

# News and Views

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## *A Note From Joel*

I trust you had the chance this Summer to get some time off to think about investing in your business.

Labor day is a good reminder for back to school. Take the opportunity to plan some training for your employees. Work with them & make a plan for mutually designing their future. This approach helps improve your bottom line by enhancing their knowledge & developing their skills. This is an investment in your most important asset that pays dividends.

We unveil our newly designed website with this issue, check it out at [www.kraftassociatesoda.com](http://www.kraftassociatesoda.com). Webmaster

Seth takes you behind the scenes in its development.

You will find the second part of Bill's excellent article on Customer Retention which fits right into the theme of our Senior Manager Seminar this November. Check out our Fall seminar schedule inside.

Our feature: News From Our Clients was well received in our last issue & has more content this time. Thanks to all of you who provided input on our previous issue.

*Have a great Fall*

*Joel McFadden*

## *Senior Manager Seminar*

*by Joel McFadden*

This program is designed to help our clients by focusing on the transition our employees make as they move into Senior Manager and Executive roles in their firms. It builds on the foundation of ODA principles and processes found in our regular public seminars:

Begin with Excellence which focuses on recruiting and selection;

KASH which covers training, selling and communications and

Controlling Excellence which concentrates on supervision and management.

Studies show that the only initiative which directly correlates with the long term success of a firm is achieving excellent customer service. Certainly, this is a requisite skill which our senior management teams must master.

We will address this subject in our Senior Managers Seminar following an interactive approach. With the help of Harvard Business School Publishing, we have

put together a participative multi media case study. This includes a computer simulation in which we will actually discuss and try out the necessary steps to improve our customer service.

The tools we develop include a take home program which we can use to improve the performance of our own business.

Our venue is the Historic Inns of Annapolis, Maryland. If you haven't ever visited this charming city, which of course is the home of the US Naval Academy, you are in for a treat.

Past attendees report that much of the benefit of this seminar comes from meeting with those from other firms. This year we also have on the program a tour of one of our client's fascinating facilities, the headquarters of nearby Paul Reed Smith Guitars. PRS is the world's premier builder of electric guitars.

If you haven't already received an invitation, or want more information contact us at Kraft/ODA.



## The New Look

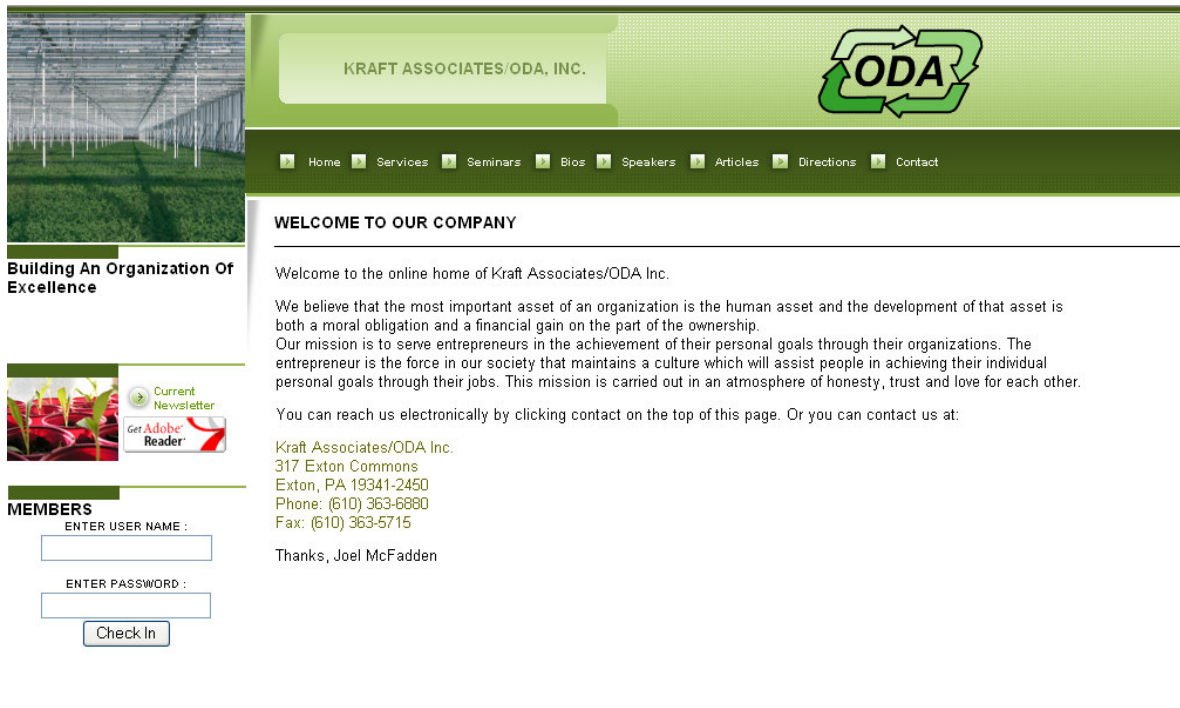
*by Seth Schneider  
Applied Computer Technologies, LLC*

Joel McFadden recently approached us to design an all-new web site for Kraft Associates/ODA displaying a professional and positive company image. He explained how in his line of work it is of utmost importance that he portrays his high quality level of work to all of his clients at the outset - not only to better represent himself, but as an example to those who look to his company for direction with their own. With this directive, we went to the drawing board and ultimately developed the site that you see now.

Returning visitors to the Kraft/ODA web site will notice that things have changed in a big way. The web site has been redesigned with more information and better accessibility to offer great

service. Our plan incorporated a whole new look, a refreshed logo, a members area, and easy access to lots more information including industry-related articles, and downloadable documents and forms for use for your own company. You will also see an updated list of speaking engagements and seminars, and a place to download the most recent newsletter.

It involved a lot of work, but it paid off. The site looks great and is a wonderful centerpiece for a company whose mission is to help other business owners meet their goals.



Kraft Associates, along with many of its clients, is reaching out to help victims of Katrina. Should you have any questions on how you can help, contact: ANLA at [www.anla.org](http://www.anla.org), PLANET at [www.landcarenetwork.org](http://www.landcarenetwork.org) or the Red Cross at [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org). Together we can make a difference.

# Customer Retention Rules to Live By by Bill Drexler

## Part II **3. Make customer service your top priority.**

You are in a service business; customers want reliability, responsiveness and quality. Knowing your customer is critical. Don't assume that you know why your customers buy or stay with you, what makes them happy or unhappy. You have to ask.

- Customers care about their problems, not yours. A customer's perception is their reality.
- Sell benefits. Your products and service are the tools that help your customers serve their customers' needs. Families want to spend more time together. Homeowners want to be proud of their property. Older customers want to maintain their quality of life.
- Manage expectations. Promise little, deliver a lot.
- Get feedback from your customer.
- Resolve Issues quickly. Keep them happy but don't give away the ranch.

## **4. Keep it Simple**

To make sure you are keeping the customers that you've worked so hard to find:

- Understand their needs. What are the emotional and logical reasons that your customers use to justify buying from you?
- Tell what you are going to do. Make sure that you promise only what you are willing to do and that it is clear to the customer.
- Do it. Quality, reliability and responsiveness are the keys. As I said earlier, deliver more than you promise.

- Make sure they liked it. Ask for feedback. This can be as informal as a conversation or as formal as a written survey.
- Ask what else they need. Look for other opportunities to serve their needs. Don't limit yourselves to lawn care alone. How about pool cleaning, window washing, and plant care? You're only limited by your imagination.

So what's in it for you? The payoff that comes from your pool of happy customers is more business.

1. They are even less price sensitive. Customers are less likely to shop around when they are happy with your service and they are less likely to complain when you have to increase your prices
2. Referrals. Your best source of new customers will come from your list of happy customers. They may not refer you to someone else unless you ask. Make sure you ask at the right time. People are most likely to give you a referral when they are feeling good about your relationship. So, after you have made their property shine before their big party, ask for referrals.
3. More sales from current customers. Up sell current products and services. If they are not buying something else that you sell, then sell it to them.
4. New opportunities. Find out what else you can do for them and add it to your line of products and services. As mentioned earlier, be creative. The key to finding out what else they might need is in the relationship you develop with your customers.

Part I of this article can be found in our previous newsletter available at [www.kraftassociatesoda.com](http://www.kraftassociatesoda.com).

### Special points of interest:

- Our new website: [www.kraftassociatesoda.com](http://www.kraftassociatesoda.com) is now live and includes some new features that we feel will be helpful to our clients.
- We received feedback from many of the newsletter recipients. If you have anything you would like to see in the newsletter, please send us a note or an email.



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## OUR MISSION:

Our Mission is to serve Entrepreneurs in the achievement of their personal goals through their organizations. The Entrepreneur is the force of our society that maintains a culture which will assist people in the achievement of their individual personal goals through their jobs. This Mission is carried out in an atmosphere of honesty, trust, and love for each other.

## OUR PHILOSOPHY:

We believe that the most important asset of an organization is the human asset and the development of that asset is both a moral obligation and financial gain on the part of the ownership.

## News From Our Clients:

- *Paul Reed Smith is a major contributor to the Kimmel Cancer Center in Baltimore, Maryland.*
- *Paul Reed Smith is a major sponsor of the September NASCAR race.*
- *Waterloo Gardens hosts and supports many charities, including the local A. L. S. chapter.*
- *Martin Viette Nurseries runs a Plant a Row for the Hungry program for the Interfaith Nutrition Network.*
- *Home Nursery provides financial support to the local public school system which educates the children of many of its Hispanic workers.*

## MANAGEMENT SEMINARS

### FALL 2005

Long Island, NY

Begin with Excellence  
(Recruiting & Selection)

September 27—28—29, 2005

K. A. S. H.  
(Training & Communication)

October 18—19—20, 2005

Controlling Excellence  
(Management & Motivation)

November 15—16—17, 2005



## Senior Manager Seminar

Fall 2005

Location:

Historic Inns of  
Annapolis  
November 8—9—10

## MANAGEMENT SEMINARS

### WINTER 2006

*Location to be announced*

Begin with Excellence  
(Recruiting & Selection)

January 2006

K. A. S. H.  
(Training & Communication)

February 2006

Controlling Excellence  
(Management & Motivation)

March 2006