the chapter written was rather mundane and not especially noteworthy.

Maybe it was eventful, or exciting, or challenging or uplifting.

I like to ask folks if they have changed their opinion about anything in the past week, or month, or year.

Has their work-related or personal financial needs been altered at all in the past year? It’s possible they haven’t. It’s

Whether it is the employees working for you, the peers working with you or the customers you work for, how much of your conversations are centered on them?

Folks who focus their attention on others tend to attract more goodwill and success towards themselves.

Strive to be that person.

just as likely they have.

Like those around us, we have written new chapters to our own personal stories.

We are all just a little different from what we were before.

Faces and places that are familiar to us still provide a wealth of new things to learn and opportunities to uncover.

There are usually great “new markets” to discover right where we are today.

"Things do not happen. Things are made to happen."

»John F. Kennedy

*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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