

Profit Builder

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Special points of interest:

Here are just some of the business issues we can help you with:

- How strong is your industry and your industry position?
- Which of your product lines are profitable and which ones are costing you money?
- Are some of your customers actually costing you money to service?
- Achieving business independence - building a business that works without you!

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The Value of Discovering Customers' Key Frustrations

Some refer to this as the "granddaddy" of all great marketing ideas and it certainly is one that, when you understand it and implement what it means, will reap you significant rewards.

So, let's take a look at it. To help you understand and work with the idea, consider dealing with a contractor. Well no, don't consider dealing with a contractor, consider dealing with contractors in general.

Think about it and then ask yourself, "What is one of the most frustrating things about dealing with them?"

There are usually two answers that come out in rapid succession. First, THEY'RE UNRELIABLE. And second, THEY DON'T CLEAN UP AFTER THEMSELVES.

With each business development initiative you implement be sure to always measure and compare results. Always test one idea against another.

It is amazing how few companies do. Few test any aspect of their marketing and then compare it to something else. They bet their destiny on arbitrary, subjective decisions and conjecture.

One way of saying it is like this:

Now imagine that you are a contractor. Imagine you knew about those key frustrations and that you wanted to build the most extraordinary contractors' business in the world.

Wouldn't you now make sure that when customers dealt with you, they would NEVER experience those key frustrations.

Follow the logic. People get upset dealing with contractors because they are unreliable. Therefore, if someone is out there who makes it his business to be reliable, even to guarantee it, then that contractor is going to get a lot more business.

Not only that, that contractor is going to get work at a higher rate than his competitors. All of this simply because that contractor

has locked onto a key frustration and made sure that his customers don't experience it when they deal with him.

So as you can see, exploring key frustrations creates a wonderful opportunity for your business. The question is, how do you find out what they are?

Surprise, surprise — you ask your customers!

You can do that in what we call a Client (or Customer) Advisory Board.

Seeking key frustrations is a major key to developing a great business.

We can help you discover (and address) your customer's key frustrations.

What You Can Measure You Can Manage

"We do not have the right or the power to predetermine what the marketplace wants — to do so is arrogant in the extreme."

Interesting thought, isn't it? None of us want to be considered arrogant. And the way to avoid it is by measuring the results of different approaches. But it's not just measuring — it's measuring everything!

Here's a simple example: ever

wondered why McDonalds stores are red and yellow? — It's not by accident), they tested different approaches (colors in this case) and found red and yellow produced better results for them.

Measurement has a purpose. It's to demand maximum performance from each process in your business. We can help you identify which processes you could and should be measuring in your business.

Are You Keeping It Simple or Slow?



Use this list to consider areas of your business that could be simplified to better serve your customers and employees:

On average what is the turn-around time for resolving a complaint or concern at your business?

Are your customer complaint procedures clearly defined, incorporated in employee training and easy to use? Ask your employees. Reassure them

that this isn't an exercise in humiliation but an attempt to improve things.

Are job descriptions, duties and responsibilities clearly defined? Or is there a lot of everyone doing whatever whenever because it needs to get done? This is not always a bad thing, but there has to be clarification for who is responsible for what. This prevents disappointment, confusion and resentment and

fosters retention.

When focusing on customer loyalty, be sure to ask the people on the frontlines how they would improve things? The people who deal most directly with customers are likely to have specific insights about the policies and procedures and have probably given a lot of thought about how their jobs could be easier if it was easier to please the customer.

“The successful man is the one who finds out what is the matter with his business before his competitors do.”

—Roy L. Smith

Collecting the Money You're Owed

The collections process can be an overwhelming and unwanted aspect of business. But it doesn't have to be.

Consider these questions:

Which accounts do you want to pursue collecting personally?

Are there accounts that would be best collected by a collection agency?

Which accounts should your attorney pursue?

Do you have so many accounts that it would be worthwhile to hire a full-time collections specialist?

Do you know enough about the laws to avoid violating the laws that protect consumers?

How will you communicate with

your clients who owe money and how often?

How will you keep track of these communications?

When do you decide a debt is un-collectable?

This is just the beginning of collecting your accounts. We can help you determine the best approach.



Give People a Clear and Detailed Action Plan

Many business people simply make it difficult for people to buy things because they don't give them a specific action plan.

Consider for example, a potential customer of a business is reading a letter about a new product or service. The potential customer is excited. But the she puts the letter down

promising to “get back to it” but never actually does. Sound familiar?

People need to be told explicitly how to act in order to obtain a business product or service. Sure, it seems obvious. But it's amazing how many times the obvious gets overlooked.

The fact is, potential customers

(strange as it might seem) really do appreciate being led. Let's get even stronger. If you don't get PRO-active in asking for the order, you are denying yourself maybe two-thirds of your potential business.

The opportunities to get proactive and lead your customers to buy from you are far-reaching and plentiful. Grasp them!

Beginning a Successful Planning Session

Outline your hopes for the process and the overall structure of your session in your opening comments.

Iterate the commitment to creative thinking and review the session's procedures.

You may want to include a report on the economic environment or the status of your current market.

This may seem like common sense, but hold your meeting in a comfortable place free of interruptions and distractions. Consider going to a hotel or

conference center.

The process can take a couple of days and you may want to go to a resort.

Be sure to have a structure to the meeting otherwise you will be wasting time and money:

Appoint someone external to the business to facilitate. It should be someone well respected and impartial. (We can take on that role for you).

Commit to creative thinking so no idea is immediately rejected as impractical or undesirable.

(Sometimes impractical or impossible suggestions can spark other extremely positive ideas).

Find someone to write down the essence of what the group discusses and decides.

Make sure you have a flip chart, markers, and masking tape or thumb tacks.

Follow an agenda and stay focused.



Some Tips for Helping Your Team Accept Change

Allow people to express their fears and concerns. Conduct a meeting for just that. Approach people one on one.

Share an example of when you resisted a change because of fear, identify what was the source of fear and how you overcame your fear. Be sure to share the success of the change.

Identify where the resistance in your organization is coming from.

Brainstorm with your team ways to alleviate some of the fear and reduce the resistance.

If people feel they cannot accept the change, offer to help them find another team or place of employment.

Share the positive outcomes of the changes and explain why the change is important.

Remember that a team involved in the process of change is likely to feel like they have influence on the process and some control over their situation. This alleviates much fear around change.

"The path to success is to take massive, determined action."
Anthony Robbins

Customer Service Roadblocks

Sometimes when morale is low and systems are complicated, people begin to build roadblocks to superior customer service.

We call them don't blocks.

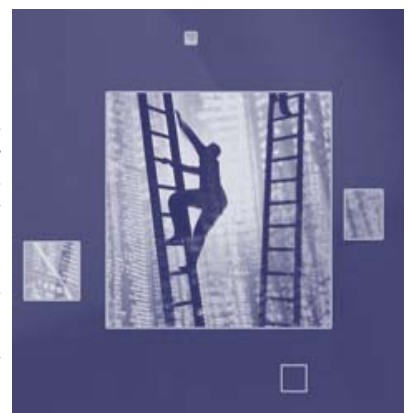
Here are 5 common don't blocks. If you're experiencing problems or want to increase your customer service efforts, consider bringing this list to a meeting for discussion.

5 "Don't" Blocks to Customer Service

1. Don't know
2. Don't care
3. Don't tell me, tell someone else
4. Don't make things too difficult for me
5. Don't bring your problems here take them somewhere else.

Ask us about "Towards Awesome Service" - a customer service focused training workshop we can run with your team members to help them understand the critical link between quality customer service and business growth.

Together we can help your team become truly excited about delivering "Awesome" service to your customer base.



How Long Since You Tested Your Prices?

Price testing is not an area most business owners think about. However, different prices on the same product often outperform one another by an enormous margin.

It's not a matter of increasing prices — it's a matter of testing them. And testing can be done imperceptibly.

One consultant we know advised a business owner to increase his prices. The owner did not welcome the idea at all.

Like most business people, he rejected the idea as ridiculous. "I'll lose all my customers," he said.

So the consultant devised an interesting test. "Let's take the slow moving items," he

said. "They represent about 30 percent of your \$450,000 revenue. Let's test increasing the price of those items by just 10 percent. And, of course, let's measure the results.

The result? No decrease in sales of slow moving product lines at all and an extra \$13,500 on the bottom line.

Of course, the client would not have realized that gain had he not been game to test.

Reluctance to test is something we can expect to deal with — particularly when it comes to testing prices.

But deal with it by measurement.

Measure the results you get for each incremental change.

And remember, you're not committing to the change forever.

You're simply committing to testing.

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MEMBER

About Our Consulting Services

We are not your 'average' consulting firm. Far from it. We are members of the Principa Alliance, an international network of consulting professionals.

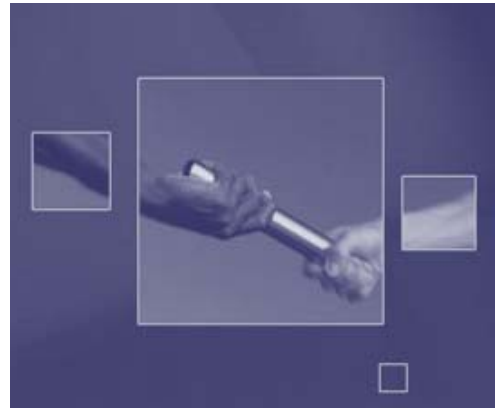
So when you work with us to improve your business you're gaining access to a global knowledgebase and a wealth of consulting experience that is much more powerful than any one firm could offer.

Combining our knowledge of your business, the personal relationship we share with our clients and the consulting tools,

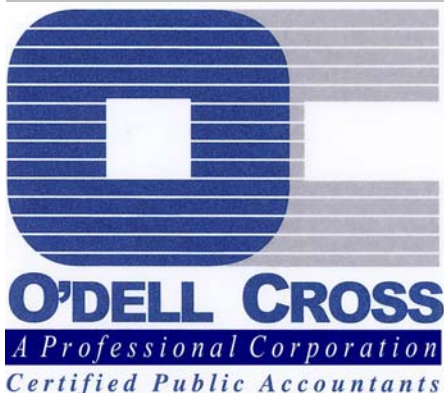
support and networking power of the Principa Alliance, we can help you achieve more with your business than you imagined possible.

Our goal is to help you build a stronger, more profitable business and enjoy a higher quality of life and greater financial and personal freedom as a result.

We can and will do so much more for you than just 'keep the score'. Contact us today to discuss how we can help you build a business that delivers on its promise.



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