

GLOBAL BUSINESS MAGAZINE FOR SHOE, APPAREL & ACCESSORIES RETAILERS

FOCUS

ON FASHION RETAIL

AUGUST 2011 VOL. 47

FALL/WINTER

**2011-12
FASHION
TRENDS**

SPRING/SUMMER

2012 FASHION TRENDS
PREVIEW

INSIDE

THE BUYERS MIND

TOP 5

LESSONS

FROM SIMON COWELL

TRADE SHOWS CALENDAR

CELEBRITIES & FASHION

BE TRUE TO YOURSELF!



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When asked about my job, I answer- Don't have one! *"When you find what you love to do, you will never work a day in your life"* -Confucius

Look, I am constantly invited to various fashion and entertainment events around the world, meet and befriend tons of incredible individuals, produce a beautiful magazine that is appreciated by thousands ... Naaaaah, this is not a job, this is fun!

Doing what you love to do makes you feel great, makes others feel good about you, and if this is the issue- you receive better business if you are happy with yourself first. When you're not worrying too much about- "Ummm... Will I get paid? What if they don't like me? What if they don't like my product?" etc etc. You know what happens then? Then you look around and see people wearing all these UGLY clothes, shoes and accessories that have been produced by those "creatives" who played it safe! Everybody is copying everybody, claiming- we are the fashion, we are unique! You know what? Screw that! This is why fashion industry is in such a shape, because everybody is playing the safe game: designers, wholesalers and retailers. No wonder, consumers are not buying this crap!

I am tired of it and don't want to be a part of it! The first time we put the celebrity inside FOCUS and on the cover, everybody told me- "Don't do that, you'll get in trouble; this is unheard of for a trade magazine!" Well... that issue, according to our distributors, flew off the shelves! At the FFANY show they said- "NEVER in the history of this show has a magazine gone so fast!" This is what they said, not me. So, I'll do it again, because I like celebrities fashion and am sure, there will be many readers who will appreciate it as well. Some will, some won't- who cares?! You can never please everyone, but I certainly am HAPPY with my decision no matter the possibility of being ostracized.

Same goes for about everything else in this issue. Fashion sections, both Fall/ Winter and Spring/ Summer, will show you the styles everybody will be copying soon for mass production or have copied already. THIS is fashion, made by the people who are not afraid to be misunderstood or afraid not to sell, because in the end, they do sell!

Follow the story of Simon Cowell, who's made his millions by telling the truth and being himself. Read the story of my good friend Kenny Gee, who has opened his successful (first) 3,000+ sq ft "The Habitat Shop" in Manhattan with zero money in his pocket, only dreams, passion and perseverance. I am sure you will benefit from other articles in this issue as well, because all of them have been prepared to inform, educate and to inspire YOU to be successful. Most importantly, to motivate you to be fearless doing what you love to do, and thus, to be HAPPY. This is what this issue is about, BE TRUE TO YOURSELF!

"Happiness is not a goal; it is a by-product." -Eleanor Roosevelt

With that, I am wishing you to be yourselves and finding what it is you love to do.

I'd love to hear your thoughts. Please feel free to contact me at editor@focusonshoes.com with questions, comments, suggestions or topics you'd like to see covered in future issues. Serving you better is our goal and privilege.

Sincerely,

Alex Geyman
Editor

table of contents:

- P. **4** Editor's letter
- P. **6** FASHION: Fall/ Winter 2011-12 Fashion Trends
- P. **16** ENTREPRENEUR OF THE MONTH: Top 5 Lessons From Simon Cowell
- P. **19** FASHION: Spring/Summer 2012 Fashion Trends Preview
- P. **24** TRADE SHOW TIPS: Your Formula for Success:Set Objectives & Measure Results
- P. **26** Trade Shows Calendar
- P. **28** RETAIL 101: Differentiate Through Experiences: A Case For Experience Based Retail
- P. **32** LEADERSHIP: Lesson #1: Be A Benevolent Dictator
- P. **35** Celebrities And Fashion
- P. **38** REFERENCE: Jeans Sizing And Conversion
- P. **40** Success Story: The Habitat Shop
- P. **44** Inside The Buyers Mind: Stop Selling! Start Making It Easier For Them To Buy!
- P. **47** Subscription
- P. **48** Survey: Your Opinion Counts!
- P. **49** Classified Ads

COVER PHOTO: Actress Rosario Dawson wearing Riviera earrings and bracelet
Photo by Olivier Borde/Getty Images



BUSINESS MAGAZINE FOR SHOE, APPAREL & ACCESSORIES STORES

FOCUS *on* FASHION RETAIL

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Fall/Winter 2011-12 *fashion trends*



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Misaki

- Metal jewelry. Light weight, large in size, yellow or white. Structured, angular and/or irregular shapes.
- Bold statements. Oversized bracelets, long earrings, extravagant necklaces
- Strong Motifs. Snakes, elephants, flowers, birds, bugs, leaves and coins.
- Fringe.
- Layered necklaces
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- Large Retro Inspired Rings



StyleView



Isharya



Annie Diamantidis



Eisenberg



StyleView



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M.C.L. By
Matthew Campbell Laurenza





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Montblanc



Kenneth Cole



Tom Ford



masculine, classy, and sporty

This Fall **menswear trends** proceed with some last year's pieces and bring the world a few new ideas as well. Bomber jackets, comfortable short coats, sporty elegant look. Silhouettes straight and slim, broad shoulders and narrow waists. Classic Loafers, high sneakers, hiking shoes. Rounded toes and comfortable thick outsoles.



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Ted Baker





Giorgio



7 For All Mankind

La Martina



Noxis



Kebo



7 For All Mankind

Gianfranco Butteri

Sunglasses retro and classic shapes, chunky and larger size than last year. Watches also favor classic timepieces for upscale professional look, while casual lifestyle calls for bright colors. All metal light weight jewelry.



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Fossil



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Montblanc



Paul Frank



Montblanc



Tom Ford



DSquared2



Francis Montesinos



Adolfo Dominguez





Top 5 Lessons

FROM

Simon Cowell

“I don’t mean to be rude, but...”

His signature catch phrase, Simon Cowell has become one of the most recognized faces in the television industry by not only being rude but more importantly by listening to what he was at heart – a self-proclaimed serial entrepreneur. A music producer and executive, TV personality and businessman all rolled into one, Cowell has been steadily climbing to success for almost four decades. Love him or hate

Born on October 7, 1959 in Brighton, England, Simon Philip Cowell grew up in Elstree, Hertfordshire with his three half-brothers, a half-sister, as well as a brother and a sister. His father, Eric, was a successful real estate agent as well as an executive in the music industry, while his mother, Julie, was known throughout town as a socialite. “I had a quiet, nice childhood,” recalls Cowell. “We had no McDonald’s, no color television, and luckily no Paula Abdul.” Largely raised by nannies, Cowell and his brother were sent off to boarding school and were frequently transferred for their misconduct. By the time Cowell was just 16 years old, he had already been a registered student at 16 schools.

To some, Cowell was an opinionated and troublesome child; to others, he was funny and outspoken; but, he was nevertheless the same Cowell the world has come to know today. Cowell recalls the first time he made an honest criticism – when his mother was wearing a fur coat and matching hat for a special occasion. She asked her son, “Does Mommy look pretty?” Cowell replied, “No, Mommy looks like a poodle.” Similarly, in one of his music classes, Cowell told the teacher she was wasting her time in trying to teach the students musical instruments because they all sounded dreadful. Cowell was subsequently kicked out of that class.

Cowell would never graduate from any of those 16 schools he attended over the years. In 1979, he got his first job working as a mail room clerk for EMI Music Publishing, thanks to his father’s connections. “In many ways, I was glad that I had started my career on the very low rung of the business,” Cowell recalls. “It was there that I

learned how to deal with people.” Over the next few years, Cowell would work his way up within the ranks of the company to eventually become a record producer. Unsatisfied with his prospects, Cowell left EMI in the early 1980s to form E&S Music, his own independent music company.

The success Cowell has achieved today would be hard won; E&S Music collapsed less than one year after its launch. Cowell swallowed his pride and returned to EMI. But, Cowell’s entrepreneurial instincts would not rest for too long. After just a short time, Cowell again left EMI to form Fanfare Records along with fellow former EMI mail clerk Iain Burton. Cowell’s attempt at creating his own independent music label would prove to be far more successful the second time around. them.

Now that Cowell had started his company, he needed to find an artist that would help take it to the top. That was when he met Sinitta, an aspiring pop singer, who Cowell immediately both asked out on a date and signed a contract with. In little time, her single “So Macho” had become a smash hit in the UK. At the same time, Cowell struck up a friendship with successful producer Peter Waterman and, in his own words, “followed him around like a dog,” in order to learn as much as he could about the industry.

By the time Cowell was 28 years old, he had achieved a modest level of success but it wouldn’t last long. He had made a series of bad business investments and he owed a bank almost \$1 million, forcing Cowell to move back into his parents’ home. Despite the setbacks, Cowell was still determined to make it big in the music industry. Soon, his efforts would pay off when he was hired by BMG Records.

In 1989, when Cowell was 30 years old, he began his new job as an A&R consultant for BMG. This would mark Cowell’s comeback. After noticing how popular WWF Wrestling was – along with all its related merchandise sales – Cowell decided to create a WWF-themed record, with tracks actually sung by the wrestlers themselves. It became a monster hit.

Cowell followed up this success with his discovery and subsequent signing of the hugely

successful pop bands 5ive, Sonia, Curiosity Killed the Cat, Robson & Jerome and Westlife. Cowell recognized the rising popularity of pop music and tried to sign the Spice Girls, but was unsuccessful. With the initial success of Westlife, Cowell worked hard to convince the other studio executives to replace the less attractive members of the band with cuter boys. After they agreed, Westlife would go on to become one of the most successful pop bands in the UK.

After his achievements in the music industry, Cowell turned his attention next to reality TV. He had witnessed the huge success of the show “Popstars” and was determined to take advantage of what he saw as this rising trend. In 2001, Cowell teamed up with producer Simon Fuller to create “Pop Idol”, where audiences would vote in a national talent search for a pop singer. Cowell himself was one of the panel judges, whose brutally honest criticisms soon became the show’s main attraction.

The success of “Pop Idol” in the UK led to a similar version in the U.S., called “American Idol.” Cowell was determined to conquer the larger American market. With the same premise as its predecessor, Cowell was again a judge and again came to be known for his harsh comments. Winners of these shows would then be signed onto Cowell’s newest music label, S Records, which he launched in 2002. In 2003, BMG bought out Cowell’s half-share in S Records for \$42 million. Cowell had become a multi-millionaire.

In 2004, Cowell returned to his musical roots and created Il Divo, teaming four opera singers from four different countries together in what turned out to be a hugely successful operatic pop group. That same year, Cowell created another British TV talent show called “The X Factor”, which also proved to be a success. Using the formula it seemed he had now perfected, Cowell launched “American Inventor”, a competition show where entrepreneurs across the country could compete for best new product. Cowell also signed on as executive producer of “America’s Got Talent”.

Cowell lives a lavish lifestyle with houses in both California and England, but his



entrepreneurial success is what has made all that possible. He continues to be a host on the wildly successful “American Idol”, giving doses of his unique brand of insights to millions of households nationwide.

Lesson 1: Don't Compromise

At the very first audition of “American Idol”, fellow judge Paula Abdul got her first taste of what it was like to work with Cowell. Following a terrible performance by a young contestant, Cowell responded with one of his trademark criticisms. “My jaw literally – like a cartoon – must have hit the table,” recalls Abdul. She proceeded to tell Cowell that he could not talk to people that way. Cowell responded that indeed he could. Abdul countered, saying he could not talk to Americans that way. Cowell said that he could and he would and the conversation abruptly came to an end.

“I think you have to judge everything based on your personal taste,” says Cowell. “And if that means being critical, so be it. I hate political correctness. I absolutely loathe it.” It is this attitude that has caused Cowell to come under attack by colleagues, the media and the public alike. Unafraid of speaking his mind and willing to suffer whatever consequences might arise as a result, Cowell has gotten to where he is in the industry due to his refusal to compromise.

When he was once asked whether he considered himself a music man or an entrepreneur, Cowell responded, “An entrepreneur. I’ve always treated the music business as a business. Whether I’m making TV shows or signing artists, you have to do it by the head and not the heart – and I run my businesses that way.”

Cowell is all business. He refuses to back down in the face of criticism and opposition and does not let personal feelings get in the way of his work. Fellow “American Idol” judge Randy Jackson recalls one time after Cowell had made particularly harsh comments towards a contestant, family members of that rejected contestant were waiting for Cowell with baseball bats, ready to beat

him up. In typical Cowell fashion, he just laughed it off and used a different exit. It was not going to change anything for him.

Even the comments that Cowell has come to be both loved and hated for were once the object of criticism themselves. One morning, a group of producers for “American Idol” handed Cowell a written script of biting put-downs for him to use on the following shows. Cowell told them that his remarks were all his own and he refused to look at their script.

The ability to stand firm in one’s beliefs is a characteristic Cowell would like to see more of in others, believing that it is one of the key ingredients necessary for success. Before every audition, Cowell talks to all of the would-be singers and encourages them to stand up for themselves. No matter how critical he may be towards them, Cowell would rather have the contestants argue with him than just walk out of the room. He knows that anyone who is willing to back down in the face of a challenge will never make it in the cutthroat music industry.

“If you’ve got a big mouth and you’re controversial, you’re going to get attention,” says Cowell. The test of success then comes with whether or not you are capable of not only staying strong in the face of that attention, but thriving in it as Cowell does time and time again.

Lesson 2: Be Relentless

“I am a hedonist at heart,” says Cowell. “I love the uncertainty and the challenge. I’m also exceptionally competitive and ambitious. It is relentless, relentless, relentless. I can’t help it. Sometimes I’m glad, sometimes I wish I wasn’t like that all the time. I can never switch off.”

From the time he was a young boy, Cowell knew what he wanted to do; he wanted to conquer the music industry and nothing or nobody was going to stand in his way. Starting off in the mailroom of a music studio, Cowell knew he had a long way to go before achieving his dream, but he was willing to put in the time and the energy he needed to. “If

you want to make money, you’ve got to work for it,” says Cowell. Slowly but surely, he was working his way up the corporate ladder.

“From the mailroom, I had come a long way,” Cowell explained in his 2003 autobiography. “I had more than 80 million albums to my credit, some 30 number one singles, and a hundred Top 30 singles. But still one thing eluded me. I wanted to have a career in the United States.”

Making a name for himself in the U.K. music industry was not enough for the ambitious young Cowell; he wanted to conquer the even bigger American market. But, the success of “American Idol” did not mean Cowell was simply going to put his feet up and enjoy the fruits of his labour. Through a combination of creativity and ambition, Cowell continued to put together winning arrangements that would knock the industry’s socks off; Il Divo’s debut album sold millions of copies worldwide and forced the likes of popular rapper 50 Cent off the Top Billboard charts.

Ambition and competition are the name of the game in the entertainment industry, but that is exactly how Cowell likes it. Speaking about the victory of Kelly Clarkson over her competitors in the very first “American Idol”, Cowell says, “They all hate each other deep down, but they’re not going to say it on camera. Ask Kelly how many congratulation e-mails she got from the other contestants. Probably zero. But that’s the music business. In a positive way, I like that. I like the fact that people enter the show because they might win.”

Winning, for Cowell, was an inevitable part of his drive to success. After his partying days as a young boy in boarding school, few had much faith in Cowell; even fewer could have imagined him going on to become a multi-millionaire. But, that is exactly where his relentless ambition led him.

Despite the success he has achieved, Cowell continues to set high goals and work towards them. “If I don’t find an international artist this year, then I will have failed. That is the one thing that interests me,” he says. “It is a personal thrill for me to play a role in giving the best young singers...a shot at realizing their dreams.”

Lesson 3: Take Rejection

“People said, ‘You will never make any money in the music industry,’” recalls Cowell. “Or, ‘You have no talent.’ Also, when you’re putting out a record, failing to make the top 100 is a kind of rejection. It’s painful.”

Throughout his career, Cowell would become quite familiar with rejection. After he was initially expelled from numerous boarding schools, Cowell could have easily given up. Headmasters were not only telling Cowell that there was no place for him in their schools, but that there was no place for him in a civilized society. That is a hard message to swallow as a young boy. But, Cowell wanted to prove them wrong.

Despite the success he had achieved at EMI in the early years of his career, Cowell’s first attempt at launching and running his own company was an utter failure. E&S Music folded almost as soon as it had opened. In Cowell’s eyes, this was a massive rejection by the music industry. Again, he could have given up, but Cowell wanted to prove them wrong.

He didn’t dwell long on his failure. In little time, Cowell had again launched his own independent music label. Fanfare Records would prove to be more successful than E&S, but challenges would still be ahead for the eager Cowell. When he was 28 years old, Cowell’s professional efforts took a nosedive when he wound up \$1 million in debt and living with his parents. He wondered if this was yet another sign of rejection from the music industry. Was there room for his vision? Would he ever be able to carry that vision out?

“I effectively lost everything,” Cowell says of that difficult time in his life. “I had to move in with my parents. In hindsight, it was the best thing that happened in my life because I learned the value of money: not to borrow money and not to live beyond my means. And I learned that getting there is more fun than being there. But one thing that I have always been able to do is to own up to my mistakes and not blame others.”

Cowell accepted his losses, faced the rejection and began the slow climb back up. There would be hard times again – his reality show *Cupid* was cancelled in 2003 – but Cowell had finally understood that failure was a part of the process. While they were hard experiences to go through at the time, Cowell now understands that it was those very failures that made him the success he is today. “In the music business, over the last 25 years, I’ve faced a lot of rejection,” he says. “It’s a lesson learned. You have to stand out from the crowd.”

Cowell has learned that little failures along the way are what make for a great success in the end. “I think America is a hard nut to crack,” he says. “But once you get a toehold it’s a great place for an entrepreneur because people are so enthusiastic.”

Lesson 4: Be Honest

Cowell strayed from his roots in 2003 when he took a cameo role in “Scary Movie 3”. Playing a

judge who had to critique a rap contest, Cowell says of his own acting, “It was excruciatingly embarrassing. I was absolutely dreadful.”

It is this same honest attitude by which Cowell judges himself that he also judges others. In his decades in the entertainment industry, Cowell has learned that one of the secrets to success is honesty – both with oneself and with others. He has no delusions about what he is and is not capable of. He knows both his own strengths and weaknesses and is honest with himself in admitting them. He is also quick to point out the strengths and weaknesses of others, believing that knowledge of this will help someone on the better path to success.

When “Pop Idol” first aired in the U.K., Cowell was a very different judge from the one that has made headlines today. He was polite to and supportive of all of the contestants, whether or not they actually performed well. But, upon reflection, Cowell admitted that he found the whole thing false. Because the judges were too conscious of the cameras, they were not as honest as they would have been in a normal audition and Cowell vowed from thereon out to tell the truth. Immediately, Cowell knew he had stumbled onto something. His brutal honesty had become an instant hit with audiences, who dubbed him ‘Mr. Nasty’. The show’s success skyrocketed in large part to Cowell’s honesty.

But, Cowell wasn’t just being honest for the sake of good television. “I met someone the other night who is 28 years old, and he hasn’t worked a day since he left college because he’s pursuing a dream he’ll never, ever realize,” said Cowell. “He thinks he’s a great singer. Actually, he’s crap. But nobody has said to him, ‘Why have you been wasting your time for eight years?’”

Cowell believes that in order to succeed, people need to be honest with themselves about their abilities. “If you want to win, you have to realize that good is not enough,” says Cowell. “You’ve got to be great!” Recognizing that you are better at one task than another will set you on the path to success.

“I haven’t done anything particularly harsh,” Cowell says in response to critics of his brutal honesty. “Harshness to me is giving somebody false hopes and not following through. That’s harsh. Telling some guy or some girl who’ve got zero talent that they have zero talent actually is a kindness.”

Cowell was ambitious but he knew enough to understand that ambition alone would not get him wherever he wanted. He needed to be honest with himself about his skills and abilities and work with what he had. Chasing empty dreams, for Cowell, was simply a distraction from a more appropriate path to success. Once you were honest with yourself about what you could and could not do, you would be that much closer to success.

Lesson 5: Trust Your Gut

When Cowell first started out at BMG, he wanted more than anything to produce a hit and

prove himself to be a valuable contribution to the company after years of rejection by the industry. Oddly enough, he decided to look in the direction of professional wrestling. His colleagues thought he was crazy, but Cowell had a hunch that if young boys would pay to watch professional wrestling and buy all the related merchandise, they would surely also buy a WWF-themed record sung by the superstar wrestlers themselves.

Cowell’s hunch was bang on. The WWF Superstars album was an instant smash hit. After that, few would come to doubt Cowell’s instincts again. He would later go on to record albums with the Power Rangers and the Teletubbies, both of which achieved similar levels of success. When most people had dismissed opera as not being mainstream, Cowell mixed it with pop and four attractive young men, in *Il Divo*, and created an instant mainstream success. Where few thought there was any potential for a successful record, Cowell followed his instincts and proved everyone wrong.

It was this kind of leadership – by gut instinct – that would characterize the rest of Cowell’s career. Cowell understands, however, that his instinct would not always be spot on. Sometimes he would get it wrong, but it was in recovering from his mistakes that Cowell would go on to create something even better.

Early on, when reality TV was just beginning to grab a hold of audiences, Cowell was offered the opportunity to be a judge on a new show called “Popstars”, which detailed the process of putting together a pop band and producing the winning band’s first record. Cowell’s gut instinct told him that the show would not be popular – people would not want to ruin the mystique behind the process of how bands come together.

Cowell declined to participate as a judge on the show. A short time after it first aired, both the show and the band that was created as a result became hugely popular. Cowell had trusted his gut instinct and, as a result had missed a great opportunity. It was one of his biggest regrets.

But, Cowell’s gut instinct was now telling him that the success of “Popstars” was not an isolated occurrence. He had a hunch that “Popstars” was just the beginning of a growing trend and this time, Cowell would not let the opportunity pass him by. Determined not to make the same mistake twice, Cowell teamed up with producer Simon Fuller and created the new show “Pop Idol”. A reality show with a twist, it quickly became an even bigger hit. Cowell’s gut had been wrong once, but he had learned his lesson and made good the second time around.

Cowell refused to bend in the face of doubt or pressure. Sometimes to naught and sometimes to success, Cowell always followed through on his hunches. Where he was wrong, he learned from his mistakes and where he was right, he could proudly smile in the face of his doubters.

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SPRING/SUMMER 2012

fashion trends

preview

The upcoming season of Spring-Summer 2012 will be characterized as a season of bright colors and light fabrics. Ethnic touches still will be present in both men's and women's clothes and accessories: exotic leathers, tribal prints, large ornaments, patches. As skinny pants and tight silhouettes have expanded into their own category, wider and more voluminous cuts will dominate the look of the next summer. As you can see on the photos from the just successfully concluded Mercedes-Benz Berlin fashion week, fashion proposals for the season demonstrate active use of earthy, floral, tender colors. Oversize sunglasses, denim continues being in style this season. For men, while the short blazers will remain in mainstream, a little touch of "retro"- longer jackets will be the trend. Sporty California "cool" seen in shorts and trousers, canvas sneakers and oxford lace-up shoes. For women's footwear the high heels and platforms, wedges and wide use of lace, tribal ornaments and floral accessories.



Anja Gockel



Laurel



Dimitri



Hien Le



Dimitri



Irene Luft



Lisa for Donald J Pliner



Donald J Pliner



Chinese Laundry



Anja Gockel



Basler



Basler



Frida Weyer



Lena Hoschek



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Lena Hoschek



Strenesse Blue



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Blacky Dress





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Minx by Eva Lutz

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Southwest Shoe Expo
World Trade Center, Dallas Booth #1814-1813
Aug. 11-14, 2011

The Atlanta Shoe Market
Cobb Galleria Centre, Booth #136-138-140
Aug 13-15, 2011

Footstep (Magic)
 PLATFORM (Magic)
Las Vegas Convention Center
Footstep Booth #66010, L2 (Aug. 21-24)
FN Booth #62105/62006, L1 (Aug. 22-24)

The Metropolitan New York
The New Jersey Conv. & Expo. Center
Sept. 26-27, 2011

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Your Formula for Success:

Set Objectives & Measure Results



This month, with some help from our reader, we explore the topic of *Setting Objectives and Measurable Results*. After the dust settles on the strategic planning process, it is the calling of each part of your marketing plan to drive the company a step closer to attaining its strategic goals.

Setting objectives for your exhibiting programs ensures that you are aligning the short term (tactics) with the long range (strategies). When you include specific measurements for assessing the outcome of each show you can: 1) justify individual show participation and 2) increase the effectiveness of your overall program.

The tips provided by readers show a common theme - successful shows are the result of a structured approach to exhibiting.

"If you don't know where you're going, you won't know if you got there. And even if you did, you won't know where you are! Know your objectives for a show, implement tactics to help achieve them, and then follow up after the show to see if they worked. This is TradeShows101 and the most likely area to be overlooked."- Patti B., World Access

Not every show and/or event should get the same set of goals. What determines the variations in objectives between shows? It's all about matching attendee interests with your company's purpose in communicating with them. Attendee interests can be understood by doing pre-show research (often done during the show selection process). Your specific communication purpose is where your products and/or services meet the audience interests - **What's In It For Them?**

"Before a show, always decide what your goal for that show is, and tailor your booth presence and tactics to that goal. If you are trying to sell a lot of product you will have a much different strategy than if you are hoping to introduce people to your product or just do general marketing for your company! A focused approach is much more effective than a scattershot one."- Rae C., WizKids

It is also important to recognize that there may be more than one audience present at a given show. Some shows serve a broader interest while others are more focused and vertical. In your planning, don't forget that everything doesn't happen in the pre-show - follow through ensures you complete the action and can measure results.

*"We always do a pre-show meeting with the staff, marketing team and office personnel. We discuss our objectives and desired results ... **we prepare for how we will respond to the leads following the show.**"*- Sue A., The Deerfield Collection

Another aspect of the goal-setting process is keeping all of the elements that contribute to your company's trade show appearances integrated and focused on the objectives. This reader calls attention to this piece of the puzzle.

"The trade show booth and supporting materials and staff need to be developed as a cooperative affair. There is nothing more disconcerting than to have the public relations staff choose the giveaway, the designer decide on the look of the booth, and the print manager make the decisions on the materials to be distributed. That usually makes booth staff feel like used car salesman - expected to sell the car with little control over the type of car, nor its condition, that they are selling..."- Simone, CanolaInfo

Finally, don't overlook the fact that one of the primary drivers for show attendees is to discover something they didn't know about before. "What's new? What's hot?"

"Remember that trade show attendees are there (for the most part) to learn more. Our job is to educate them in a way that helps them communicate our value to their ultimate audience (whether it is their managers or customers). Make your message easy enough to re-communicate."- Robert A., PropertyInfo Corporation

We hope that you have found a nugget, or two, to expand your personal treasury of exhibiting wisdom.

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permanent showrooms
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temporary exhibits
AUG 18-21, 2011 thu-sun



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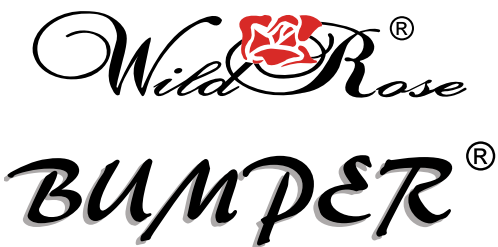
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| | DATE | EVENT | LOCATION | M | W | C | FOOTWEAR | APPAREL | ACCESSORIES | PHONE | WEB SITE | FOCUS' RATING |
|-----------|-----------|--|----------------------|---|---|---|--------------|---------|--------------|----------------------|---------------------------------|---------------|
| August | 2-4 | The New York Shoe Expo (FFANY) | New York, NY | • | • | • | • | • | • | (212) 751-6422 | www.ffany.org | ★★★ |
| | 4-7 | Outdoor Retailer | Salt Lake City, UT | • | • | • | • | • | • | (949) 226-5794 | www.outdoorretailer.com | ★★ |
| | 6-8 | Stylemax | Chicago, IL | | • | | • | • | • | (312) 527-7759 | www.stylemaxonline.com | ★ |
| | 6-8 | Kidz | Chicago, IL | | | • | • | • | • | (312) 527-7759 | www.kidzstylemax.com | N/A |
| | 7-9 | Chicago Collective | Chicago, IL | • | | | • | • | • | (312) 527-7759 | www.chicagocollectiveonline.com | ★ |
| | 7-9 | Mode Accessories | Toronto, Canada | | • | | • | | • | (416) 510-0114 | www.mode-accessories.com | N/A |
| | 8-10 | Select- The Contemporary Trade Show | Los Angeles, CA | • | • | | • | • | • | (213) 630-3616 | www.californiamarketcenter.com | N/A |
| | 8-10 | Focus- Apparel & Accessories Show | Los Angeles, CA | • | • | | • | • | • | (213) 630-3616 | www.californiamarketcenter.com | ★ |
| | 8-10 | Transit- The Los Angeles Shoe Show | Los Angeles, CA | • | • | • | • | | • | (213) 630-3616 | www.californiamarketcenter.com | ★ |
| | 8-11 | La Kids Market | Los Angeles, CA | | | • | • | • | • | (213) 630-3616 | www.californiamarketcenter.com | N/A |
| | 11-14 | Dallas Apparel & Accessories Market | Dallas, TX | • | • | • | • | • | • | (214) 655-6100 | www.dallasmarketcenter.com | ★★ |
| | 13-15 | The Atlanta Shoe Market | Atlanta, GA | • | • | • | • | • | • | (706) 923-0580 | www.atlantashoemarket.com | ★★★ |
| | 13-16 | Premium | Munich, Germany | • | • | | • | • | • | +49 (0)30-629-085-78 | www.premiumexhibitions.com | N/A |
| | 18-22 | Atlanta Apparel Market | Atlanta, GA | • | • | • | • | • | • | (404) 220-3000 | www.americasmart.com | ★★★ |
| | 19-22 | OFFprice Show | Las Vegas, NV | • | • | • | • | • | • | (262) 782-1600 | www.offpriceshow.com | ★★ |
| | 21-23 | AccessoriesTheShow | Las Vegas, NV | • | • | • | • | | • | (212) 686-4412 | www.accessoriestheshow.com | ★★★ |
| | 21-23 | Moda Las Vegas | Las Vegas, NV | | • | | | • | | (212) 686-4412 | www.modamanhattan.com | ★★ |
| | 21-23 | MRket LV | Las Vegas, NV | • | | | • | • | • | (212) 686-4412 | www.mrketshow.com | ★★ |
| | 21-23 | Toronto Shoe Show | Toronto, Canada | • | • | • | • | | • | (416) 444-0005 | www.torontoshoeshow.com | N/A |
| | 21-24 | MAGIC | Las Vegas, NV | • | • | • | • | • | • | (818) 593-5000 | www.magiconline.com | ★★★★ |
| | 22-24 | Project | Las Vegas, NV | • | • | | • | • | • | (212) 951-6654 | www.projectshow.com | ★★★★ |
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| | 22-24 | ENKVegas | Las Vegas, NV | • | • | | • | • | • | (212) 759-8055 | www.enkshows.com | ★★ |
| | 22-24 | KIDshow | Las Vegas, NV | | | • | • | • | • | (305) 598-7019 | www.lingeriesshow.cc | ★★★ |
| | 22-25 | WomensWearInNevada- WWIN | Las Vegas, NV | | • | • | • | • | • | (702) 436-4081 | www.lingeriesshow.cc | ★★★★ |
| | 25-30 | Denver Apparel & Accessory Market | Denver, CO | • | • | • | • | • | • | (303) 292-6278 | www.denvermart.com | ★★ |
| | 28-30 | Australian Shoe Fair | Melbourne, Australia | • | • | • | • | | • | 613 9654 7773 | www.aec.net.au | N/A |
| | 31-3 Sept | Sapica | Leon, Mexico | • | • | • | • | | • | (477) 152-9000 | www.sapica.com | ★★★ |
| September | 1-3 | SIMM- Semana Internacional De La Moda | Madrid, Spain | | | | Fashion Show | | | 44 20 78 86 30 00 | www.semanamoda.ifema.es | N/A |
| | 6-8 | Mode Shanghai | Shanghai, China | • | • | | • | • | • | N/A | www.modeshanghai.net | N/A |
| | 7-9 | GDS International Event For Shoes & Accessories | Düsseldorf, Germany | • | • | • | • | | • | (312) 781-5185 | www.mdna.com | ★★★★ |
| | 8-15 | Mercedes Benz New York Fashion Week | New York, NY | | | | Fashion Show | | | (212) 489-8300 | www.imgworld.com | ★★★★ |
| | 11-13 | Shoe Market Of The Americas (SMOTA) | Fort Lauderdale, FL | • | • | • | • | | • | (786) 331-9000 | www.smota.com | ★★ |
| | 11-13 | Modacalzado+ Iberpiel | Madrid, Spain | • | • | • | • | | • | 34 91-772-3000 | www.ifema.es | ★★★ |
| | 13-17 | International Fashion Jewelry And Accessory Show | Warwick, RI | • | • | | | | • | (401) 295-4564 | www.jewelrytradeshows.com | N/A |
| | 14-18 | Shenzhen International Jewellery Fair | Shenzhen, China | • | • | | | | • | (852) 2561-5566 | www.newwayfairs.com | N/A |
| | 18-20 | Fashion Coterie | New York, NY | • | • | | | • | | (212) 759-8055 | www.enkshows.com | N/A |
| | 18-20 | Sole Commerce | New York, NY | • | • | • | • | | | (212) 759-8055 | www.enkshows.com | N/A |
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| | 18-20 | FAME | New York, NY | | • | | | • | • | (212) 686-4412 | www.fameshows.com | ★★ |
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- ★★★★ Awesome

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Ratings reflect people's opinion of show organization, traffic, convenience and value for attending/participating businesses.

Differentiate Through EXPERIENCES:

Any retailer who wishes to survive long-term in today's competitive arena must be able to answer this fundamental question: **What makes your store(s) different enough for the consumer to choose to do business with you?**

A Case for Experience Based Retail

by Doug Fleener

The retail marketplace is now oversaturated and the next decade will continue to see consolidation and domination in our industry. Wal-Mart continues their incredible growth strategies that are changing the way the world shops and, subsequently, changes the way we retailers must operate.

Beginning in the 1970's the proliferation of large malls was the death of many downtowns along with the locally owned retailers and regional chains that inhabited them. Those that survived adapted to the new retail environment. The 1980's and 1990's saw big box category killers and national discount general merchandise retailers once again change the retail landscape, putting competitive pressure on the malls as the malls themselves once pressured the downtowns and their retailers. Those that survived adapted to the new retail environment.

Consumer shopping habits have forever changed. Faced with substantial losses in their 401Ks and an uncertain job market, consumers of all income levels have become value oriented shoppers. Supercenters, large discount stores with an all-encompassing product selection, are becoming the dominant retail force and are now a primary shopping destination for most consumers. Recent studies have predicted that supercenter sales are expected to triple in the next seven years. Triple! National chains offering top brand names at deeply discounted prices are now in most every market in America. Once again, locally owned retailers and regional chains must adapt to survive.

Wal-Mart continues to hone their well-oiled retailing machine and apply their proven approach to new markets, recently becoming the largest grocer in the United States. They continue to expand in to new areas like gasoline, financial services and other businesses. If Wal-Mart doesn't sell what you sell right now, there's a high likelihood it's only a matter of time before they will.

Beyond Wal-Mart is Target, who is targeting (pun intended) a more fashion conscious consumer who has become accustomed to value oriented shopping. Other dominant retailers having a huge impact on local retailers and mid-size chains include Best Buy, Home Depot, Kohl's, Lowe's, Marshalls, Barnes and Noble, and Staples. And retail is no longer done just in storefronts but also online with internet pioneers Amazon and EBAY, as well as countless websites that have made pricing transparent and anything you want to buy a click away. So I ask again, why will the consumer choose to do business with you? How will you adapt in this new era of retail?

Retail Model

On a basic level, retail is a combination of three components; Product, Process and People. Within these components are elements that when put together form a retail model. This model can be easily debated but my experience has shown that it's easily understood and encompasses the critical elements for discussion.

Success Formula

It is impossible for a retailer to be all things to all people, though many companies have failed trying. Companies must choose - either consciously or unconsciously - the element that is to be their primary competitive position. Without a primary competitive position there is no key strategy and no identity, resulting in overall mediocrity, a sure formula for failure.

Wal-Mart's primary competitive position is pricing. 7-11's primary competitive position is location. The Gap's primary competitive position is product selection. To have long-term sustainable success a retailer needs to be a market leader in their primary element. The market is determined by both geography and competition. Because of the Internet and the proliferation of dominant retailers nationwide, geography has become less of a market factor.

Successful retailers also focus on secondary elements; those elements at which a retailer can outperform the market standard and complement the primary competitive position. When a retailer is a market leader in their primary element and has one or two secondary elements in which they outperform their competition, they are on their way to market dominance.

You must always meet the market standard with all your elements in the model. These often changing standards are set mostly by consumer expectations and the competition's ability to achieve them. Below market standard on any element may neutralize the primary and secondary elements.

Using Wal-Mart as an example, we know their primary element is pricing but they also dominate in product selection as well as in all of the process elements. Kohl's is moving towards market dominance by having price as a primary position and location and product selection as secondary positions.

Note that marketing is not one of the elements. Marketing is the activity that

Here are the model's main components and elements.

Product

1. Product Selection:

Product selection is made up of three elements:

- Market segment. This determines the type of products to be sold,
- Scope. The range of the segment(s),
- Quality. The characteristics of the segment and scope.

2. Price: The price the consumer pays for the goods offered by the retailer.

Process

3. Operational activity: Includes inventory procurement, inventory management, and all necessary administrative activity.

4. Structure: The organizational structure necessary to operate the retail enterprise.

5. Location and site management: The physical plant and location.

People

6. The customer experience: What the customer experiences when conducting business with the retailer.

7. The employee experience: What the employee does and experiences when working for the retailer and interacting with the customer.

8. Services: Services such as delivery, installation, in-home sales, and personal shoppers are just a few examples. Services are considered a people component as they are most often performed by people and their quality is determined as such.

A retailer's aspirations and mission drive the choices and activities within each element. Strategic decisions and tactical execution of the elements make up the retailer's identity in the marketplace.

communicates the primary and secondary element to the consumers and drives them into the store.

Do you know your primary competitive elements? The fact is many small retailers don't. Are you a market leader in it? Do you have any secondary elements that you can exploit? And most important, is the customer choosing you because of it?

The Future of Retail

As discussed, the marketplace is more competitive than ever with big box retailers and national chains dominating the marketplace and predictions of even tougher competitive conditions

ahead. Caught in this change will be mid-size chains, small stores, and any retailer who cannot be a market leader in their primary position. This change may or may not mean that these retailers won't exist in the future. If they do exist they'll be faced with no or reduced growth, thinning margins, and limited profitability.

The trouble ahead for many retailers is this: a good number of small and mid-size retailers today identify a product element as their primary competitive position, the same component in which the dominant retailers of today and tomorrow are leading the market. Not long ago a retailer could carve out a niche in the market with a well-defined product selection strategy. Because of shorter product adoption phases, quicker commoditization of products in almost all product segments, rapidly changing customer tastes, and a wider product scope being carried by dominant retailers, this is no longer the case. Few retailers and even fewer smaller retailers can be market leaders in any of the product elements. The fact is these retailers must shift their primary competitive position away from the product component and differentiate themselves in some way or else face an uncertain future.

Why a People Position?

The greatest opportunity for many retailers in this situation is to differentiate themselves by shifting their primary position from a product component to a people component. At the same time they must maintain their product element(s) as their secondary market position. While this is not an easy feat, the customer will likely reward those who can make such a bold transition. Another alternative, depending on market segment, is for a retailer to create differentiation by maintaining their current primary position but develop a people component as the secondary position.

Remember, the people elements are customer experience, employee experience, and services. These elements have some advantages over product elements. They cannot be commoditized, they add value to your customer's lives beyond the product itself, and they are difficult for large retailers to execute, rarely exceeding customer expectations.

People components focus on outcomes by putting the customer and employee as the focus of the retailer, not the products or processes. This is not customer service. Customer service is a phrase so overused today that we don't even have a common understanding for what it is. And when we do, it refers to "waiting on someone". Retailers who "wait" on someone will be waiting for profits.

Experiences are how customers act and feel as result of being engaged with your employees, your products, and your physical store. It's taking key in-store activities like selling, merchandising, and collateral and using them to better educate your customer and give them the best possible experience. It's an entire company focused on delivering a "WOW" to the customer. Customers who receive above market experiences are more likely to purchase, be a loyal customer, and recommend your store to family and friends. You

have no better advocate than a customer who receives a great in-store experience.

Retailers who are leaders at customer experiences are also leaders at employee experiences. They understand that employees are the company to their customers. They see employees as people and not as a line on the expense statement. Most important, they know that if they want to have employees give their customers an experience, the company must first deliver one to the employees. Many retailers treat employees well, so focusing on employee experiences is not a difficult transition. Many other retailers lack respect for their employees and they don't treat them as well as they should. For these retailers the transition will be challenging. The greater problem is the number of retailers who think they treat employees well but in fact don't do as good as job as they think. The tell tale sign is a company's employee turnover rate and how it compares to the industry average, although as an industry our turnover rate is much too high.

The final element in the people component is service. Service is both a differentiation opportunity as well as a profit opportunity. Services are often cumbersome and difficult to execute, which make them more suited to the smaller companies, although many large retailers are successfully outsourcing them. Home Depot's Expo stores have changed how stores sell service and installation, giving consumers a one-stop shop. One key point about this element: if you make it a primary or secondary competitive position you must do it right. Often this is the last contact point with your company. A poorly executed service can be detrimental to any repeat business. Bad service is easy to do and is done by many retailers. Exceeding customer's expectations with service is difficult but consumers will reward those who do it well.

Theory or Practice?

Executing customer and employee experiences as a primary competitive position is what we at Dynamic Experiences Group refer to as Experience Based Retail. This is a systematic approach to implementing employee and customer experiences. It's executed by focusing on four strategic areas that we call the 4 Es of Experience Based Retail. They are Environment, Engagement, Entertainment, and Education. We will discuss these in greater detail in later papers.

Some believe this is more theory than true practice, but there are successful retailers who execute Experience Based Retail and the market has rewarded them handsomely. The reason we don't hear or see it much is because, as discussed, most retailers are product focused.

One retailer who is a model for those wanting to execute a people component strategy is The Container Store. With 28 stores in 15 markets around the country, The Container Store is a great place to shop and a great place to work. They have been named the top one or two best places to work by Fortune Magazine the last four years in a row. They average 20% sales growth yearly and employee retention rates far above the industry standard.

Another great example is a Boston based chain, Jordan's Furniture. If you're from Boston or visit here, you know about Barry and Eliot Tatelman, the two brothers who run the four store chain that was started by their grandfather back in 1928.

There are many elements of Jordan's Furniture that has made them a success including operational refinement, a phenomenal advertising strategy, and knowing and hitting their target market. Most important is that Barry and Elliot turned buying furniture, a tedious and uneventful task into an incredible customer experience.

How successful have they been focusing on people? The average furniture retail chain averages between \$150 and \$200 of sales per square foot. Jordan's averages close to \$1,000 a square foot. The average furniture chain spends about 6% of their annual revenue on advertising and runs countless sales. Jordan's spends only 1% to 2% of their revenue on advertising and never runs a sale. Jordan's was recently acquired by Warren Buffet in an all-cash deal worth about \$225 million dollars. The Tatemans maintain total control of the day-to-day business. Not bad for two guys who love to laugh and have fun with customers and employees alike.

Into Action

Creating and executing an Experience Based Retail strategy takes both commitment and a willingness to change. For some retailers, especially those who want to create customer experiences as a secondary competitive position, it may require less change. Either way, it is quite rewarding to put people at the heart of what you do.

There are numerous ways for retailers to begin to take action and create incredible customer and employee experiences. Many retailers may choose to put together a new strategic direction for their company.

Others may want to put into action some of the following suggestions. Either way, you're on your way to differentiation through experiences. Here are some suggestions:

Educate your customer: Help your customer obtain the information necessary to make an intelligent purchase decision. Retailers who focus on product are interested in getting a product out the door but retailers who focus on people want their customers purchasing the right product. This can be done with seminars, in-store trainings, and product demonstrations. Group product demonstrations and showings are the most under-utilized sales methods in retail. Why sell one-on-one to a customer when you can sell to a group?

Focus on benefits: Most market segments are focused on price and product features. Customers don't buy features but rather they buy products that improve their lives. Retailers who translate what they sell into benefits for customers will be rewarded.

Be inviting: One of the first steps toward a better customer experience is to make sure customers are welcomed to the store. Customers like to be acknowledged and greeted but not pounced on. Teach employees how to welcome people as well as thank them for their business. I wish I had a dollar for every time I said thank-you to a cashier and they said "no problem". I feel like saying, "no, that is a problem and didn't you learn any manners from your parents?"

Be a great place to work: Happy employees make for happy customers. Pay your employees well with creative compensation plans that allow them to share in success. Create recognition and reward programs along with fun and engaging contests. Empower people to make decisions and give managers the opportunity to run their businesses. Communicate openly to your employees, think of them as partners and not subordinates. Be flexible. Make work fun. Most important, respect your employees and let them know how much you appreciate them.

Be a fun place to visit: Jordan's Furniture is a fun place to shop. Their flagship 130,000 square foot store in Natick, Massachusetts is

based on a New Orleans Mardi Gras theme complete with a greeter who offers you beads upon entering the store. Every hour "Bourbon Street" comes alive with an exciting animatronics show complete with Elvis, The Village People, Louis Armstrong, and Barry and Eliot themselves. Adults and children alike come to the store to see the show and eat lunch at Kelly's Roast Beef, and maybe when they're there they look at or purchase furniture. And chances are if they don't purchase on that trip, they will purchase at Jordan's when it's time. Most of us are not in a position to make this large of an investment to entertain customers. But with a little creativity and effort, you and your staff can create a fun place to shop.

Keep the focus on the customer: Well-kept stores are important. Replenishing inventory is also important. Focusing on the customer while they are in the store is the most important. Executives and managers need to make sure they are always communicating this. I once worked for a company that had a noble goal of maintaining perfect stores. I learned a lot about managing people and myself in attempting to achieve the goal. Unfortunately the company's actions communicated the message that a clean store was more important than helping customers. Whenever the chairman of the company was in the corporate jet, destination unknown, 75 stores stopped focusing on the customers and instead were feverishly cleaning their stores. I always wondered how much revenue was lost on those days.

Invest in your people: Find great people and keep them. Invest in the employee's training and development. At The Container Store every first-year full-time salesperson receives more than 235 hours of training, over thirty times the industry average. Each Container Store has full-time employees who are dedicated to training all store employees on the features, advantages and benefits of each product, as well as specific training on how to best service and sell to their customers.

Have a retail floor strategy: Most chains have a CRM strategy, an inventory replenishment strategy, an IT strategy, and so on. What scores of retailers lack is a well-defined retail floor strategy. Don't confuse training employees with a floor strategy. A well-defined retail floor strategy should define the desired outcome for customers and create tools for the employee to engage the customers. Expectations must be set for the employees along with mechanisms and rewards to drive the desired behaviors and outcomes. At Bose, our retail employees knew exactly what was to happen at any given time, much like a well diagramed football play. Most stores could execute it like clockwork.

The Road Less Traveled

Delivering experiences is considerably more challenging than selling "things". Most retailers are not willing or able to take on the challenge of delivering experiences. The good news is that the road less traveled is often faster and more scenic. I hope to see you on the road less traveled. Good luck and keep it fun.

Doug Fleener is a veteran retailer with over 25 years of hands-on retail experience with world-class retailers including Bose Corporation as well as owned his own retail store. Fleener is now president of Dynamic Experiences Group, a Lexington, MA-based retail consulting firm that works with retailers to improve their customer experience and profitability. He is also a speaker and author of the book, *The Profitable Retailer: 56 Surprisingly Simple and Effective Lessons to Boost Your Sales and Profits*. Learn more at www.dynamicexperiencesgroup.com



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Aug 22-24 MAGIC -FOOTSTEPS, Las Vegas ~ Las Vegas Convention Center ~ Booth # FF65908 (Level 2) South Hall

Lesson No.1: Be a **Benevolent Dictator**

(and Eight More Lessons for Getting Your Stalled Start-up Off the Ground)

BY MICHAEL FEUER

If you've been afraid to act on your great business idea, now—yes, NOW—is the time to make your move. To help you get started, here are a few of the lessons I learned building my own well-known, successful businesses.

Be your own boss. It's a version of the American Dream that most people have fantasized about. Unfortunately, to many would-be entrepreneurs, getting past the dreaming phase and into the *doing* phase seems insurmountable—especially in a shaky economy where quitting your day job seems foolhardy and funding seems scarcer than, well, pay raises and affordable health insurance.

But the iron is not just hot; it's smoking. And if you don't strike now, someone else just might beat you to it. The perfect time to make your move is when everyone else is afraid to. It's a lot like investing in the stock market—once everyone else starts jumping on the bandwagon, you've missed the window.

The truth is entrepreneurial success *isn't* rocket science. It requires a great idea, the chutzpah to pull the trigger, and the determination and discipline to create and stack the building blocks

needed to get from point A to point B—and from point B all the way to Z.

If anyone knows what it takes to be a successful entrepreneur, it's me. I started OfficeMax with almost no money and built a \$5 billion company in a relatively short period of time. Now I am working to build that same success as founder and CEO of my new venture, Max-Wellness, a health and wellness retail chain.

My new book, *The Benevolent Dictator: Empower Your Employees, Build Your Business, and Outwit the Competition*, tells you how I've reached such great heights. Through scores of specific leadership lessons, this non-traditional guide lays out the leadership methods that can effectively launch a new business and navigate it through the fast-track growth phases that produce tangible success.

Once you've made the decision to take your stalled start-up idea off the shelf, blow away the dust, and move it into the marketplace, you'll need to know what to do (and, just as important, what not to do). My book can help. But in the meantime,

here are nine tested & true tips and insights for getting the job done right:

You'll need to rule your startup like a benevolent dictator.

It's not as scary as it sounds. The “benevolent” part means always putting the entity, the employees, and, most importantly, the customer, first. In other words, you're focused foremost on doing the right thing for the right reasons, for all stakeholders. The “dictator” piece simply means that somebody in a new venture (i.e., you) has to recognize when debate, conversation, and analysis can't take you any farther. At that time you have to decide, “We're taking this fork in the road, for better or worse, and it's on my head.”

With both OfficeMax and Max-Wellness, being the benevolent dictator provided the critical leadership necessary to take an idea and transform it into reality as fast as possible. Remember, beating the competition is never easy. Someone has to be willing to make the important decisions when it counts.

If you don't ask, you won't get.

Whether you're asking an employee to go the extra mile, asking a vendor for a discounted price, or pitching a business concept to an investor, you have to be willing to put yourself out there. Though most entrepreneurs don't like asking others for help, they must learn to live with the process, because it's a stark reality of growing a company.

Asking is certainly much more difficult than getting; however, it becomes much easier if you can learn how to make a strong presentation and tell your story. Attention, interest, desire, and action are the key elements of selling—you can ask for or tell just about anything as long as you do so honestly and spell out the good, the bad, and the ugly.

"No" means "maybe."

The word "no" is just a synonym for "maybe." This realization led me to train my teams to comprehend that the "no" you receive the first nine times is merely a disguised "maybe"—because the other guy is looking for a reason why not to proceed, or doesn't understand what you're asking. It's only after the tenth time—when the other person hangs up on you or walks out of the room and slams the door—that "no" really means "no."

I've seen it over and over: Hearing "no" simply means that you haven't effectively or passionately explained what you need—or adequately expressed how your success will translate to their success. Obviously, you'll have to be tactful. You certainly don't want to alienate potential investors, customers, or employees by harassing them for a more favorable answer. But you don't have to take "no" for an answer either.

Always look at a new idea through your customers' eyes.

Today customers have the power—and they know it. No longer do they have to accept inferior products and dismal service. In our world of almost instant computer-driven communications, blogs, chat rooms, Tweets, Facebook pages, and apps galore, the consumer has come of age. There is a fast-growing movement afoot, and customers of the 21st century will not be denied.

At OfficeMax I had an army of customer service reps who were trained to do the right thing for the customer the first time around. Still, periodically, tenacious customers who



were outraged by a perceived transgression made it their mission to reach the CEO directly. It was during those phone conversations that I truly learned what listening to the customer really meant.

I would identify myself when I answered my phone, and the irate caller would, many times, launch into histrionics. He or she would often suggest I take the angst-causing product and place it where it shouldn't go and wouldn't fit. After the ranting and raving stopped, however, I almost always solved the problem by simply saying, "I'm very sorry. I apologize. You're right." Listening. That's all it took.

Whatever kind of business you're running—whether it's a retailer, software development firm, restaurant, accounting firm, or manufacturer—it's imperative to listen to what your customers are really saying when they tell you

what they want from your business. You must learn how to think like your customers and see things through their eyes, not just yours. In essence, you must create an environment, a product offering, and a way of doing business that makes you the company of choice.

The journey better be as much fun as the destination.

Many a great entrepreneur has been derailed by burnout. It's a disease that can be caused by many factors, but which ultimately boils down to this—too much focus on the final outcome and an inability to enjoy the day-to-day elements of being an entrepreneur. In short, you have to enjoy the journey as much as you enjoy reaching the destination. If you don't, you might make it there, but you won't last long once you get there.

I always incorporated this mindset into my business plans, right down to my daily activities. I'd start the day by handling my most difficult or unpleasant tasks first. With those out of the way, I'd take a management walkabout checking with staff members at all levels. Then I'd move on to thinking time, meeting with colleagues, or sometimes just schmoozing, bonding, or focusing on new and better ways to get things done.

I always tried to teach through my own example that the journey for everyone should be as much fun as the destination. It's important to shape your day-to-day work in a way that allows you to have some fun. By getting the hard stuff out of the way early, you don't have to work with a sense of dread and you're freed up to enjoy the rest of the day. Build some fun into every day, and you'll

stay refreshed and focused on making your business the best it can be.

Let "Mother" do the hiring.

Bad hires are not only disruptive to businesses—they're also expensive. According to a variety of studies, the cost of firing senior- or middle-management personnel can be as high as 300 percent of that person's annual salary, and in some cases even higher. This includes the cost of finding a replacement, training, and the ancillary emotional and unsettling peripheral and disruptive effects. How can you stack the deck in your favor when making a new hire? Listen to your mother.

If there is a voice in your head that sounds like your mother and it's advising you not to hire a certain candidate, the voice is probably just your entrepreneurial instinct telling you to

proceed with caution. But beyond what I call the Mother Rule, there are ways to get job candidates to reveal their own crucial character traits.

One way I vet candidates is to ask them to provide a letter of interest outlining why they think they can get the job done, and what it would take to get them to join the organization. This shows me how the candidate thinks and articulates ideas and concepts—and also lets me know if he or she is thorough and has a sense of urgency by getting back to me in a timely fashion.

Don't drink your own bathwater.

When success is reached, history tends to be rewritten about who did what and why, and how victory was snatched from the jaws of defeat. At a certain level, this is all well and good. The problem arises when the true story gets filtered down, and the lessons from the experience lose their meaning because they're not accurate or they're too vague. This makes it increasingly difficult to apply what you learned to similar future efforts. If something didn't work and no one remembers why, you're usually destined to repeat past mistakes.

Whether you have hit your stride or have reached a milestone, it's imperative to remember one thing: If you don't remain hungry to achieve continued success, you'll soon find yourself believing that you are as great as your last success. Moreover, if you do that, you could drown drinking your own bathwater or make bad mistakes because you trusted without verifying.

Know when it's time to pull the plug.

One of the biggest dilemmas for any entrepreneur, CEO, or business owner is to know when enough is enough. There are peaks and valleys in virtually every company and industry. The trick for an owner is to understand these vacillations and know when it's time for you to sell—to the highest bidder, of course.

The key to fulfillment and continued success is knowing how and when to reinvent one's business and even personal life. It's all about looking for that new twist or turn that might ignite a new burning in the belly.

That time arrived for me when I decided to sell OfficeMax. The company had been—in my mind anyway—something I did for almost 16 years but not who I was. I was thrilled that what I did employed 50,000 people and did business in every state but Vermont, with international operations in China, Japan, Brazil, and Mexico. At the end of the day, I knew that my team and I had built OfficeMax to fulfill its promise of “serving its customers, creating opportunities for its employees, and building value for our shareholders.” With this realization, I knew it was time for me to move on.

Know how to put lightning back in the bottle again and again.

It is absolutely possible to be a repeat entrepreneurial success. Most successful second-act players have honed their instincts and skills and created a series of methodical steps that they follow. They understand how to get from A to Z

while minimizing pain and wasted motions and maximizing available capital. Experience has taught them where to spend the most time and effort to ensure that they meet or beat both others' and their own expectations.

Like many successful entrepreneurs and operators at this stage, I live to work rather than work to live. I love the challenge, thrive on naysayers telling me it can't be done, and get great satisfaction in proving the pessimists wrong. I won't presume to understand the psychological reason why anybody does anything, but the simple answer for me is that I put lightning back in the bottle because I know I can. There's nothing more gratifying to me than starting from scratch and building a meaningful and relevant business, and if it's a giant, so much the better.

Navigating a start-up venture is about as close as you can get to a 24/7 ride on the world's scariest roller coaster. Every morning, when the entrepreneur gets out of bed, it's showtime. And every evening, when that same would-be tycoon restlessly drifts off to sleep, he says a silent prayer, giving thanks for the fact that he's survived the preceding 18 hours or so and asking to be granted the strength to fight another day.

If that sounds like an exhilarating life to you—and if you're prepared to lead and to put the interests of your customers and employees ahead of your own—why not go for it? Take a chance. Pull the trigger. Start building something great. It doesn't matter what's going on in the economy. If you're feeling that burning in the belly, there will never be a better time than now.



About the Authors:

Michael Feuer cofounded OfficeMax in 1988 starting with one store and \$20,000 of his own money, a partner, and a small group of investors. As CEO, he grew it to more than 1,000 stores worldwide with annual sales topping \$5 billion. He is also CEO of Max-Ventures, a venture capital and retail consulting firm, and cofounder and CEO of Max-Wellness, a comprehensive health and wellness retail chain that launched in 2010. After opening initial laboratory test stores in Florida and Ohio, a national roll-out is now underway.

Dustin S. Klein, contributor and editor of *The Benevolent Dictator*, is the publisher and executive editor of Smart Business Network, publishers of Smart Business, the nation's second-largest chain of regional business publications.

He has interviewed thousands of senior executives and civic leaders across America. He is a regular presenter on business-related issues for public and private business audiences and is a frequent guest on television, radio, and Internet programs.

About the Book:

The Benevolent Dictator: Empower Your Employees, Build Your Business, and Outwit the Competition (Wiley, 2011, ISBN: 978-1-118-00391-6, \$24.95, www.benevolentdictator.biz) is available at bookstores nationwide and from major online booksellers.

CELEBRITIES & Fashion

“Everybody lives by selling something,” wrote Robert Louis Stevenson, author of “Treasure Island.” Agents, CMOs and deal makers will always get starry-eyed by the big names of “celebrity” because brands love endorsements, and consumers buy into “celebrity.”

As the editor of FOCUS magazine, I attend many entertainment and Red Carpet events in Los Angeles and other cities around the world. Yes, it is fun to be at and watch, but it also becomes clear to me, that this is a very profitable business. In addition to enjoying active careers and all but monopolizing magazine covers these days, many of the women on Red Carpets also happen to have lucrative fashion or beauty endorsement deals on the side. Athletes, actors/actresses, just almost any kind of celebrity- they all are the walking money making machines for various companies: Tiger Woods and Michael Jordan (Nike), Kim Kardashian and Wayne Gretzky (Skechers), Matthew McConaughey (Dolce & Gabbana), Jessica Biel (Revlon)- the list goes on and on. The moment a celebrity puts something on and gets exposed to the media, the media creates the “BUZZ”. BAM! The product gets noticed. BAM! The product is talked about. BAM! The product SELLS.

Use of Celebrity works, sales for some brands increased up to 20% or even higher, upon commencing an endorsement deal.

An estimated \$50 billion is invested globally on corporate sponsorships and endorsements. So before we shoot a golf ball through celebrity endorsements, let’s recognize that they’ve never gone out of vogue nor will they, because the rewards of relying on an endorser can far outweigh the risks. Celebrity endorsement does not give just a face to a product but adds aspirational value to the brand thus making it more desirable for the Charleze Theron lovers, thus justifying that extra cost that a consumer is willing to pay to own the product

Mr./ Ms. X endorses. Celebrities create, or help creating fashion trends and this is why we’re starting a new section in FOCUS covering exactly that, what celebrities are wearing, for your professional and personal pleasure, enjoy!

-A.G.

Above photos:

Penelope Cruz at the Pirates of the Caribbean screening wearing Marchesa gown, Chopard earrings, Jimmy Choo shoes and a Swarovski Power clutch. Depp is wearing Mascot sunglasses

Gwen Stefani attended the premiere of This Must Be The Place wearing Swarovski’s red crystal Power clutch.

From the Red Carpets



Salma Hayek at Puss in Boots premiere, wearing Prada



Ron Wood wearing a Montblanc Profile Watch and Ana Araujo wearing a Montblanc profile watch as well as Premiere rencontre Necklace.



Goldie Hawn in Roberto Cavalli



Model Bianca Balti wearing Cartier jewelry



Model Karolina Kurkova with Cartier jewelry

Charlize Theron is wearing the Dior Moon Busiter dress, watch is the Dior VIII 38mm automatic



L'Oréal ambassador Aimee Mullins wearing Swarovski 'Crash' Earrings at The Calvin Klein Party



Transformers 3 Rosie Huntington-Whiteley wearing Naeem Khan dress, Shia LaBeouf wearing Prada suit



Paris Hilton is wearing Tony Ward Couture dress, Katerina Maxine earrings and Le Vian ring at the "Race to Erase MS"



Brandy Norwood, MsBellezza Jewelry



Jodie Foster is wearing Armani dress and Cartier jewelry, Mel Gibson is wearing Armani



Actress Diane Kruger wears a Jaeger-LeCoultre's Grande Reverso Lady Ultra Thin in pink gold



Karina Smirnoff, MsBellezza Jewelry





jeans Sizing and conversion

(for women)

Measuring Guidelines

Everyone wants to look great in their jeans. Jean sizing varies by designer. It is recommended you also review measurements. Waist and hip measurements can vary, in the same size jeans, based on where the pants sit. (high-waisted to super-low rise). Many designers and boutique lines are labeling the fit of their pants by a style name. Become familiar with the fit you like and the corresponding names for the designers you prefer. The usual differences are where the jeans fit in relation to the waist and hips (low rise, mid-rise), the hip and leg fit (straight, skinny, loose, relaxed) and the leg opening (boot cut, flare, tapered).

How to Measure

For most people the waist measurement is the most confusing since most jeans are now low rise and therefore don't come anywhere near your natural waist. For most jeans the sizing is still based on your waist measurement, unless stated otherwise. When in doubt, use the hip measurement, since at this time it is the most relevant.

Waist: Measure around the smallest portion of your waist. Although it's higher than you're going to wear your jeans, this is the figure that determines most waist measurements. So, be careful not to hold the measuring tape lower, or you may end up with loose-waisted jeans. If your measuring existing jeans, lay them flat and measure the waist from side to side and then double that figure.

Rise: Start at the center seam where the legs meet. Measure the distance to the top of the waistband. Note the length to the bottom of the waistband and including the waistband.

Hips: Measure around the widest portion of your hips. This is usually just below the top of your hip bones. If your measuring existing jeans just lay them flat and measure at the widest point of the jeans and double that measurement.



Inseam length: Measure the inside of your leg from your crotch to the floor wearing the shoes you will wear with the jeans. If you have an existing pair of jeans lay them flat and measure them from the crotch seam to the bottom of the jeans.

Leg Opening: Is the bottom of the leg, measured across

Thigh Width: Wrap the measuring tape around the widest portion of one of your thighs. Again, if you have existing jeans, just lay them flat and measure the widest portion of the thigh and double it.



7 For All Mankind



Nockauf

Women's and Junior's Sizing by Number, Letter, Waist and Measurement

NOTE: All sizing information varies by rise, fit and designer. Even numbered sizes are women's and odd numbered sizes are juniors.

| NUMBER SIZE | LETTER SIZE | SIZING BY WAIST | APRX. WAIST MEASUREMENTS |
|-------------|-------------|-----------------|---------------------------------------|
| 00, 0 | XS | 24 | ~ 26"(mid rise 0) to (low rise 0) 28" |
| 1/2 | XS | 25 | ~ 29" |
| 3/4 | S | 26 | ~ 29-30" (mid-rise 27" to 31") |
| 5, 6 | S | 27 | ~ 30" - 31" |
| 7 | M | 28 | low-rise 32" - 33", mid-rise 30" |
| 8,9 | M | 29 | 32" to 34" |
| 10.11 | L | 30 | low-rise ~36" |
| 12 | L | 31 | |
| 13 | L-XL | 32 | mid-rise ~35" - 36" |
| 14 | L-XL | | |
| 16 | XL-XXL | | mid-rise ~36" |

Jeans sold by Waist size usually stop at 32, which is approximately a Juniors size 13.
Please be aware of manufacturers' differences in sizing and the waist measurement variance

THE HABITAT SHOP

by Kenny Gee

How do you follow the previous issue of Focus where this column “Entrepreneur of the Month” featured advice from mogul Donald Trump? You don’t try to, as I am no Donald Trump. I am however Kenny Gee, a young entrepreneur who literally had a dream and created something from nothing. A billionaire I am not - a regular person like most of you who has always been a dreamer, I am. I was asked by the Editor of Focus, Alex Geyman who visited my store in New York City, The Habitat Shop, what were some of the obstacles I faced launching my business, lessons I learned and what advice I would give to other aspiring entrepreneurs. Needless to say I thought this was an amazing opportunity to share with all of you my endless journey to opening a successful retail venture and the truths I live by.

To set the scene I was born and raised in Manhattan, New York City. I come from humble beginnings and am the younger of two boys. I grew up in a small tenement with a single Mom and a Dad who left us without any support. With one parent who constantly worked, we had no choice but to learn self-sufficiency. My mom however never wanted us to feel bound or defined by our lower-class situation so with her hard earned money working as a clerk for the Post Office, she gave us all of the opportunities the world had to offer - going to the theatre and museums, skiing in Vermont, riding horses Upstate, vacations to the tropics and private college. I went on to receive a BA from New York University and an Associate from The Fashion Institute of Technology for Interior Design and Fashion.

Passion and self-fulfilling prophecy:

Start with an idea that you truly believe in, whether that’s a concept, a product or service and never let it out of your mind - sleep, eat, drink and breathe



THE HABITAT SHOP

THE HABITAT SHOP

143

OPEN

it because the more it becomes a part of you, the easier it will be to manifest. I myself believe in self-fulfilling prophecy. Many books have been written about this ideology but simply put, whatever you imagine for yourself you can make a reality. Mix in a ton of hard work and passion and anything is possible - everything I have set out to do, be it school, career, travel or personal relationships, has materialized in some way. An interesting story; many years ago I passed by the construction site of what would be the new Hearst publishing headquarters. There were huge billboards promoting their publications such as Marie Claire, Cosmopolitan, and Seventeen. There were also renderings of what the "Eco friendly" all-glass tower was to be. It looked glorious and I remember thinking, "I so envy the people that will get to work in such a prestigious building." I thought I too would die for the opportunity to work there. Years later, after deciding to make the transition from Interior Designer to the magazine industry and after applying to every design magazine, multiple times, I was offered a position as an Editor at House Beautiful, a Hearst publication! And you can bet that every morning I rode up the escalator through the cascading lobby fountain, I thought about that day I walked past the construction site and longed to be one of the privileged. However, on the cusp of "The Recession" I left House Beautiful - I wanted more control over my career and I decided I wanted to embark on my true calling, being an entrepreneur.

Think outside of the box:

Having come from an interior design background, I originally planned to open a furniture and home accessories store. But a few months into pitching a home store, I had a catharsis. How could I compete with largely established home stores like Pottery Barn, Crate and Barrel and West Elm. How would my smaller boutique be different and how would I convince a customer to take a chance on an unknown brand versus a household name. The solution became crystal clear - I would have to change my

business model from "home store" to "lifestyle store." Not a common retail concept, I decided to combine my love of all things design and create a store that would sell clothing, jewelry, bags, baby and pet gifts, furniture, home accessories, lighting, art and rugs - a one-stop-shop named The Habitat Shop because I would sell everything in your habitat! By increasing the product categories I could increase the probability that someone would make a purchase. If you went to a furniture store and didn't like anything you might leave empty handed, but at my store if you didn't find a piece of furniture, you might find a dress or a necklace or that baby shower gift you forgot about. Putting together a well-curated collection of goods, I am able to offer my customer something different than a store that sells solely clothes or furniture and present a unique shopping experience unlike most.

Stand for something or you'll fall for anything:

While looking at real-estate with a friend who had a successful catering business and was searching for a bakery space, it suddenly clicked - the years I had imagined having my own business was to manifest in a retail space. I remember during its conception thinking, what do I want my business to stand for? The first thing that came to mind was "Affordable Luxury" - I quickly jotted it down on a post-it note and stuck it to my computer. Two years later and eight months into opening, it is still there as a reminder of what my business continues to stand for. The reality is that we are in a recession and people are conscious of their spending. Sales and promotions inundate in my email box. Sale signs line every 5th Avenue store year round, not just at the end of the season. People want a bargain but more importantly they want the same high quality. And the surprise is that this is actually possible with two major strategies - the right mark-up and knowing your customer demographic. Firstly, while 2 to 2.5 are the standard, many major retail stores mark-up 3-4 times the wholesale cost. How do they get away with it? Because they are a name brand and

people will pay more for a household label. But when you're a young start-up like me, you have to be conscious of the mark-up and maybe take less of a profit while you build your customer base. Every day, both new and repeat customers comment on the affordable price point for the quality of merchandise I carry. Secondly, is to know the store's demographic, which will take a bit of time. I definitely had a point of view as to who I was shopping for, combined with my own personal taste. I scoured major trade shows with thousands of companies, looked through countless magazines, all in order to curate what I thought was the store's signature look. After opening, over the first months customers began to dictate much of the information I needed to know. What sizes sold best, what price points they would pay, colors, patterns, silhouettes and styles. You learn from your customers so that the next time you go to market you concentrate on what is going to be most sellable and continue to reorder what has been your best sellers - all while maintaining your point of view. Dictating trends is a two way street.

How do you start a business?

So let me backtrack. Starting my business did not happen without major obstacle and hardship. During the almost two years developing this venture I was literally unemployed. I had max'd out all my credit cards and started the long process of negotiating my lease and construction - all the while working odd -jobs to stay financially afloat. No one had told me how to open a retail store and I didn't have a partner or investors. I literally had to figure out on my own what this process was. There is absolutely no trick or secret to this except good old-fashioned common sense, intellect and asking advice of any professional who will give you the time. The most important tip I can give you is to avoid looking at the venture in its entirety. It will overwhelm you, possibly discourage and scare you into thinking it is too large an endeavor to take on. The goal is to deconstruct the business and outline all of the steps necessary - one by one check off your



list. By breaking it down, your large endeavor becomes palatable. The first and most important task is to create your Business Plan as it will be reviewed by everyone from your bank, investors, real-estate agents to your landlord and in my case the co-op board of the building. After that is completed, the list for me included going to trade shows to source merchandise, research price-points, applying for bank loans, lines of credit, applying to nonprofits for small business loans, choosing an architect, contractor, real-estate attorney, CPA, setting up phone, internet, electricity and insurance policies. In addition, designing what the space would look like, selecting materials and colors, display units, mannequins and the list goes on. BUT, step by step, before you know it you have reached the end of that list! It is a hugely grueling process and you will feel like quitting at some point. You will feel disparaged especially when things don't happen easily or in your favor – countless doors will be slammed in your face and you will hear "NO" more times than "YES" but you have to remain focused and persevere.

Use the recession to your advantage - there's no such thing as luck:

One of my favorite Oprah quotes goes something like this, "I don't believe in luck, luck is preparation at the point of opportunity." When asked how I was able to open a store during such difficult times, my answer is quite simple; I used the recession to my advantage. Instead of being intimidated to start a venture or scared that I would not find a consistent customer base, I thought about the old sayings – "turning lemons into lemonade" and "seeing the glass half full, not half empty." Everywhere in the media we were hearing that due to the recession, big business was closing, people were being laid off, losing their homes – negative after negative. But at the same time I also heard things like, it was a renter's market and small business with less overhead could get their foot through the door. Incentives were given to young start-ups to help boost the economy. I realized, now more than ever I could find a retail space and aggressively negotiate a more affordable rent for the square footage and prime location. After starting negotiations on three previous spaces and all falling through for one reason or another, I persevered and along with my new real-estate agent found the ideal space. I was able to negotiate added incentives including a longer free-rent period, longer lease term, and a landlord monetary contribution toward my build-out expense. With 3000 square feet, 14 foot high ceilings and a 2000 square foot basement for storage, I am located on 19th street between 6th and 7th avenue - a prime location in the trendy

Chelsea neighborhood. With neighbors like Pottery Barn, West Elm, American Apparel, The Container Store, Bed Bath & Beyond and all of 5th avenue fashion retail, I am in the middle of a shopping destination and I know for a fact I never would have been able to attain such a deal under a healthier economy.

Believe in yourself and ignore the naysayers - there's no such thing as "try":

There are people in your life - associates, friends, even family who will have doubts, concerns, worries out of love and all together negativity to spew but you cannot let any of it deter you. There are people who "say" and people who "do". Like I said earlier, you will have moments of self-doubt, but at the end of the day, it is imperative that you believe in yourself, your abilities and know that your endeavor is going to be a success. In fact, use other's negativity to fuel you and to prove them wrong! Stick-to-it-ive-ness is an actual word that I love because it pretty much sums up what you need to do, stick to it! No successful entrepreneur ever took "NO" for an answer or allowed others to dissuade them from reaching their dream. There is a metaphor I once heard that resonated with me, the person simply told me to "try" and lift my right arm, so I lifted my right arm and they said exactly, there's no such thing as "try", you either do it or you don't. If you don't have the confidence and strength to push through to the end, to lift your right arm so to speak – then you are not meant to be an entrepreneur.

Network, network and network:

Business is all about networking. As you know we do not exist in a bubble and as the saying goes, "it takes a village..." Every chance you get to tell someone about your venture, DO! You never know who will have words of wisdom to share, or who can help you directly or will know someone that they can connect you with. I myself pulled from my contacts at previous jobs for a number of favors that helped in getting my business off the ground. A little bit of charm, humility and guts go a long way. Also I attended any party and event I could get an invitation to, as people who are actually in your industry are going to be the pool of people that are most helpful and relevant. At such events, you cannot be too timid to literally tell people all about your venture and always exchange

business cards. If they can't help you start your business, at the least they can be a customer!

Never stay static - always think a step ahead:

Once you've got your business up and running never stay static. The world is moving at a nanosecond's pace. People want change and variety every day. If you allow your business to stay stagnant, people will inevitably lose interest and move on to the next big thing. Keep your merchandise, displays and product selections growing. Every time I have a repeat customer come in, I am always able to tell them of a new promotion, and new inventory that arrived since their last visit. Now that I've been in business for eight months and more revenue is coming in every month I am able to continually put money back into the business to assure its growth. With successful departments, I am now concentrating on further developing the Furniture department, creating a Men's department and most importantly creating an E-commerce website. It is a must for every retail business to have an online presence. The revenue generated from a successful E-commerce website will take the business to the next level. Also though we currently carry other labels, on the horizon is developing my own line of home products and possibly a fashion line – I am always open to collaborations with other companies as well. Lastly, a chain of The Habitat Shop is always in my peripheral. Knowing that it can take upwards of a year to find the right space and begin lease negotiations, though it is a bit premature there is no harm in starting to look at potential spaces in other neighborhoods to capture a different demographic.

My final point is this, while you need to continue nurturing, growing and strengthening your brand identity and industry presence, you always need to think a step ahead. Never rest on what you have built thus far because the journey is endless and those who consistently and continually set a higher bar, can dream a bigger dream will remain relevant in today's ever-evolving environment.



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Stop Selling!

Start making it easier for them to buy!

for FOCUS on Fashion Retail by Kristin Zhivago

Take off your selling hat for a second. Yes, I know you need and want to sell more. Don't we all? But thinking like a seller is the biggest, baddest mistake you can make. It's easy to make, of course - the minute you start running a business or selling for a living, you shift into seller mode. As you do, you start to distance yourself from the very people who can make you successful. *They* think like buyers, not sellers. Given that no sale is made unless someone decides to buy, it makes a whole lot of sense for all of us to pay more attention to our customers' buying process.

As buyers, we all know that our "buying process" has changed *radically* in the last ten years or so, thanks to search engines, websites, filtering functions, customer reviews published at the point of purchase, and the really user-friendly online retail sites such as Amazon and Zappos.

Meanwhile, sellers are trying all sorts of things in an attempt to appeal to their buyers, with very little revenue growth to show for it.

In this article, I'm going to help you think more like a buyer, and I'm also going to give you

very specific tools that you can use to find out exactly what your buyers expect from you, what things they would gladly buy from you, and how you can sell more.

First let's go shopping with Jane.

Jane is looking for a dress to wear to an upcoming party. More often than not, the first thing she does is go online and start looking at what's out there, using a search engine as well as visiting her favorite retail sites. She has something very specific in mind. As she shops - a process that can literally take hours - she has questions.

The site that has the style she's looking for, makes it easy to find, and then answers all her questions is the site that is most likely to make that sale. Yes, low prices help, more so than ever, but if you were to offer Jane the "perfect" dress for \$20 or even \$50 more, a dress that she absolutely loves, she will work very hard to talk herself into justifying the expense.

Buyers like Jane are now in control of the buying press. They have the World's Largest Searchable Catalog, right at their fingertips. They will click from one site to another in an attempt to find what they want. If they find

something promising, they keep it on an active tab, and keep looking until they can compare a few possibilities. They then drill down on each item, attempting to get their questions answered. At least, that's what they want to do. If your site fails to answer their questions - when they first arrive, or as they dig further, they will click over to the site that does answer their questions.

There's a lot of talk about "buyer personas" these days. Know who Jane is, and supposedly you can sell to her more effectively. My interviews with real customers always reveals just the opposite. Marketers have used their knowledge about Jane to actually impede her buying process. For example, when Jane comes to a site, the retailer might give her a choice of "bohemian," "classic," and "chic." But what Jane wants is to find a party dress. She doesn't necessarily know what category they put her desired dress into. She's been disappointed before by the way retailers have categorized their products; she doesn't want to chase down another series of dead ends.

She literally wants you to get out of the way - so nothing stands between her and the little dress she is imagining herself wearing to that party.

When Jane started her buying process, she actually had a “perfect buyer scenario” in mind. This Buyer Scenario is much more important than the Persona. It’s the experience that the buyer wants to have, playing out from start to finish.

Jane would be thrilled if she could go online, type “little black party dress” into a search engine, and be presented with dozens of tempting little black dresses, with pictures, material, sizes, and prices. She would love to check off several of them, so she could examine them more deeply and compare them. She wants help weighing her tradeoffs. *This one is really gorgeous, but it’s awfully expensive, and it might show stains more readily than the other one. This other one isn’t as stylish, but it might be more adaptable to other social occasions (and that shirring under the bust might make me look and feel slimmer).*

Jane would also appreciate a filtering capability that enables her to select the features she would like to see. So often, these filtering functions are frustrating, because they simply don’t focus on the issues that Jane really cares about. Often, if she enters more than one filtering criteria, she gets zero results. That means that clothing manufacturers are not paying enough attention to the criteria that are important to the Janes of the world.

Jane has questions. *What’s this one made out of? Wash or dry clean? How does it handle stains? What’s the real color? Does it stretch? How thick/thin/sheer is the material? Will it shrink? How long- or short-waisted is it? Will it fit me? How much does it cost? Can I see it up close - so close that I can actually see the material composition and the stitching?* [Size



is a big issue; Jane wears a 14 - 16 blouse and 12 in pants. She’s a petite, but when she buys petite sizes, the arms are always too short.] *If the item doesn’t fit well, will I be able to return it conveniently? Will this match my [other outfits]? Is it in stock? Do they have my size and my color? What have other buyers thought of it?*

Usually, only a third to a half of these questions are answered on retail sites. The lack of information means that Jane will keep looking, because she will feel that she hasn’t “found it” yet. She will only feel she has “found it” if all of her questions are answered - and answered to her satisfaction. Thus, your job, as a seller, with your website, is to answer all of her questions. And you have to know all of the questions she might ask. I will show you how to find out.

What if Jane shops at the mall instead of her

computer? At the mall, she has the advantage of being able to feel the material and trying on the item. Many of her questions are answered, right there. But at the store, the item might not be available in her size, or she may be disappointed in the “look” when she tries it on.

There is also the added factor of the salesperson in the retail store. Jane will either be totally ignored or pounced on.

When the salesperson does engage, the standard query, “Can I help?” is a silly question. It only invites a “No, thanks” response. Jane is pretty sure that the person can’t help, based on her previous experiences.

The salesperson could be more helpful - and more successful - if she asked questions that would help Jane describe what she’s really looking for. “What kind of dress would you really like to find?”

If the salesperson lets Jane talk until she has described the desired effect (which is really why we buy clothing, shoes, accessories and jewelry - we are shooting for a desired effect), the salesperson will then be able to present the best options.

Marketing and selling to the Janes of the world

Buyers have changed the way they buy. They are taking full advantage of the online tools available. They are paying a lot of attention to the content generated by customers like them, and little attention to the product descriptions provided by manufacturers and retailers. When they have almost decided to buy, they will turn to the manufacturer or retailer, to get very specific questions answered. At that point, their questions are usually very specific. You must answer those very specific questions in order to make the sale. What are those questions?

While all of these changes have been happening on the consumer side, there’s been an explosion in the number of channels available to you as you try to reach customers, including social media and mobile. The “experts” pitching you are claiming that you must participate in those channels, or you will be left behind in the dust heap. Should you get involved in the new channels - or not at all? Would an effort pay off, or bomb?

You can resolve both of these unknowns by using one method, a method that has been proven in literally hundreds of situations with thousands upon thousands of customers. You can find out the questions that you must answer in order for Jane to complete her purchase with you, and you can determine how your customers are using new channels to make their buying decisions.

About the Book:

Roadmap to Revenue: How to Sell the Way Your Customers Want to Buy is a step-by-step guide to increasing revenue, no matter what you sell or whom you sell it to. It teaches how to interview current and prospective customers to understand and act on their needs, perceptions, and buying journey. It includes management advice on the most effective application of marketing and selling methods. Published by Bristol & Shipley Press, 1st edition April 15, 2011. Available on Amazon and all other retailers.

Further information is available at <http://www.RoadmapToRevenue.com>



**Here's the method, which I describe in step-by-step detail in my new book,
*Roadmap to Revenue: How to Sell the Way Your Customers Want to Buy.***

1 Conduct in-depth, conversational interviews of at least 7 customers in a given category. Select the customers carefully; your goal is to analyze your most successful sales and then “reverse-engineer” them so you can create new sales in quantity. Interview customers by phone, rather than using any other method. I explain why and how, in my book. You will be asking open-ended questions and then letting them talk. The method is conversational - you'll be introducing “conversation starters” with each question - rather than conducting a survey. Surveys are boring and seldom extract meaningful information that you can use to grow your revenue.

2 When I conduct these interviews for clients, the “big picture” issues emerge quite clearly by the 7th in-depth interview. The trends are undeniably obvious. I know the kind of information they must see in order to make a purchase, the types of products they are hoping to buy from my client, how they buy, and the trends that are influencing their buying process, needs, and perceptions. I know how their customers feel about certain types of fashion and why, what they wish more retailers would do, and how my client can make it easier for them to make buying decisions (and return to make more purchases). I find out why they came to my client in the first place, and what they find special about that client. I also find out what they think my client could improve.

You may think you know the answers to these questions now, but I know from personal experience that you are missing very important

issues and dynamics that are influencing your sales levels. When I start working with a client, they always tell me what they think is important to customers. Then I interview customers. Their issues, concerns, and priorities are decidedly different than what my client assumed, even if they interact with customers as customers buy. Customers simply don't reveal what they're really thinking in those situations. You have to wait until after the sale is consummated, and then ask them correctly, before they will reveal the inner thoughts that drove their purchase.

If you're conducting interviews yourself, you'll want to talk to more than 7 people - more like 10 to 15 - to make sure they've revealed the information you need, and to overcome people's natural tendency to sugar-coat their comments because they're talking to you about your products, service, and company. They are always more blunt when they're talking to me. After successfully conducting these interviews, you will know how best to use the channels available to you, and what you have to do to your website and/or retail establishment(s) to make it easier for the Janes of the world to make their buying decisions.

3 You will organize and summarize your findings, then present the data in a Brainstorming and Planning meeting. Using what you've learned, you and your team can map out your customers' buying process, and how you will support it at every step. You'll find very specific instructions for these activities in *Roadmap to Revenue*, including insights and solutions for corporate politics, budgeting, and ongoing project/employee management.

Your business is unique. Your products are unique. What works for another company probably won't work for you. You can figure out what will work for you by understanding what your customers want to buy from you and how they want to buy it. Right now, this information is locked in the minds of your current customers, but you can access that information fairly easily using the methods I describe in *Roadmap to Revenue*.

Customers will not tell you what they're thinking while they're in the process of buying from you (we are all poker players when we're buying), but after they buy, they will be more than happy to help you. They want you to succeed, because they want to buy from you again. They want you to have what they're looking for. They want you to make it easy to find and analyze. And they want to buy

from you, if you answer all their questions satisfactorily.

The “roadmap to revenue” starts with the realization that sellers and buyers think differently, and nothing is sold until a buyer decides to buy. The sooner you immerse yourself in the reality of their buying process, the sooner you will start selling more.



About the Author:

Kristin Zhivago is a Revenue Coach to companies of all sizes. She helps CEOs and entrepreneurs increase their revenue, by understanding what their customers really want to buy from them and how they want to buy it. Clients have included IBM, Johnson & Johnson, Dow Jones, Abbey St Clare, Wimco, Bazaarvoice, and hundreds of other companies. Zhivago also speaks worldwide on the subject of increasing revenue, marketing, sales, and social media. She can be reached at kristin@zhivago.com. Her revenue-growth advice blog is www.RevenueJournal.com.

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MARKETING SURVEY

Please fill out this form completely, answering ALL questions. Incomplete or inaccurate entries will not be considered.

I certify that I am: Retailer _____ (signature) / Not a Retailer

If a retailer, please tell about your store:

Specialty: Men Women Children
Age Group: Infants And Kids Teens 20-30 30-45 45+
Retail Price Point: Discount Budget (\$20-40) Moderate (\$40-70) Upper Moderate (\$70-120)
 Lower High End (\$120-\$200) High-End (\$200-\$400) Luxury (\$400+)
Store Type: Independent Boutique Dept. Store Chain Store 1-5 Locations Chain Store 5+ Locations
Merchandise: Shoes Only Apparel Only Accessories Only All
Lifestyle: Dress Casual Athletic Comfort Special Occasions Western Dance Urban Ethic Beach
 Gothic/Alternative/Other _____

Best Selling Brands _____

Notes About Your Store _____

- **Your Primary Business Sources** (describe):
 Trade Magazines _____
 Consumer Magazines _____
 Trade Shows _____
 Internet Catalogs
- **How Do You Find New Merchandise?:** At Trade Shows Responding To Ads Sellers Contact You
- **At Trade Shows You:**
 Know Exactly What You Need And Who Sells It
 Know Exactly What You Need But Don't Know Who Sells It
 Just Looking
- **How Frequently Do You Purchase Merchandise For Your Store?:**
 Every Month Every 3 Months Every 6 Months
- **Your Average Purchase Is:** Less Than \$1,000 \$1-5k \$5-10k \$10k+
- **Your Priorities Are (Please RATE, 1 is most important):** Price Fashion Brand Quality Other _____

- **RETAILER:** Please name your 3 biggest headaches to which you want to find a solution:
 1. _____
 2. _____
 3. _____

- **Any Suggestions/ Comments to help FFR to become more helpful to your business?** _____

YOUR OPINION COUNTS !

As a service to our worldwide audience, Focus on Fashion Retail regularly conducts surveys to determine satisfaction with the various footwear, apparel and accessories trade shows and to rank our readers' favorites. Being an independent media outlet not affiliated with any trade show, we believe that peoples' opinion must be heard, it adds up to the value of our services as well as serves the needs of the industry.

As always, in the closing issue of the year (November) we will be announcing and reviewing the TOP 10 TRADE SHOWS of 2011. For that purpose, we will be conducting this survey throughout the year, offering to rate performance of various shows. Events collected the maximum score will make it to the final list.

If you have attended any of the shows listed below and would like to submit your opinion, please do so according to these rules:

- Rate the shows you have attended on the scale of 1 through 10, where 1 is awful and 10 is awesome;
- You must identify yourself (see opposite side);
- Your opinion must be fair and objective;
- You must be an independent observer, not employed by not affiliated with any trade show;
- Please rate only those events that you have attended within last 6 months.

Upon completion, please send this form to FFR. Your personal information will not be disclosed, nor shared with anybody.

| Show | Organization, Planning, Promotion | Attendance, Traffic | Convenience | Services offered at the show | Cost of attending/exhibiting | Value for your business |
|--|-----------------------------------|---------------------|-------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------|
| AccessoriesTheShow | | | | | | |
| Atlanta Apparel Market | | | | | | |
| Australian Shoe Fair | | | | | | |
| Chicago Collective | | | | | | |
| Dallas Apparel & Accessories Market | | | | | | |
| ENKVegas | | | | | | |
| Fame | | | | | | |
| Fashion Coterie | | | | | | |
| Focus- Apparel & Accessories Show | | | | | | |
| GDS International Event for Shoes & Accessories | | | | | | |
| International Fashion Jewelry and Accessory Show | | | | | | |
| KIDShow | | | | | | |
| Kidz | | | | | | |
| LA KIDS MARKET | | | | | | |
| MAGIC | | | | | | |
| MICAM Shoevent | | | | | | |
| MIPEL | | | | | | |
| Moda Las Vegas | | | | | | |
| Moda Manhattan | | | | | | |
| MODACALZADO+ IBERPIEL | | | | | | |
| Mode Accessories | | | | | | |
| Mode Shanghai | | | | | | |
| MRket LV | | | | | | |
| OFFPRICE Show | | | | | | |
| Outdoor Retailer | | | | | | |
| Pool Trade Show | | | | | | |
| Premium | | | | | | |
| Project | | | | | | |
| Sapica | | | | | | |
| SELECT- The Contemporary Trade Show | | | | | | |
| Shenzhen International Jewellery Fair | | | | | | |
| Shoe Market of the Americas (SMOTA) | | | | | | |
| SIMM- Semana Internacional De La Moda | | | | | | |
| Sole Commerce | | | | | | |
| Stylemax | | | | | | |
| The Atlanta Shoe Market | | | | | | |
| The New York Shoe Expo (FFANY) | | | | | | |
| Toronto Shoe Show | | | | | | |
| Transit- The Los Angeles Shoe Show | | | | | | |
| WomensWear In Nevada- WWIN | | | | | | |



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Luxury accessories line is looking for an in-house rep with experience in accessories, handbags, and small leather goods. Our company, Thale Blanc launched last year and has since received press from Genlux, Shape Magazine, Daily Candy, Angeleno, and numerous online editorials as well as sold out collections at Ron Robinson Fred Segal & Saks Jandel. We are currently looking for an energetic sales rep to expand our collection to department stores and luxury national retailers. Preferably 5-10 years experience in luxury accessory sales with a focus on department stores and high-end retailers and network with buyers and agents nationally and internationally. Please send resume to info@thaleblanc.com or call 310.472.2740 to apply.

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Cobb Galleria Centre | Renaissance Waverly Hotel

MAGIC: AUGUST 22, 23, 24
Las Vegas Convention Center

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