



News and Views

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A Note From Joel

Just back from our annual ANLA meeting and the accompanying 2009 Legislative Conference. This was a very well run program, kudos to the Association Staff. I think all found the meeting to be very good networking and learning opportunity. This newsletter has a

mix of articles with a strong focus on tools we can use to manage our businesses through the current economy to our Vision and Goals.

You will also see dates for our Fall seminars on the back page.

Enjoy the rest of your summer,
Joel

Ten Steps to Creating Your Own Economic Stimulus by Joel McFadden

By now you have probably heard enough about the economy; understanding the messages and applying them to your business is another thing. So, where do you go from here? I believe what you must do is get back on track with the Vision for your business.

Let's look at the steps to make that happen:

1. Dust off the Vision Understand the strengths of your firm and make sure the current environment hasn't compromised them. Build on these strengths especially the customer service successes.
2. Refocus the Vision with today's realities Look carefully at the current opportunities and threats which present themselves; bounce them off your sweet spot. Widen your sweet spot to increase the pay off where appropriate.
3. Share your Vision with your team This is a good time to freshly deploy your Vision within the firm. You can't expect their help, especially in challenging times if they don't know where they are supposed to be headed.
4. Listen to customers But provide leadership with the Vision. One of the results of economic uncertainty is that customers become less reliable. Their feedback can be erratic and self serving. It takes skill to gather the real actionable messages these days.
5. Assess your resources Check their suitability to do the job especially your most important asset, your employees. Some external perspective is helpful here because like customers your employees are hard to read. This assessment must be forward looking.
6. Refresh your structure Base it on what you learned with your assessment. Get the right number of troops

where you need the focus and the change. Look carefully at your management in place; first level supervisors need extra help in today's environment.

7. Step up the communications This should be done internally with your employees and externally with customers. Do not assume that no news is good news, instead increase the number of one on one contacts. Use performance review meetings with employees even if there are no raises right now. Keeping people in the dark does not protect morale but increases fear. Use focus groups, interviews, questionnaires, ads and email blasts to step up communications with customers.
8. Refresh employee training Focus on the new needs of the marketplace, especially on communications training. Use the assessment you have done to craft a training program that fits the environment. By the way, finding methods to educate customers as well pays off in times of change. Help them learn the value of our products and services.
9. Lead from the front; Get out there and talk to your customers and employees. Show the Vision by living it in public. If there are some tough sales calls to make, make some. If there are some tough employee situations, participate. Walk the talk of your Vision. Showing positive energy is a great business development tool.
10. Your objective is full employment for your employees. We call this job fit. That is, employees are performing at the highest potential of their job description. This means your company is delivering the maximum value to your customers which protects your competitive position in the marketplace.



WINNING THE VALUE GAME

*A New Marketing Perspective on the Role of the Business Owner ** by Don Metzник

Summary

A company succeeds when it consistently delivers value to its customers and employees. This article focuses on delivering value to customers.

To deliver value in today's environment the entire company management team must become increasingly customer-focused. This is best accomplished through a new, broader, and more demanding view of marketing. Because the business owner is the sole individual with the perspective and influence to make this happen, he or she must consider expanding involvement in the marketing process, either personally or through the internal development of high potential individuals. This is becoming increasingly important as inbound marketing and social media, new disciplines that require new knowledge, rapidly expand their impact in today's marketplace.

Introduction: Winning the Value Game Through Vision and Execution

Winning the value game means one of two things; either your company consistently attracts more new customers than it loses, or your company maintains customers at its ideal level. If you are not winning this game you will soon be out of business.

Winning today means the business owner/CEO must become immersed into two areas that may have been largely ignored or assigned to a low level individual on the management team: marketing vision and marketing execution. The owner/CEO must articulate a new marketing vision and then ensure it gets done. No longer can vision and execution be left to your marketing manager, assistant, or a committee.

What does this mean to you as owner/CEO and how does this affect what you do?

A New Marketing Vision

Customer value is enhanced when all the resources of the company are focused on customer satisfaction. Marketing, by definition, is focused on the customer. For this reason, marketing is the discipline by which all company resources can be best focused on the customer. As Drucker states, "Concern and responsibility for marketing must therefore permeate all areas of the enterprise."

This is a task well beyond the capabilities of the typical small business marketing manager, if such a person even exists within a company. It requires an orientation of the entire company to the changing needs of customers, to a changing environment, and to all the resources of the company. Only the owner/CEO has the perspective and ability to fulfill this role.

It takes the owner/CEO to ensure implementation, because only the owner/CEO can ensure departmental cooperation and set priorities under conflicting situations. For example, only the owner/CEO can get the controller to view marketing programs as value-enhancing efforts and not just expenses.

Execution—Getting Things Done

Larry Bossidy and Ram Charan, co-authors of the book Execution, maintain that execution is the major job of the business leader. Within a small business context this means,

for example, that the owner/CEO must spend as much time on the marketing plan as on the financial forecast. And, like company financials, the marketing plan must involve extensive review, robust debate, realistic expectations based upon realistic appraisals of resources and capabilities, openly discussed accountability, and tenacious follow-through. The owner/CEO must be the thought leader for marketing opportunities. Further, the owner/CEO must ensure its execution with the same scrutiny and detail as any major capital improvement.

The Expanding Role of the owner/CEO

To summarize, customer value is produced when a customer-focused strategy is integrated throughout the company and executed with precision. The only individual in a position to ensure the proper strategy and its proper execution is the owner/CEO.

How does this involve the owner/CEO? Here are several suggestions:

°Every component of the marketing plan must be fully understood as well as how it impacts every department in the company.

°Supported by specific knowledge, the owner/CEO must be able to challenge the marketing manager to create plans that are realistic in their scope and realistic in their ability to be executed by other departments.

°For individual marketing strategies, the owner/CEO must ask for appropriate rationale and analysis and be able to discern between substance and wishful thinking.

°The owner/CEO must be absolutely convinced that the plan can be achieved and that by being achieved the company goals will be met.

How can this be done?

Creating vision and getting it done is time-consuming and laborious, and may involve new ways of including departments and personalities not practiced before. Rather than take significant time from current owner/CEO responsibilities, here are several ways I've found to support the owner/CEO.

Identify an individual with professional marketing experience. If there is no one with professional credentials within the company, consider hiring someone from the outside who can act as an executive coach. Have this individual work in tandem with the owner/CEO to develop the strategy and points of execution.

A large opportunity presents itself when a company is committed to growing internally. Consider, for example, growing the VP of Sales into a Sales and Marketing position. Hire an interim business advisor who can not only maintain the company's marketing momentum during the growth process, but also actively involve the owner/CEO in the entire marketing process.

Mandate for Change

A new marketing vision coupled with the commitment to get things done holds great promise for winning the customer value game.

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* Complete version of this article is on our website

Look Back, Look Over, Look Ahead, Plan Ahead! 5W's 1H! by Paul Orme

No question about it - this economy has created challenges for all businesses and in particular growers, landscapers, wholesalers and nurseries.

The question is – “What can I do to minimize the effect of the economy on my business and maximize what opportunities I can identify?”

The place to start is the 5 W's and 1 H of any good business planning exercise.

What Where When Why Who How

Using these five w's and one h, take a look at three aspects of your business on the same day each week at the same time for at least one hour to one hour and a half. Start by yourself and then bring in a key colleague/leader on your team for the last half hour.

Here are some examples you may want to look at...

1. Revenue and Revenue by Segment?

Take a look at April, May, June 2009 and 2008 in terms of revenue in total by month & by segment of the business and ask yourself the five w's and one h. Or focus on the 10 biggest opportunities you handled in A/M/J 2008 and A/M/J 2009.

For example...

What – was selling last April versus this, May versus May and June versus June?

Where – was the business coming from – product lines, types of customers, size of customers, geography?

When – early in season, late, during specific sales or promotions, by day of week, by week of month, by some influence that triggered the opportunity – remodeling, public works project?

Why – did we get the work - referral, reputation, bidding process etc.?

Who – assisted us in getting the opportunity and who was key in getting the project done?

How – did we complete the project or make the sale and what did we learn to add to our skill set?

2. How are we doing with customers – old and new?

What – is our revenue in last two months with old customers and with new customers?

Where – are our new customers coming from – referrals, new geography?

When – do our old customers return – beginning of season, when new project shows up, when they move to new location?

Why – do our old customers come back to us – services, products, etc and why do new customers give us a try?

Who – are our old customers – doing more or less with us, likely to stay or leave us and who are the new customers and will they become ongoing customers?

How – did I form a relationship with my old customers and how have I shown appreciation for their patronage and how did I greet and serve a new customer to convert them to an ongoing relationship?

3. Employees and Business Partners

What – are the key roles for my employees to increase revenue and improve customers' satisfaction?

Where – are my employees performing well and where are my business partners making a difference?

When – in what situations and projects are the employees achieving goals and when are they falling short?

Why – do we perform well on some aspects of the business and why do we fall short –Correct employees? Correct skills? Need for training?

Who – are the 25% of my employees who are delivering 75% of the results and how can I recognize and reward them and meet their aspirations?

How – can the entire staff be upgraded and enhanced to achieve the business goals?

Getting Started with the 5w's and 1h?

The best way to get started is to just decide to do it and book and appointment with yourself in you planner/calendar for each week for the next four weeks and then the next quarter.

Write What, Where, When, Why, Who and How down the column of an 8 ½ X 11 piece of paper – better yet type it on a master and make 20 copies.

Take three areas you want to work on and spend 20 minutes on each for 1 hour and then bring in your partner/key employee and get their input for 10 minutes each on the three areas.

Finally, in each of the three areas make three statements of what you learned and how you are going to modify your action plans going forward.

Write it down, put it in a folder and once a month review the past four weeks and write a summary of what you learn and the plan for the next few months.

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DiSC Behavioral Program *by Joel McFadden*

Our Behavioral Assessment instrument is available for use in a variety of applications. It is of particular value when the position to be filled is a hybrid of more than one function—sound familiar? Behavioral interviewing improves the odds to help us understand our employees and recruits. This in turn helps us decide whether a multi functional job is really a good business decision or a misguided cost reduction idea which may actually cost us more.

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.

News From Our Clients:

- *ANLA elections: Philip Statile, L.P. Statile: Landscape Distribution Board Division, Director; Mark Sellow, Prides Corner Farms: Grower Division Board*
- *The Advance Group has developed a new Corporate Image and Marketing program; check them out at www.TheAdvanceGrp.com.*
- *WRAP-N-PACK recently rolled out a new interactive web site believed to be one of the most valuable research and sales tools in the industry; check them out at www.Wrapnpack.com.*
- *The Laurel Group recently opened a new multi business unit facility in Water Mill to serve the market in the Hamptons.*
- *Martin Viette Nurseries recently opened a new Retail Store at The Americana Manhasset.*

MANAGEMENT SEMINARS

FALL 2009

Long Island, NY

Begin with Excellence
(Recruiting & Selecting)
September 16-17, 2009

K. A. S. H.

(Training & Communications)
October 20-21, 2009

Controlling Excellence
(Management & Motivation)
November 17-18, 2009



SENIOR MANAGEMENT SEMINAR

Dates
To Be Determined

MANAGEMENT SEMINARS

WINTER 2010

Location TBD

Begin with Excellence
(Recruiting & Selection)
January 2010

K. A. S. H.

(Training & Communication)
February 2010

Controlling Excellence
(Management & Motivation)
March 2010

Kraft Associates/ODA, Inc.
Seminars