

Special points of interest:

- Coaching your team to success!
- Wrap it up! Getting cross-selling to work for you
- Time-wise—ironing out the bugs in your schedule
- Phone savvy—how to win customers and influence people

Inside this issue:

The 10 killer myths about Coaching	2
Would you like fries with that?	2
Policies vs. Procedures—what's the difference?	3
Getting time wasters under control	3
Dealing with difficult interactions	3
Your most vital business tool	4

Making meetings work

Meetings often seem like a waste of time, but if you know how to use them, they can be very powerful tools.

Before the meeting

Is the meeting necessary? For instance, do you need the group to provide information or advice? Do you need to share information with the whole group?

Identify the meeting's objective and process. Is it to solve a problem, reach a decision, or some other outcome? How do you propose this be achieved?

Involve the right people—those who can provide relevant input or make decisions.

Provide an agenda in advance outlining the meeting's purpose and desired outcomes.

Sound out key participants in advance—find out their initial thoughts and discuss any ideas you'd like them to share at the meeting.

Prepare for the discussion—gather relevant documents and data and circulate relevant background information to other participants.

During the meeting

Establish the meeting's purpose and objective early on to help minimize digressions.

Make sure everyone has a say—control interrupters and dominators and make it possible for quieter people to contribute.

Gain closure on each issue—be it by vote, group consensus, or leader decision

End the meeting with an action and communication plan—what were the outcomes? Who is responsible for any tasks? When must they be completed?

After the meeting

Follow up quickly with a memo containing minutes of the key points discussed, decisions made, action plan and follow up time.

Provide promised resources and act on your decisions—as quickly as possible.

Meetings are just one component of the engine that drives a business. Knowing when to meet, and just as important, *how* to meet, can make meetings efficient, effective, and maybe even fun—saving money and sanity alike.

Your business's pot of gold

You're constantly on the lookout for people who want what you have to sell and who will appreciate the value you offer. And yet, there's a vast resource you see every day that you more than likely overlook. That is: *your existing customers!*

Your customer database is potentially your most valuable asset. As a vital marketing tool, it gives you all the information you need to plan and implement your campaigns.

Your database should also have information on those who've made inquiries, but haven't yet done business with you.

Marketing directly to your existing customer database gives your business an edge. They've dealt with you, they know you. You're already set apart from the crowd. You're no longer competing with all the other mass marketing forms out there.

Building a database need not be a complex process. Start out simply at first. Gather the names and contact details of your customers and prospective customers.

Later, expand your database with other details such as how they heard about you, what product they bought or asked about, significant dates (birthdays or anniversaries), and so on.



*“Drive thy business
or it will drive thee.”*
Benjamin Franklin
(1706–1790)

The 10 killer myths about Coaching

From *Harvard Management Update*

MYTH 1: Nobody can really define coaching.

Coaching is a well-defined process, with start points and end points. What’s different—and what throws some managers off—is that the heart of the process is a person’s potential. So success isn’t easy to quantify.

MYTH 2: Coaching is managing with a happy face.

Making sure someone achieves set performance levels is managing. Helping them handle problems for themselves is coaching.

MYTH 3: Coaching is just another name for mentoring.

A coach is more dispassionate than a mentor. If someone fails to live up to a commitment, a mentor might say, "You're disappointing me." Coaches say: "This is what you said you wanted, and you're not doing it."

MYTH 4: Being a coach means being a cheerleader.

A coach doesn't just praise an individual's efforts. A coach

helps people understand what they need to change in order to attain their professional goals.

MYTH 5: Coaching takes a lot of time.

Coaching relationships can last anywhere from 3 months to 2 years, depending on what the coachee is trying to accomplish. But during that period it should take at most 30–45 minutes a week. That's the time you spend checking on what someone has done since you last spoke and figuring out what steps they should take next.

MYTH 6: Coaching is a kind of psychotherapy.

Coaches, like all business people, need to have a grasp of psychology, such as what motivates people. But coaching focuses on what to do now, not on what went wrong in the dim past.

MYTH 7: One recipe can handle all coaching situations.

There is no "one size fits all" approach to coaching. Just as individuals and their goals are different, so is what each

person needs to learn to achieve them.

MYTH 8: Some people just can't be coached.

If an individual is truly unreceptive to your coaching, there may be other problems in your relationship or in your coaching style. Try the person with a different coach before writing him or her off as uncoachable.

MYTH 9: If you successfully coach people, they may leave.

While some employees who achieve new goals will leave, far more will feel greater loyalty to an organization that is interested in their professional development.

MYTH 10: Coaching doesn't add to the bottom line.

Coaching can have a positive impact on performance, but it is not a short-term process. Coaching prospects should be people you think can be even greater assets to the organization than they already are.

Would you like fries with that?

McDonald's would have to be the most famous business in the world for its cross-selling techniques, and it nets millions. Before you say "Well, it would never work with my customers!" consider these ideas for making cross-selling work for you.

- With your team, write a list of all of your products and services. Now look at each

item on your list and identify what complements each different product or service. Make a commitment as a team to suggest these complementary products or services each time you're dealing with a customer.

- Would you believe the biggest seller for McDonalds is their Happy Meal? This takes cross-selling to the

next level by packaging 2 or more products into one 'offer'. With the list you created earlier, consider ideas for 'packaging' complementary products and services together at a special offer price. This will help increase the average spend of your customers.

The only thing left to do now is to tell people about your newest product offerings!



Policies vs. Procedures—what’s the difference?

A number of things happen when you systemize processes in your business. First, you don’t have to do the process. Second, others less skilled than you so can do it. And third, you establish a “way we do things here”.

The more formal side to this occurs when you document the way you do things—in other words, when you develop policies and procedures.

Policies are the guiding principles of your organization. Policies can be rules such as dress codes, conduct codes and so forth. They can also relate to procedures, outlining the procedure’s purpose and effectiveness measures.

Procedures are a particular way of doing something, usually outlined in a series of steps or

a cycle to be followed to accomplish an end result.

Having your policies and procedures clearly documented improves procedure control—and therefore performance outcome—and provides clear scope for monitoring and further improving your business’s systems.



Getting time wasters under control

A time waster is anything that keeps you from doing things that have more value and importance to you. They’re different for everyone. For some, a chat with a colleague might be a time waster; for others, it’s a chance to manage the stress of the day.

Identify your time wasters, then develop strategies for dealing with them. For example, instead of personally handling

certain emergencies, set procedures in place for others to handle them or to prevent them in the future.

For each time waster, brainstorm strategies that match your personal style. That means, don’t commit yourself to making 10-minute call backs if you enjoy making personal contact in a relaxed manner. Instead, spend your energy on organizing your thoughts before

a call, so you complete all your business in one call and don’t need to make additional ones.

Experiment with the strategies you develop and keep the ones that are effective. Let your team know you’re working on managing time wasters and enlist their support. Remember though, only you can determine whether you are using your time wisely.

“Obstacles are those frightening things we see when we take our eyes off our goal.”

Henry Ford

Dealing with difficult interactions

We all perceive things differently from one another. For instance, you may perceive a particular goal as more important than a team member does.

Our differing perceptions shape our understanding of the world. For example, if one of your team has experienced a layoff, they may interpret your announcement of an expansion very differently from someone who has never lost a job. As we focus on factors that seem the most relevant to us, we look for evidence that supports our

views. And our behavior flows from this understanding.

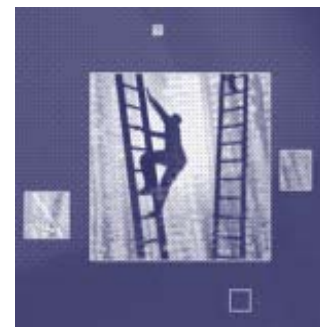
Gender, work roles, and work experience can all influence perspectives. The company veteran who has been with you for years and knows how things have always been done will have a very different perspective from a new hire fresh out of school or college.

When working with behaviors you find difficult, it’s important to inquire, or at least conjecture, about the other’s perspective.

When you’re able to acknowledge the other point of view and appreciate the other person’s perception of the situation, you can move toward resolution.

For instance, you may discover someone’s persistence in working on an issue *you* consider unimportant to be based on *their* perception that the situation is critical.

Such enquiries—and discoveries—can be a big help in reconciling your differences.





Your most vital business tool

Around 90% of all first time enquiries begin on the telephone, so it's the perfect opportunity to project an image of friendliness, efficiency and professionalism. It's also the opportunity to significantly increase your conversion rate of telephone enquiries into sales and achieve a better return on your advertising and marketing investment.

To get the full benefits from your phone, it's important all your team members consistently use good telephone technique.

- Smile to the point of a grin before you pick up the phone

- Answer the phone on the second ring
- Answer the phone with a structured message *Greeting + Location (optional) + this is [your full name]*. e.g. "Thank you for calling ABC Company, this is Jane Noble."
- Listen attentively and give out positive strokes (e.g. Uh-huh; Right; Yes, etc.)
- Show interest in your caller and build trust by asking questions.
- Leave your caller on a high.
- Hang up last.

Voicemail: Friend or Foe?

When used effectively voicemail can be a great help. It's important though, *not* to use it as a means of avoiding talking with your customers.

When recording your voicemail messages remember these 3 things:

1. Be as brief as possible.
2. Be totally customer focused.
3. Give a human option early.

Good telephone technique can create a delightful experience for your callers such that they'll want to keep coming back.

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