

Saturday, August 15, 2020

Volume 26 #606

"I think being nice is more important than being clever."

» Ricky Gervais



Nice Work If You Can Get It

I've had great opportunities over a couple of decades to work with talented folks on building and supporting team morale.

I've used some version of, "It's as much an art as a science," more times than I can remember when interacting with highly process-focused leaders.

One particularly intense manager wanted to draw up a very detailed list of the tasks involved in creating the type of culture he sought.

He believed that if he simply gave folks specific tasks to perform and monitored the execution, he could build a friendlier and more productive work environment.

I told him I liked much of his theory. I then joked, "But it will work better if you hire and retain nice people and allow them to be themselves."

That nice people theory was running through my head recently while visiting a megastore in south Louisiana.

I needed to pick up various household items, was exhausted, and not in the best of moods.



It's Okay to Phone It In

I've kidded with many bankers that, in the past, folks seemed to be looking for Nostradamus.

Most of the conversations we engaged in involved talking about what the future would hold.

We've had hundreds of "future bank" conversations.

What will branches look like? What will banker roles look like?

Will branches and branch bankers still be around? (Spoiler alert: Yes, and yes.)

And then, 2020 got all 2020 on us.

Many banker friends seem to be less interested in talking about the future, and more about what they've been dealing with in the recent past.

I've joked with some that it seems "futurists" are out, and therapists are in.

Now, it's not that bankers are not concerned about the long-term future. Of course, they are.

They are just more acutely focused on keeping their teams engaged, their customers supported, and their businesses

There were two cashiers in adjacent lanes without customers in front of them. I told them that I must have stumbled upon the VIP section.

They smiled, and as I prepared to lift a heavy item, one stepped over and asked her coworker for her scanning gun.

She then began scanning the larger items at the bottom of my basket.

With a Cajun drawl, Mary said, "Linda has bad knees. I'll save her the steps."

That struck me.

This person was enjoying a rare moment of not having a customer standing in front of her, and instead of looking at her phone or staring into space, she walked over to help her coworker with a task.

As she did, both commented that they liked the items in my basket. It actually made me feel better.

I had trouble picking them out, and it was nice to hear that I may not have made the wrong choices.

As Linda finished the scanning, she said, "I love when I get to work with her. It's so much nicer when you work with nice people. You know?"

I smiled, "I sure do."

And after interacting with them, I walked out feeling nicer myself.

It's a fair bet that no one ever gave Mary instructions to help her co-worker in that specific way. But it's the kind of thing that nice people do.

They find ways to improve other people's days.

And when they do, they improve their own days, as well.

Whose day will you improve today?

running during the most challenging period of their careers.

Another rather interesting thing has been the increase in actual phone calls I've been on with banker friends and customers.

It hit me when an old friend I'd only exchanged email and texts with for years called me out of the blue.

He laughed, "My thumbs would go numb trying to text all the things I want to rant about."

I was reminded again of the importance of actual human connections.

Folks holed up in "home offices" and communicating with their teams primarily through email can feel cut off.

It's akin to how the wearing of masks limits the important facial visual cues we rely on when communicating with others.

I've been reminded of the improved quality of conversations we tend to have verbally as opposed to email or text chains.

Hearing verbal intonations, inflections, and laughter is far more enjoyable and enlightening than smiley face emojis.

Just saying. 😊

I believe the same is true for your customers. Even in markets that are "open for business," things usually aren't entirely back to normal.

Some folks are busier than ever. Some are struggling to keep things afloat while dealing with protocol restrictions and weakened demand.

Some are still entirely shut down. Whatever their situation, most are dealing with higher levels of uncertainty.

Let them hear a friendly voice, and speak to a receptive ear this week.

Everyone will benefit.

"It's hard to beat your competition when you're copying them."

» **Neil Patel**

CLICK HERE TO REGISTER TODAY!

FIESTA FSI

VIRTUAL RETAIL BANKING CONFERENCE

SEPTEMBER 16 - 17, 2020

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

[Click Here to Unsubscribe](#)