

"However beautiful the strategy, you should occasionally look at the results." »Sir Winston Churchill

On Tour



My wife and I have begun the “good-grief-we’re-old” process of visiting college campuses with our older son.

I have unsuccessfully been attempting to limit my comments about what things were like at college “back in my day”.

After visiting some of these schools, I more understand why young people have taken longer to get out of college than in yesteryear.

Who would want to leave these places? I have vacationed in places with less frills and entertainment options.

I walked away from one school’s “student athletic complex” thinking I would have practically lived in there. It was amazing.

Of course, when I later saw the self-serve ice cream bar in the café, I realized that’s likely where I’d have spent more time.

We have thus far visited some small, private (i.e. insanely expensive) schools

Don't Sign Out Early



I have noted some of the predictable responses I get to certain comments during seminars through the years.

One particular comment about courting prospective customers regularly evokes laughs and head nods.

When talking about the importance of consistent marketing, I suggest that it would be awesome if people would be kind enough to wear signs for us.

It would just be so wonderful if the person in front of you had a sign that read, “I’m a 4-“Good Morning!”, 3-“How ya’ doing?”, 2-handshakes, and 1-hand-me-a-business card customer.

The next person may be a 3-flier, 7-smile-at-me, 2-ask-me-about-my-business customer.

When groups chuckle about the silliness of that prospect, I suggest to them that those signs actually exist.

and a huge state (i.e. uh...still expensive) school.

The grounds, facilities, and marketing pieces of each have been impressive in their own rights.

And yet, the thing we seem to remember most when discussing various visits has been what the college students who have led our tours have been like.

Simply, on the tours in which we have been more engaged talking to the guides, we've come away just "feeling better" about that school.

While several have been really nice and helpful, one guide has stood out thus far. Her name is Rachel, and she followed up with a handwritten note to our son.

It was obvious she had listened to comments he made, as well as looked up relevant information from his initial survey. It impressed us.

In a growing sea of choices, Rachel's follow-up has helped make that school "the leader in the clubhouse" at this point.

That fact had me reflecting on certain conversations I have had with bankers over the years about customer relationships.

People do not form relationships with buildings, ATM's or mobile apps. Yes, those things are important.

However, thousands of other businesses can provide nearly identical options.

Okay... they don't... you know... ACTUALLY exist, but the right mix of gestures, interactions, and questions does exist to help a person get to the point of seriously considering becoming your customer.

We too often mistakenly think that a certain amount of interaction with a customer has established ourselves in their consciousness.

We've had conversations, we've given them a business card, we've been friendly to them... all that stuff.

So now, we have done all we can do and just have to hope they eventually choose us.

It is too bad the customer isn't wearing that helpful sign.

You might be only two smiles, a handshake, and one "Just checking in with you" away from that person beginning to do business with you.

I also provide a little newsflash to groups by telling them that a person may have to "seriously consider" becoming a customer more than once before they actually make that move.

Sometimes it is something that we do that gets them reconsidering.

Sometimes it is something that happens away from our control that gets them evaluating (or reevaluating) us.

The world is not static, and neither are our prospects.

What no other organization has are the people working within your organization.

In a competitive and homogenized industry, the organizations with the best teams of good people focused on personally connecting with and helping customers are those that come out on top.

Are you personally recruiting anyone today?

The very same people and businesses you have interacted with over the past weeks, months, and years are a little different from the last time you asked them (in word or gesture) to consider you and your services.

There are almost always new opportunities in familiar places if we look for the signs.

"If you are any good at all, you know you can be better."

»Lindsey Buckingham

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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