

"You can't go back and change the beginning, but you can start where you are and change the ending."

»C.S. Lewis

Making It Look Easy



There are few places I am less interested in being on "Black Friday" than a big-box store.

I tend to pass on the "wrestling for flat screens" events.

As fate would have it, I had an emergency on Black Friday that forced me into one.

Okay, my emergency was that I needed particular barbecue supplies. In Texas, yes, that is an actual emergency.

My wife was tickled that the Grinch of Black Friday was heading to a store on that day, and she decided to come along.

I am pretty sure it was just to laugh at me, but I'm glad she was entertained.

One of the neatest merchandizing displays I witnessed were giant 75" flatscreen TV's replaced on heavy-duty

Scrubbing Up



I happened upon a column this week that struck a nerve with me. It shared that Walmart is in initial test stages of a self-driving floor-scrubber.

It made me smile because running a floor scrubber was one of my least favorite duties in my first real job.

That is saying a lot, as my first job was "butcher shop assistant" at a small grocery store.

Cleaning a butcher shop's floor and industrial meat-saws each day is not for the squeamish. Days that they cut liver were especially motivating to work hard and be promoted out of there.

You would think that the times I was assigned jobs that didn't involve scraping meat would be the highlights of my week. Yet, that was not the case when they had me run floor-scrubbers and buffers.

hand trucks, along with the suggested soundbar accessories.

I joked, "They've done the hard part...it would be a shame to pass this deal up."

That retailer obviously has observed how many people look at these large TV's, like the price, show interest in them, visualize where they would put them in their homes, and then talk themselves out of it because they don't want to find an employee for help or can't imagine hauling one to their cars.

Reducing the perceived hassles (some real, some imagined) of making purchases, conducting business, changing service providers, etc. is more critical today than ever.

In an uber-competitive business world, people are more likely than ever to walk (or click) away as soon as the excitement or interest of a proposition is surpassed by the anticipation of being hassled.

Moreover, that bar gets lower each year.

I reflected on when I managed my first in-store branch over twenty years ago.

One of the more effective signs I ever placed near our branch had a simple picture of a clock and the words "It will only take 15 minutes to improve the way you bank."

Sure, these days, internal auditors might parachute in and take flamethrowers to my "homespun" signs. The rules have changed a bit.

For those who have never run them, these machines were designed to destroy the displays the stock boys and vendors had spent hours building.

The buffers do this while forcing you to strain your back and arms fighting them, as well as your voice as you scream, "Look out!", and "Sorry!", and "My bad!" over loud, whirring noises and crashing sounds.

If Marty McFly had landed his DeLorean in the parking lot of Frank's IGA in 1981 to tell me floor-scrubbers would run themselves in 2017, I would've high-fived the red-vested time traveler.

Yet, today, the most common coverage of this type of news is foreboding.

Talk of the jobs that may be lost to this type of ever-improving technology compels some to argue that it is a negative thing.

Don't get me wrong. Technology's upheaval of the workforce is not a 100% happy story.

There will be disruption and displacement along the way.

Always has been, always will be.

However, it is hard to argue that technologies that do things more efficiently, reliably, and safely are bad things.

I go back to my mantra, "Evolution does not mean elimination, but failing to evolve guarantees elimination."

However, clearly and continuously communicating to customers that you are committed to making banking with you not just a smart decision, but an easy one, resonates more than ever.

It's a complicated-enough world out there.

People want to do business with people who clearly make dealing with them simple, fast, and friendly.

What are you doing this week to make doing business with you all of those things for customers?

That sentiment is as true for folks like computer programmers, medical professionals, and bankers as it is for factory workers.

For two decades and counting, I have preached that being in "sales" (i.e. getting other humans to do business with you) is not a negative aspect of our jobs.

It will be our most vital role, and the thing that most protects us from obsolescence.

Technology will not smile, pay compliments, or make new contacts and friends today.

Will you?

"I decided to fly through the air and live in the sunlight and enjoy life as much as I could." »Evel Knievel



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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