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## "Complaining begets more complaints. Anger begets more anger. And optimism begets more optimism."

» Simon Sinek



### Don't Phone in Your Year

A national radio station ran a funny "bumper" this week that initially made me smile.

After a moment, however, it had me reflecting on an issue I may be a bit stuck on.

In the bumper, the announcer stated, "You know, if 2020 weren't a leap year we'd be one day closer to being done with it."

Now, I'll admit that's a good quip. Kudos to the person who wrote it.

Believe me, I am a tremendous believer in the power of humor to help people through difficult times.

Having a solid sense of humor is like having a good set of shock absorbers on a car. You aren't jolted and bothered by every little bump in the road.

That said, it reminded me of the fact that far too many of us may be programming ourselves to believe that nothing good is going to come of this year.

We become so consumed by the disorder and chaos we've seen during the first half of this year that we have trouble seeing anything else.

In past times, you had to wait for a newspaper or maybe a radio broadcast. Maybe you waited until the evening TV news to hear what happened that day.

Regardless, it was usually a relatively short amount of time taking in "the news."

No matter how depressing that news might be, folks digested it and got back to their lives rather quickly. They dealt with the things before them that they could affect.



### Extend Your Reach

A senior manager recently expressed his concern that it has been hard for his teams to conduct their outreach efforts to customers.

His folks are telling him they are having an especially hard time reaching people.

Some small businesses remain closed. He's told that others are operating with reduced capacity and are too busy to talk.

They're also telling him that even the businesses and individual customers who have not been greatly disrupted are apprehensive right now.

I told him that those things are believable, and then asked if he ever had trouble motivating his teams to keep up their outreach efforts before the current crisis.

He realized my point and laughed.

We may be using a new excuse for a longstanding issue.

I wasn't discounting the current reasons that his team has been giving him.

Customers have a tendency to hunker down during uncertain times.

It is possible that his folks may be having a harder time than ever communicating with these customers.

And those they do reach are often more disposed than usual to say, "No thanks, I'm good." to suggestions and even genuine offers of assistance.

Yet, I suggested to him that there has seldom been a better time to step up outreach efforts.

That's not how we operate today.

Many walk around with phones in their hands providing them with a constant rage drip.

And if you really want to delve into the pits of despair, scroll through the comments sections of social media sites. If you're not careful, you'll soon be convinced there is no good news in the world.

But if you simply look up, you'll almost always find some.

And with just a modicum of effort, you'll usually find more than you'd expect.

Beyond that, the surest way to see good news and positive things around you is to create them.

Find someone who is struggling and give them assistance.

Don't just offer. Do it. Insist on it.

Make every customer you interact with feel like they are the highlight of your day.

Be the kind of supervisor, peer, and employee that others are happy to be around.

Smile more. And, yes, laugh more.

Remember that you are more likely to act your way into feeling than feel your way into acting.

Create the good news you're looking for these days.

Even customers who are not of the mindset to discuss their banking needs are very cognizant of who reaches out and is there for them in uncertain times.

Beyond that, I suggested to my friend that his challenges were not unique. His competitors are facing the same environments and dealing with the same hesitations that he and his teams are.

Realizing that others face similar challenges does not necessarily make yours easier.

It does, however, remove the idea that we are playing on an unlevel field.

We aren't.

But, some of us keep playing while others sideline themselves.

The comment I believe resonated the most with my friend was when I reminded him that customers may not have time to listen to you.

They almost always, however, have time to be heard. Ask them how they are doing and if there is anyway you can help them.

No, you may not uncover business possibilities immediately, but you're reminding them that they matter to you.

In a chaotic world, you're listening to them.

When the time is right, most will return the gesture. You'll have earned it.

**"The best performers set goals that are not about the outcome but about the process of reaching the outcome."**

» **Geoff Colvin**

*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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