

BUSINESS MAGAZINE FOR FASHION LIFESTYLE RETAILERS

FOCUS ON SHOES

MAY 2008

VOL. 33

THE KEY TO BEING RECESSION RESISTANT
BUSINESS TELEPHONE ETIQUETTE
TRADE SHOWS CALENDAR
PROMOTION PLANNING
AND MORE!



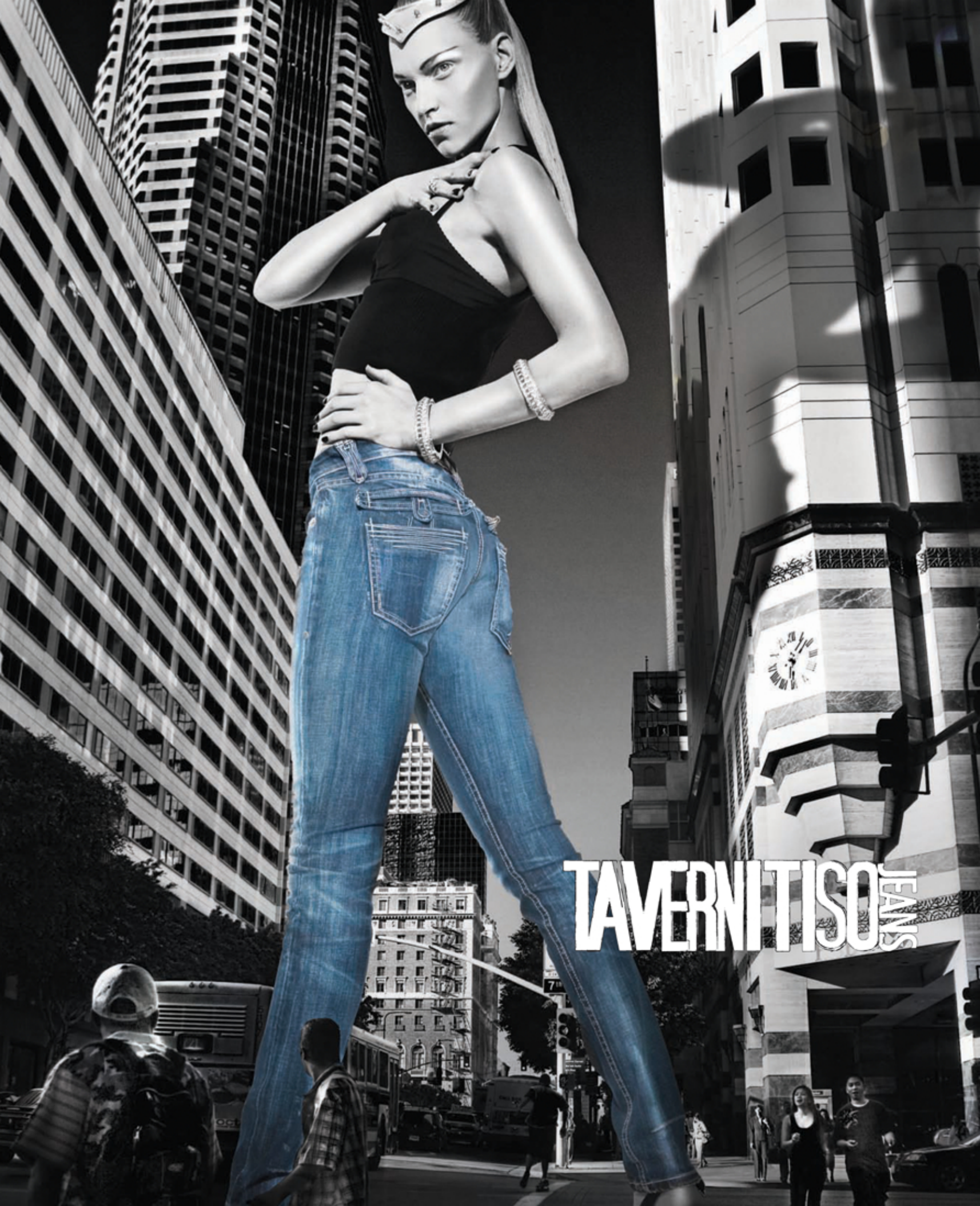
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FOR FALL/WINTER '08

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May is here and the sights and sounds of spring are everywhere.

The air is mild, new buds appear, sun shines in a cloudless sky; yet tomorrow it will rain. But that's all right, because I know there will be sunny days again after the storm. Rainy days are natural occurrences, and they will pass—just like the things that threaten our livelihoods and businesses on a daily basis.

Listen. As we struggle to make our businesses work, everything seems to be turning against us: escalating oil prices, dwindling property values, a pervasive credit crisis, and consumers who don't spend. It would be foolish to deny these realities. Yet, it would be just as foolish to assume that they'll never end, that the sun will never shine again. It's certainly true that negative reports get the most press. But we cannot and should not let bad news rule our lives, because it's equally true that economic downturns can be largely self-fulfilling as people trim expenses through fear of worsening economic conditions, unwittingly contributing to a perpetual cycle of economic scarcity.

Focusing on the negative doesn't help, and playing it "safe" is probably your worst strategy for improving your store's performance. Here's why: If, through excessive caution, you stock only predictable, uninspired merchandise, a drop in sales is virtually assured—no, *guaranteed!* By featuring styles that don't "speak" to your customers, you only bore them, making them feel justified in forgoing discretionary purchases. Don't fall into this trap.

Change is coming. Trust me. Take a good look inside this issue. Be sure to check out our selection of shoes and accessories that can entice your customers to buy, bringing increased sales for you a few months down the road! Carefully review the Trade Show Calendar with FOS star ratings, and shop the most appropriate show for your needs! And while perusing the pages of this issue, don't just look! Read our practical, informative articles prepared especially for you, and start putting their wisdom to work *right now* to be better prepared for the upcoming season.

Don't let the clouds of pessimism obscure your view. Instead, do *your* part to improve the economy by improving *your* store, *your* business, and *your* life.

Do you notice the buds on the trees outside? They are the signs of a brighter future! Let them inspire you to grow your business—then let *Focus on Shoes* show you how.

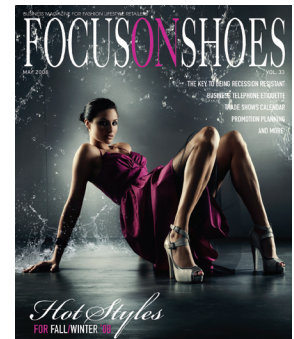
As always, I'd love to hear your thoughts. Please feel free to contact me at editor@focusonshoes.com with questions, comments, concerns, or topics you'd like to see covered in future issues.

Alex Geyman
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*Sound Marketing Advice For The
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by Tom Marnell
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*Functions Of Merchandising And
Budgeting: Promotion Planning,
art II; Q&As*
by James E. Dion
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*Productive Customer Service: The Key
To Being Recession Resistant*
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WINTER '08 STYLES

FOS picks hot styles for Winter 2008



WOMENS' DRESS BOOTS

<p>2</p>	<p>3</p>
<p>4</p>	<p>1. Mary-Kyri 2. Barbara Bui 3. Donna Serena 4. Baldinini 5. Loriblu 6. Poetic Licence</p>
<p>5</p>	<p>6</p>

WOMENS' DRESS SHOES

<p>1</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>3</p>
<p>4</p>	<p>5</p>	<p>6</p>
<p>7</p>	<p>1. Gianna Meliani 2. Emilio Pucci 3. Gigi Favela 4. Courtney Crawford 5. Hush Puppies 6. Barbara Bui 7. Poetic Licence</p>	

WOMENS' CASUAL BOOTS



1



2



3



4



5



6



7

- 1. Däv
- 2. Barbara Bui
- 3. Coclico
- 4. Gigi Favela
- 5. Nicole
- 6. Nicole
- 7. Chinese Laundry

WOMENS' CASUALS

- 1. Palladium
- 2. Fly Flot
- 3. New Balance
- 4. Alberto Guardiani
- 5. Poetic Licence
- 6. Rockport
- 7. PF Flyers



1



2



3



4



5



6



7

ACCESSORIES



1



2



3



7



8



4

- 1. Barbara Bui
- 2. Bracher Emden
- 3. Ananas
- 4. Gigi Favela
- 5. Barbara Bui
- 6. Clara Kasavina

- 7. Beijo
- 8. Franziska Hubener
- 9. Frye
- 10. La Chica Chic
- 11. Frye
- 12. Barbaba Bui



5



9

10



6



11

12



MENS' DRESS



1



2



3



4



5



6



7

- 1. Artioli
- 2. Speroni
- 3. Due Elle
- 4. Flexa
- 5. Hush Puppies
- 6. Mac Dugan
- 7. Carlo Ventura

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MENS' BOOTS



1



2



3



4

5



6



1. Brumas's
2. Speroni
3. Rockport
4. Vittorio Virgili
5. Dino Bigioni
6. Pakerson

MENS' CASUALS



1

2



3

4



5

6



1. PF Flyers
2. Kebo
3. New Balance
4. PF Flyers
5. PF Flyers
6. Bernardo

CHILDRENS'



1. Primigi
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You need to get your message across immediately as the customer walks, or drives by.

Effective Store Signage

BY MELANIE McINTOSH

In this day and age of modern computers, ink jet printers and desktop publishing programs, I am still amazed to see store owners that put little effort in to producing quality signage for their stores.

Signage is one of the most important ways to convey your message to your customers. Your store name, promotions, pricing, and product information may all be conveyed through signage. Are you getting these messages across effectively?

As a customer walks by your store, you have about 3 seconds to let them know what they will find inside.

What message are you sending? Professional signage will attract the customer, provide just the right amount of information and invite the customer to enter your store or try your product.

Unprofessional signage is confusing to the customer and sends a negative message about your store and product. Common problems include too many signs, ambiguous or misleading messages, spelling errors or signs that are difficult to read. I don't know about you, but I avoid stores that have signs littered throughout the store that scream, "SALE! 9.99" and in small print at the bottom they add, "and up."

Effective signage has the following qualities:

1. Quality Production

You don't have to spend big bucks to get signs that look professional. Having said that, you still need to be willing to spend a few dollars to create the image that you want to represent your business.

Consider the lifespan of the sign. Exterior signage that needs to last several years requires a fairly large investment. The shorter the lifespan of the sign, the less it should cost. If you are running a small boutique, producing your own short term promotional or informational signage is perfectly

acceptable, provided you have the tools and skills to do it well. If you are producing signs on your own, they should be produced on a computer, not handwritten. This might seem too obvious to mention, but I still see stores using signs that have been written in black felt marker. Use a desktop publishing or word processing program and quality printer and paper.

If your printer and paper are not good quality, take your computer file to a print shop to produce your image. Mount

your final images on a heavy card, illustration board or foam core.

2. Simple Color Scheme

Don't go crazy with color. Pick a simple, two or three color scheme and stick with it throughout the store. Pick a background color, text color and highlight color.

Make sure that the colors have enough contrast to be easily read. Red on black, while a dynamic and high power combination, does not have enough contrast to be easily viewed. However, if the text is very large, bold and only one or two short words, you might be able to get away with it. Outlining the text with a thin white line will also improve the contrast.

Also be careful with combinations such as yellow/green or orange/pink/red or green/blue. These combinations can be powerful and trendy, but require more work with design to make them legible. Strong contrasts such as white/black, yellow/black, red/white, white/blue increase visibility and legibility.

3. Easy to Read

Make your signage easy to read. Don't try to put too much on one sign. Some signs are so full of tiny images, starbursts, exclamation marks, and small print, that you can't take it all in. One main image, a headline and a few bullet points are all you need on an informational sign.

A sign in a store window should be even simpler. You need to get your message across immediately as the customer walks, or drives by. This means you can only use a strong image on your sign, a headline, or a simple combination of both. Some stores only use one word, such as 'SALE' or 'HOLIDAY' in the window, and provide more information inside the store.

The more time the customer will be spending looking at the sign, the more information you can include. For example, a sign near your cash register, where your customer will be waiting for a transaction to be processed, can provide details of a contest or return policy.

4. Clear and Simple Message

Keep your message simple. Avoid trying to say too much. Choose one main message that you want to convey. Do you want to tell about a sale, a price, product info, return policy? Rather than say this all at once, try a sale sign on the top of the rack, price and product info on the tag, and return policy at the cash register.

When you craft your sign, write down the message you want to get across, then rewrite it in as few words as possible. Keep



Unprofessional signage is confusing to the customer and sends a negative message about your store and product.

reducing until you have one to five words for your headline. If necessary, write a small amount of supporting information below.

5. Well Placed

Be careful where you place your signage. Place it where it will catch your customers' attention, but will not block essential elements of your store.

Think about how customers approach your store. If customers walk by your store, but your store name is only placed high up on your store front, facing the street, how will they see it? You also need to repeat the name on the door or window, and perhaps hanging from an awning or on a sandwich board on the sidewalk.

Make sure signs don't block traffic flow, displays, or the view of the interior of your store.

Window signage may not be visible to customers for other reasons that you do not realize. Is there a parking meter blocking the view of your window? What about a loading zone where delivery trucks park for a large part of the day, obscuring part of your store from view?

Check for reflections on the window that make your interior signage invisible during the day. You'll need to check this at various times of the day to find out what happens to the light and reflections depending on the position of the sun. You can improve the visibility of your signage by improving the display lighting inside, and by using light colors in your windows. Light colored signage will stand out, while dark colors will recede and virtually disappear behind reflections on the glass.

After placing your signs, double check how they look from a customers point of view. Step back and approach the store as a visitor. Walk from front to back and look at all your signage critically and reposition as necessary.

6. Simplify, Simplify, Simplify

The simpler you keep your signage the better. Reduce visual clutter, and focus on getting your most important message across to your customer. You will attract more walk-by traffic, and avoid confusing your customer. Your sales should increase as a result.

About The Author

Melanie McIntosh is a retail consultant and owner of Inspire Retail Solutions. She helps independent retailers who are struggling to get more customers in the door. Is your store appearance actually turning customers away? Find out more here: www.inspire.bc.ca



HOW TO HIDE THICK CALVES

While some women like having strong, solid calves,

others want to play them down and give

the illusion of longer, thinner legs.

Are your calves a bit thicker than you'd like? As you might expect, this can be a problem for women who are overweight, but surprisingly it can affect thinner women also. Women who are athletic often develop the muscles in their calves, which cause them to appear thick relative to the rest of their leg. While some women like having strong, solid calves, others want to play them down and give the illusion of longer, thinner legs. This is particularly true if your calves are composed of more fat than they are muscle. Fortunately, thick calves can be downplayed by using some clever fashion tricks:

Reduce thick calves: Choose the right pants

Wearing full length pants are an excellent way to hide thick calves. The best style for the thick calved lady is a full length pant that flares below the knee. Avoid wearing tight pants that taper towards the ankle as the material may cling to the calves, enhancing their size. You'll also want to avoid Capri pants and pants that are cropped below the knee since this will call attention to the calves and shorten leg length.

Reduce thick calves: Choose the right skirt

Although you may be tempted to hide your calves in pants most of the time, you can still look dynamite in a skirt even if your calves are not your best feature. The key is to select an A-line skirt that flares towards the knee, which gives the illusion of thinner calves. You'll want to avoid a clingy skirt that tapers and stops at mid calf. Anything that clings to the leg above the calves will enhance their size. A long, full skirt can be particularly attractive on thick calved women since the material covers plump calves.

Reduce thick calves: Choose the right shoes

When you select a shoe, choose one that balances thick calves. You'll want to avoid stiletto heels and heels with ankle straps, which will draw the eye to your thick calves. You'll also want to stay away from flat-heeled shoes such as ballet flats, which can make your legs appear shorter, and calves thicker. Open toed shoes with a solid heel tend to be flattering as well as boots that stop just below the knee. Avoid wearing boots that stop at mid calf or below. Knee length boots can be a god-send for women with heavier calves who want to wear skirts. Pair them with a skirt that flairs toward the hemline for maximum calf slimming effect.

Reduce thick calves: Go monochromatic

If you have thick calves, you can reduce their appearance and elongate your legs by wearing dark, monochromatic colors. Opt for dark brown or black hose paired with skirts, pants, and shoes that match. This will also give the illusion of thinness even if you don't happen to be at ideal body weight.

You can do much to reduce the appearance of thick calves by using the power of illusion that carefully selected clothing styles offer. Plus, you won't have to pull your hair out anymore trying to cover up your calves!



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TRADE SHOWS CALENDAR

	DATE	SHOW	LOCATION	M	W	C	FOOTWEAR	APPAREL	ACCESSORIES	TELEPHONE	WEBSITE	FOS RATING
MAY	4-6	AccessoriesTheShow	New York, NY	●	●	●	●	●	●	(212) 686-4412	www.accessoriestheshow.com	★★
	4-6	Moda Manhattan	New York, NY	●	●	●	●	●	●	(212) 686-4412	www.modamanhattan.com	★★
	4-6	FAME	New York, NY	●	●	●	●	●	●	(212) 686-4412	www.fameshows.com	★★
	5-7	Accessorie Circuit & Intermezzo Collections	New York, NY	●	●	●	●	●	●	(212) 759-8055	www.enkshows.com	N/A
	5-7	Urban Trend Show & Urban Style Coterie	New York, NY	●	●	●	●	●	●	(888) 702-4440	www.urbantrendshow.com	N/A
	13-15	The Niles Show	Niles, IL	●	●	●	●	●	●	(630) 584-9513	www.nilesshow.com	N/A
	24-26	Modaprima	Milan, Italy	●	●	●	●	●	●	(212) 246-2977	www.pittimagine.com	★★
	28-29	ASR (Holiday)- Action Sports Retailer	Costa Mesa, CA	●	●	●	●	●	●	(949) 226-5744	www.asrbiz.com	★★
	29-31	Shoes & Leather Industry Exhibition-Guangzhou	Guangzhou, China	●	●	●	●	●	●	+(852) 28-51-8603	www.shoesleather-guangzhou.com	★★★
	29-June 2	Southwest Shoe Expo	Dallas, TX	●	●	●	●	●	●	(214) 675-2176	www.southwestshoexpo.com	★
JUNE	3-5	The New York Shoe Expo (FFANY)	New York, NY	●	●	●	●	●	●	(212) 751-6422	www.ffany.org	★★★
	7-9	Transit- Los Angeles Footwear & Accessories Show	Los Angeles, CA	●	●	●	●	●	●	(213) 630-3638	www.californiamarketcenter.com	★★
	9-11	JeanShow	Moscow, Russia	●	●	●	●	●	●	+7(495) 663-2374	www.jeansshow.ru	N/A
	11-13	Atlanta Fashion Shoe & Accessory Market	Atlanta, GA	●	●	●	●	●	●	(706) 923-0580	www.theatlantashoeshow.com	N/A
	14-17	Expo Riva Shuh	Riva Del Garda, Italy	●	●	●	●	●	●	+39-0464-570153	www.exporivaschuh.it	★★★
	21-24	AmericasMart Alpha- Atlanta Apparel Market	Atlanta, GA	●	●	●	●	●	●	(404) 220-3000	www.americasmart.com	N/A
	26-27	Chicago Shoe Expo	Chicago, IL	●	●	●	●	●	●	(847) 695-3663	www.chicagoshoexpo.com	★★
	26-28	Urban Trend Show & G I Collective	Atlanta, GA	●	●	●	●	●	●	(888) 702-4440	www.urbantrendshow.com	N/A
	29-30	Michigan Shoe Market	Livonia, MI	●	●	●	●	●	●	(248) 661-4590	www.mishoeshow.com	★
	29- July 1	SMOTA- Shoe Market of the Americas	Miami, FL	●	●	●	●	●	●	(786) 331-9000	www.smota.com	★★★
JULY	2-4	Bread And Butter Barcelona	Barcelona, Spain	●	●	●	●	●	●	+49 (0) 30-2000-370	www.breadandbutter.com	N/A
	15-17	The Niles Show	Niles, IL	●	●	●	●	●	●	(630) 584-9513	www.nilesshow.com	N/A
	21-23	The Collective/ Blue	New York, NY	●	●	●	●	●	●	(212) 759-8055	www.enkshows.com	N/A
	21-23	Project New York	New York, NY	●	●	●	●	●	●	(212) 951-6654	www.projectshow.com	N/A
	28-30	The WSA Show & The Collections At WSA	Las Vegas, NV	●	●	●	●	●	●	(818) 379-9400	www.wsashow.com	★★★★
AUGUST	3-5	Children's Club	New York, NY	●	●	●	●	●	●	(212) 759-8055	www.enkshows.com	N/A
	3-5	Accessorie Circuit & Intermezzo Collections	New York, NY	●	●	●	●	●	●	(212) 759-8055	www.enkshows.com	N/A
	4-5	Urban Trend Show & G I Collective	Philadelphia, PA	●	●	●	●	●	●	(888) 702-4440	www.urbantrendshow.com	N/A
	8-11	The Brighte Companies	Los Angeles, CA	●	●	●	●	●	●	(212) 759-8055	www.enkshows.com	N/A
	9-11	Transit- Los Angeles Footwear & Accessories Show	Los Angeles, CA	●	●	●	●	●	●	(213) 630-3638	www.californiamarketcenter.com	★★
	9-12	STYLEMAX- Holiday/Resort/Spring Preview	Chicago, IL	●	●	●	●	●	●	(312) 527-7759	www.mmart.com	★★
	10-12	The Chicago Collective	Chicago, IL	●	●	●	●	●	●	(312) 527-7903	www.mmart.com	★★
	14-17	Southwest Shoe Expo	Dallas, TX	●	●	●	●	●	●	(214) 675-2176	www.southwestshoexpo.com	★★
	15-17	The Atlanta Shoe Market	Atlanta, GA	●	●	●	●	●	●	(706) 923-0580	www.theatlantashoeshow.com	★★★
	16-19	AmericasMart- Atlanta Apparel Market	Atlanta, GA	●	●	●	●	●	●	(404) 220-3000	www.americasmart.com	N/A
	17-18	Michigan Shoe Market	Livonia, MI	●	●	●	●	●	●	(248) 661-4590	www.mishoeshow.com	★
	25-27	AccessoriesTheShow	Las Vegas, NV	●	●	●	●	●	●	(212) 686-4412	www.accessoriestheshow.com	★★
	25-27	Moda Las Vegas	Las Vegas, NV	●	●	●	●	●	●	(212) 710-7441	www.modamanhattan.com	★★
	25-27	MAGIC	Las Vegas, NV	●	●	●	●	●	●	(818) 593-5000	www.magiconline.com	★★★★
	25-27	Pool Trade Show	Las Vegas, NV	●	●	●	●	●	●	(877) 554-4834	www.pooltradeshow.com	★★
	25-27	KIDShow	Las Vegas, NV	●	●	●	●	●	●	(305) 598-7019	www.lingeriesshow.cc	★★
	25-28	WWIN- WomensWear In Nevada	Las Vegas, NV	●	●	●	●	●	●	(702) 436-4081	www.lingeriesshow.cc	★★★
	26-28	Project Las Vegas	Las Vegas, NV	●	●	●	●	●	●	(212) 951-6654	www.projectshow.com	★★★★



MAGIC SHOW



THE WSA SHOW

LEGEND	ABBREVIATIONS
★ Awful	F = Footwear
★★ OK	A = Apparel
★★★ Good	ACC = Accessories
★★★★ Awesome	

Show dates and locations were accurate at the time of printing and subject to change without notice. Please contact venues directly for the latest information.

FOS' ratings are based on reports from our correspondents, contributors, vendors and retailers who attended these events. Ratings reflect people's opinion of show organization, traffic, convenience and value for attending/participating businesses.



Hot spots are sections in your store which are highly visible to the customer where you place your best/hottest products to make sure the customer sees them.

FUNCTIONS OF MERCHANDISING AND BUDGETING: PROMOTION PLANNING

PART II BY JAMES E. DION

We are continuing our series on Merchandise Budgeting & Planning and we are now going to talk about Promotion Planning.

As part of your Strategic Business Plan, you need to develop a Pro-motional Plan – also sometimes called a Marketing Plan. This is a document, which identifies the various events, and **sale actions** that you need to plan for to help you achieve the sales and profit objectives in your Merchandise Plan.

To be effective, your plan must have innovative ideas each season and not repeat the same actions unless they are annual events that the customer is waiting for, such as a Back to School Shoe Sale, End of Season Shoe Blowout Sale, etc. It is also important to create activities that will differentiate you from your competition.

The Promotional Plan is created for a season **by month** and then **by week** and provides details on:

- >> Promotions
- >> Windows
- >> Communication Media

The Promotional Plan provides indications to the buyer(s) on the various product sub-categories and

themes of merchandise (styles, colors, brands, etc.) that they will need to source to create the excitement necessary to attract the customer's interest and satisfy a specific need or want for a particular time, event or sales action.

Let's have a closer look at what information to include in the Promotional Plan under Pro-motions, Windows and Com-munication Media.

Promotions - Never Spend A Week Without One

Promotions are **events and sales actions** that you need to plan on a monthly and weekly basis in order to create some interest and excitement around your products. Just having some exciting shoes doesn't work anymore. Not, unless you make a big deal out of it, or, in other words, you tell the customer **why** they should buy them and **why** they should do it from you right now. While having a great product gets you half way there, promotional activities are what eventually will get you to the sale instead of it going to your competitors.

Promotions come in many different flavors and you should try all of them to make sure you always give a different reason to your customer to check you out regularly.

They could be **Discounted Sales** – *End Of Season Sale, Weekend Sale, Sandals Blowout Sale, Buy 1 Get 1 Half Off (a very good promotion that encourages multiple unit sales) etc.* – where you select products in your inventory that you price attractively to draw traffic, while also selling some of your old inventory or products that wouldn't sell as well at full price.

While Discounted Sales are great to move inventory and compete on price, don't assume that they are the only way you can draw traffic to your store unless you are a discount retailer and that is your business model (but then, get ready to go to war with Wal-Mart and the other discount giants!).

Promotions are also **Special Actions** or **Events** that you take monthly or weekly to draw the customer's attention to your product. *Hot Styles For Summer, Young, Hip & Chic Styles, Perfect for Prom, Back to School Shoes, etc.* are all examples of promotions that you can run in your store(s) where you select products in your inventory that are "young, hip & chic", for instance, and run a promotion around them (by telling the customer a story about them). This means that you are going to display these items prominently in your store(s) so that customer can notice and appreciate them, as we will see when we talk about Windows. It also means that you are going to plan a communication campaign in your store, through the media and on your website where you are letting the customer know the story about your shoes and encourage them to come and check you out, as we will see later when we talk about Communication Media.

Be creative in coming up with weekly stories for your promotions. It's all part of the experience and customers love stores that excite them with great products but also great stories about how the products were designed, or made. Also, don't forget to build promotions around national and local holidays and events such as, *Christmas, Halloween, St. Patrick's Day, Breast Cancer Week, March Madness, etc.*

You generally plan most of your promotions in advance and list them in your Promotional Plan. However, unplanned events can occur when, for example, you need to raise some extra cash to pay a big bill or your primary competitor is running a weekend special. In that case, you might decide to run a promotional sale of some of your inventory even if it's not part of your seasonal plan. Or, it could be that a line you purchased might not be selling as well as you expected. It's best that you promote it and lower

its price before it's too late. Or, your competitors are running sales offers on some items that you also carry in your store. Even if you didn't plan for it, it may on occasion be best to have an impromptu sale to stay competitive.

Windows - Always Tell A Story

Under "Windows" in your Promotional Plan, you will



You generally plan most of your promotions in advance and list them in your Promotional Plan.

need to indicate the **themes of merchandise** to display in your store windows and to feature inside in your store's hot spots for your planned promotions – hot spots are sections in your store which are highly visible to the customer where you place your best/hottest products to make sure the customer sees them.

If your promotion is *Spring Break Hot Styles*, you might want to feature in your windows and inside the store the latest styles for all your younger customers who are getting ready to head off to Cancun or other exotic destination and have props that suggest the beach or vacation spots. Or, it could be *Valentine's Day Ultra-Sexy Shoes* where you identify all your dressier shoes (especially red ones!) and accessories and create eye-catching displays that scream 'this is where you come for that very special day'. Even if dressy styles are only a small part of your collection, what matters is that you appear to lead in that category for as long as the promotion lasts, hopefully preventing customers from going somewhere else for more choice. You are telling the customer a story about how your store and your shoes are the best they can find for that special event. Just a few styles here and there however, do not make a believable story. Don't have too many dressy styles in stock? Mass with class: display more of the same styles in the space you have but make sure you don't mix them up with other themes of merchandise because the customer would get lost in the plot!

When planning for these themed displays, make sure to not just put product out with a plain sign. That wouldn't really catch the customer's imagination, would it? Along with product you will want to tell a story to your customer about what these events stand for or their history with photos and everything that can **catch the customer's imagination** and interest and make them want to be part of that story. A large poster with a captivating picture of young women and men enjoying themselves at a beach is what you will want to put in the windows (and inside) to complement the styles on display and to make your customer want to come in and share in the experience depicted in the large posters. Abercrombie & Fitch is a very good example of extraordinary use of POP (Point of Purchase) material, like oversized posters portraying their target customers enjoying themselves while wearing Abercrombie clothes. Customers see themselves in those giant photos and come in to emulate and be like those young men and women in the photos. You don't necessarily need to hire models to wear your shoes and photograph them; that would be too costly, in most cases. However, you should definitely hire a design firm that provides you with posters with professional grade photos portraying your target customer in a situation that suits your theme. Or, if your theme is *Breast Cancer Week*, you could have a window filled with running or jogging shoes - some with some pink details, if pink is a color in fashion - along with posters, photos and other props of the activities that are occurring in the city related to this event. Most cities organize plenty of walks and runs to collect funds for this important cause and running shoes become an item that is in demand. And if you support this cause by donating some of your profits during that week, make sure to use your windows to share this story with your customers.

Is your website a display window, too? Of course, it is! So, make sure you dress up your site the same way as you dress up your windows by featuring the same promotion on your site with the same graphics, colors and shoe styles.

Communication Media - Can't Have A Promotion Without Telling The Customer About It

Communication media include newspaper/magazine, web, and radio or TV ads. They also include direct mail postcards or newsletters.

All the promotions that you listed on your Promotion Plan will require some form of advertisement. Choose the most appropriate one based on the type of promotion that you are running, your target customer and, of course, your budget.

Newspapers and magazine ads are a little costly and considering that newspapers are losing readership every day, it might not always be your best option. Conversely, radio ads if on the

right station (i.e., the station your target customer is used to listening to), are sometimes more reasonable in price and might be more effective as radio is a very "immediate" media that often reaches people in their cars and can drive almost immediate results for special events or sales.

We all know what's happening with TV ads and the advent of Tivo and, of course, the Web. So, unless you have a real big advertising budget and a very powerful promotion, don't waste your resources there.

What still works very well are **direct mail coupons, direct mail postcards and fliers**. The reach is individual. You also can control your cost a lot better and if professionally done can deliver important results. Photos must be professional, the message must be captivating and exciting and they must contain a call to action, or, in other words, a powerful and compelling story about your products and promotion.

E-mail marketing can also be very effective (and low cost), particularly with customers who love your products and your store. Make sure that you do not flood them with e-mail promotions. Once a week or every other week should be OK, but it is best if you ask them how often they would like to receive e-mail from you. Also, make sure to get them truly excited because if you are rehashing the same promotion and styles over and over again, they will lose interest in your communication. E-mail coupons are very popular with many customers, just remember not to use percentages off on the coupons, use a dollar savings!

Planning for your promotions means not just identifying what to promote, why and how, but also establishing a budget and allocating resources (people - both internal and external) to make sure you have enough funds and resources to run the promotion effectively. Remember, every promotion is an investment in your business and unless you maximize your opportunities for success, it's going to be wasted and it will eventually take a toll on your business.

Stay tuned for our next issue where we are going to talk about Sales and Stock Planning.



James E. Dion is an internationally known consultant, keynote speaker, trainer, and author of the best-sellers *Retail Selling Ain't Brain Surgery*, *It's Twice As Hard*, *Start and Run a Retail Business* and *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Starting and Running a Retail Store*. James consults, trains and speaks on consumer trends, retail technology, selling and service, retail merchandising and operations, marketing and leadership. With a MS degree in Psychology and a PhD in Industrial Psychology combined with over 30 years of progressive retail experience working at Sears, Levi Strauss and Gilmore Department Stores, James is one of the most sought after consultants and speakers in the US and internationally. He can be reached at jimdion@dionco.com; www.dionco.com.

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SOUND MARKETING ADVICE FOR THE NEWCOMER TO MARKETING

PART I BY TOM MARNELL

There are countless numbers of books and articles all giving advice to the marketing-deprived. Recent work with technology start-ups suggested these topics.

a customer and, second, maintain a customer. (It should be added — at a profit.) The Marketing Department is a unit of organization, traditionally charged with carrying out specific tasks that are deemed to be “marketing” (such as advertising, market research).



The Difference between Market-ing and the Marketing Department

Marketing and the Marketing Department are two different things. Marketing might best be de-fined as all organized efforts, activities and expenditures designed to, first, acquire

This distinction is not merely semantic. As the definition would suggest, customer-acquisition and customer-maintenance efforts go beyond the organizational boundaries of the Marketing Department. When all departments know and understand their role and importance in the marketing process, the functions of marketing work better. The Marketing Department works better.

Usually, the role of marketing is viewed from the inside of an enterprise looking out to the marketplace. Organizational units (departments) are set up to address the various marketing functions. (Keep in mind that the perspective of how you “sell” is often quite different than how your customers “buy”.) In most instances, the marketing function should provide the perspective of the marketplace looking in as well.

Critical marketing functions include:

1. Identifying the important constituencies within the marketplace. Yes, there are customers and prospects, but there are also groups that set rules and regulations, influence or recommend, establish barriers, service the product after the sale, review the product. All of these groups (and probably more) are constituencies that play a role in the successful marketing of a product or service.
2. Identifying and valuing specific target purchaser/user groups for the product. (Also known as target audiences or market segments.) Marketing should answer the questions focusing on who will be a likely prospect, who will be the best customer. Keep in mind that within the target audience there may be groups that will be readily obvious as “end users” but there may also be groups that speci-

fy, recommend, purchase, service or pay for; without a great stretch of the imagination, they may all be considered customers or prospects.

3. Communicating with the marketplace. This function may involve traditional communications disciplines (public relations, advertising, sales promotion, face to face selling) along with new disciplines (the Internet). Each target audience segment within the marketplace may play a different role in the success of marketing so different techniques or disciplines may be required to communicate effectively. Objectives need to be set for each discipline used and for each audience group or segment that is targeted.

4. Conducting transactions with the marketplace. Most people think of marketing activities as advertising or promotional events — very visible, very costly. But other interactions are part of the marketing process and should be viewed as such. (Here is where the outside-in perspective of marketing plays a vital role.)

Order processing is not just an inventory transaction, but a marketing one as well — the timely delivery of a product in good condition goes a long way in helping establish a positive attitude about the company, provides another reason for the end-user to purchase again, and to recommend the company and its products to others.

Payment processing is not just a financial transaction; it is an important element in the marketing process — payment is what is given in exchange for the item that will satisfy a need (or an itch).

Shipping the product is not just the act of putting something in a box and handing it over to UPS; it is a marketing transaction as well — satisfaction with the product or the company is never higher than when the box or envelop is just about to be opened.

5. Obtaining on-going feedback from the marketplace. An important function of marketing is to measure the performance of the enterprise in its efforts to acquire and maintain customers. What does it cost to acquire a customer? What does it cost to obtain the second order or purchase? Establishing performance metrics is often an afterthought in the plan-



MARKETING

Marketing should answer the questions focusing on who will be a likely prospect, who will be the best customer

ning process and, in many instances, superficial.

Market share is but one measure of marketing performance. Share of Customer is equally, if not, more important: if a customer purchases 100 units/year from enterprise 'A' but purchases 500 units/year in total, enterprise 'A' has a Share of Customer of 20%. How much effort should be expended to increase Share of Customer? Or, how much should be spent to maintain the customer at that level?

Obtaining feedback also means understanding the environmental conditions that the enterprise operates in, the product is marketed in. Spending on research is essential to direct the development of a product or service and the development of communications messages necessary to acquaint potential customers with the product or service, instill in them positive feelings about the product or service and motivate them to purchase.

Marketing Departments need to be open minded. Marketing Departments often fall into the trap of thinking they already know all the answers — and all of the questions. In fact, many Marketing Departments are just as isolated from the marketplace as the third-shift maintenance group. Constant dialogue with all of the component elements of the marketplace is one way to avoid missing opportunities or missing problems before disaster strikes.

Marketing versus the Sales Department

The selling function is an important element of the overall marketing process. Many organizations establish a separate sales function, apart from other elements of the marketing process. This is often a sound business strategy but can lead to a chasm between Sales and the other marketing elements. Even when both are contained within a unified Marketing Department, separate sales and marketing groups often create the situation where they have competing views of the marketplace, competing objectives and competing priorities (e.g., budget, prestige).

One area that often creates the opportunity for jurisdictional disputes and other serious problems is lead generation. In

many instances, some component of the Marketing Department is responsible for developing leads and then turns them over to the Sales Department. "Discussions" over the timing and quality of leads are a hot topic at almost all Sales-Marketing joint meetings.

Make sure that planning and execution of plans is always coordinated, and that all programs are integrated across both marketing and sales efforts.

Developing an Initial Marketing Plan

A marketing plan and a business plan are not the same thing. Marketing plans should cover all elements of the marketing process in great detail. Business plans should highlight the major marketing initiatives, their costs and potential.

Obviously, all plans should contain objectives, strategies and tactics, budgets and timetables, but the real first order of any marketing plan is to describe the product or service being offered for sale. Not by its chemical or physical properties but how the end user will be encouraged to see, feel and react. The product or service has to appear to be different (and better) than other similar products. (This is called "positioning" and there is a great book all marketers should be familiar with: *Positioning: The Battle for Your Mind* by Al Ries and Jack Trout.)

Another primary task of the marketing plan is to define the target audience for the product or service. Many, if not most, marketers define their target audiences in demographic terms — males, 18-34 years of age, high school graduates, or CFOs and CIO, or purchasers versus end users. There are other ways of defining — or segmenting — the target audience. Life style or psychographics are often mentioned in the next breathe after demographics. But, there are still other ways to segment the target audience and, perhaps the most important of all, "reasons for needing or wanting" the product. This last one is not as easy to uncover as the others, but well worth the effort: selling messages based on the motivations underlying purchase will always be more successful than messages based on less "intimate" factors.

Profitable versus Non-Profitable Customers

What is a customer worth? How many sales dollars will each customer generate — initially, over a two or three year period, over a lifetime. How much profit will each customer generate?

Customer analyses appearing in trade or general purpose publications often cite "the average customer". First, there is no such thing as an average customer. Second, if there were average customers, satisfying them would be the quickest

road to ruin. All customers are not equal. The 80-20 rule or some variant is alive and well in most, if not all, marketplaces.

Life-time value is a concept that is widely written about. If we examine the purchases of a customer over the life of his or her relationship with a marketer we can determine a historical value. Past behavior, however, cannot be assumed to continue well into the future: consumers change their behavior with a high degree of regularity in some product categories; they change their minds, attitudes and feelings about a particular product; their needs change so they change their purchase behavior; the marketplace offers new, better or different products to satisfy their needs.

Recognize that customers move through various stages in their relationship with a particular company or product. Stages are not tied to any particular calendar or precise chronology, but rather a customer-internalized set of logical and emotional reasons. Attempt to identify those stages and then set realistic estimates for behavior for those stages. While harder to do than trend-lining the past, valuing customers in this fashion allows a better match between marketing expenditures and sales.

Finding the Right Customers

A common mistake many start-ups make is that they overestimate the size of their target market. While millions of individuals or businesses may have a theoretical need for your product or service, very few will ever purchase. There is such a thing as the "wrong" customer and while it is very difficult to differentiate in advance a wrong or right customer, the importance of proactively managing the customer relationship is critical to long term success.

Examples of potentially wrong customers: customers who respond only to promotions (buy "on deal"), customers who are only 50-60% loyal, customers who purchase only once.

Some consumers (businessmen and housewives alike) are known as "early adapters". These individuals are the first in their boardroom or on their block to purchase your product. They are critical for success, but they probably won't be your best, long-term customers.

About The Author

Tom Marnell is a marketing consultant and educator. For the past twenty years, Tom has been helping national and regional companies develop go-to-market strategies, primarily involving marketing databases. Prior to starting his own consultancy, Tom held senior management positions at Bozell and Leo Burnett. Tom teaches graduate level courses in customer relationship marketing and marketing databases at Stuart School of Business/Illinois Institute of Technology and Roosevelt University, Chicago. Tom can be reached at architect@earthlink.net.

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Business Telephone Etiquette Tips

PART II

Telephone, as well as walk-in reception, is one of the most critical areas of any office. It forms the basis of initial and long lasting impressions of the office by students and parents. It is also an integral part of maintaining and improving our intra-office communication. These suggestions are offered as a way to maintain and improve your telephone skills.

All incoming calls should be answered:

- >> Promptly
- >> Personally, whenever possible
(use voice mail only when necessary)
- >> Professionally
- >> Courteously

Appropriate Greetings:

- >> "Good morning, this is Mary, may I help you?"
- >> "Good afternoon, ABC Company, Mary speaking."

Good Telephone Habits:

- 1** Treat every call and caller as IMPORTANT. Give the caller your undivided attention. Treat the telephone as a task in itself; don't be distracted by work on your desk.
- 2** Answer the phone with a smile; it actually does help convey a cheerful attitude. There is no need for you to transfer any of your bad feelings to the caller. Answer every phone call promptly on the first or second ring if possible.
- 3** Do not chew gum.
- 4** Make sure you know which line is ringing before you pick up the phone.
- 5** Keep your telephone message pad and a pen handy so they can be easily reached.
- 6** Personalize your conversation by using the caller's name; "Yes, Tom, I'll be happy to send you an application," or "Thank you for calling, Mrs. Smith."
- 7** When taking messages for another person, make complete notes:
 - a. The caller's full name, spelled correctly (ask for correct spelling if in doubt).
 - b. The caller's department, institution, agency or firm.
 - c. The caller's complete phone number (include area code).
 - d. The nature of the call.
 - e. The date and time call was taken.
 - f. Your name or initials.
- 8** If you need to put a caller on hold immediately upon answering the phone, ask before you put them on hold. Some callers would rather try calling again.

9 When you have several incoming calls simultaneously, don't panic. Handle the situation in the following manner:

- a:** Ask someone in the vicinity to help you by answering one of the calls, if someone is available.
- b:** Calmly excuse yourself: "Good Morning. May I put you on hold for a moment while I answer the other phone? (or, Will you please excuse me for a moment while I answer the other phone?) Thank you."
Put them on hold.
- c:** Answer the other call and ask them if you may put them on hold.
- d:** Return promptly to the original call.

10 When it's necessary to direct a call to a co-worker request the caller's name before transferring the call. Notify the co-worker so that he or she can be ready when he or she picks up the phone.

11 Be tactful when co-workers are away from the office. Don't say that someone is "out for coffee," "on a break." Say, "I am away from his desk (office) now. May I take a message?"

12 Be a good listener; make notes while the caller is speaking. If you are going to put a caller on hold, make a note of which line you are on.

13 Avoid technical expressions and acronyms which may confuse the caller.

14 Use businesslike phrases instead of slang. Say "Yes," "Certainly" and "Of course," instead of "OK," "Yeah," and "Uh-huh."

15 When placing calls, identify yourself and the office. "This is Jill in the Social Sciences Division Office."

16 If it is necessary to leave the line, explain the reason and excuse yourself. Always place the caller on hold, do not just cover the mouth piece with your hand. Thank the caller when you return. If it will be longer than one or two minutes, ask to return the call.

17 If a customer is talking with you in person and the phone rings, excuse yourself to the customer and answer the phone. Ask the caller to wait a moment or offer to return the call.

18 If a customer approaches while you are on the phone, excuse yourself briefly from the caller and acknowledge the visitor. Ask if the visitor can wait a moment while you finish the call.

19 It is courteous to let the caller hang up first.

BUSINESS TELEPHONE ETIQUETTE AT A GLANCE

	THIS	IS BETTER THAN THIS...
PERSON CALLED IS AVAILABLE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May I tell her who's calling? or, • May I tell him what your call is in reference to? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yeah, hang on. • I'll get him.
PERSON CALLED IS NOT AVAILABLE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mrs. Doe is taking another call right now. Would you care to hold? or, • Mr. Smith isn't available right now. May I or someone else help you? or, • Mrs. Williams is away from her desk. May I take a message? Or would you like her voice mail? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • She's busy talking now. • Could you call later? • He's not here.
LEAVING THE LINE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would you mind waiting while I check, please? or, • It will take a minute or so. Do you care to wait or shall I call you back? (wait for an answer) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hang on. • Just a minute. • Let me look around for it. • Hold on, I'll see what I can do.
RETURNING TO THE LINE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thank you for waiting, I have that information. or, • I'm sorry to have kept you waiting. I can help you now. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Okay, the date on that was June 18. • Are you still there? • I can't locate that.
COMPLETING THE CONVERSATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thank you for calling, Mrs. Rogers. I'm glad I was able to help you. Goodbye. or, • You're welcome, Mr. Jones, goodbye. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bye-bye • O.K. So long.

PRODUCTIVE CUSTOMER SERVICE: THE KEY TO BEING RECESSION RESISTANT

BY ANNE M. OBARSKI



Businesses are looking for a magic bullet when the economy is in a downturn. The good news is that the magic bullet is literally under their noses. At a recent customer experience conference, a manager was quoted saying, "Use great service to help establish a premium for product opportunity in a downturn". I think that amaz-

ing, productive service is the premium that any business should focus on in any economy.

Three areas that were pinpointed to increase customer advocacy were improving the company's web site, creating a distinctive brand and achieving call center excellence. All of the information in the case studies sounded like graduate level marketing class.

Then I ran across an article about that was the perfect example of a "best practice in customer service" in a small shoe store in St. Louis, MO.

The shoe store focuses on serving and selling to those people who are avid runners. The owner and co-owner look old enough to be my kids. I thought, "What could they possibly know about running, pardon the pun, a retail business?"

As young entrepreneurs, they did many things right. Here is a brief list that is helping them be "recession-resistant" as a specialty retailer.

1. Potential niche: As runners themselves, they knew the market, the need and the retailers and websites where they could buy the right running shoes. They also chose their location based on its closeness to parks where runners and walkers are drawn to.

2. Potential growth: Their research proved that the running industry is growing. Fitness programs and health care providers all preach the need for walking or running for aerobic exercise. The Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure events has driven a large participation in walking and running.

3. Potential Sales: Research also showed that specialty running stores nationwide have shown sales in excess of \$600 million and that number is increasing. Obviously there is a market of runners who are willing to spend money for good running shoes.

4. Potential competition: Just like any other retailer, even this specialty store is not immune to competition from

stock some serious stilettos

With up to **\$250,000** from Cynergy Prosperity Plus™ your business can stock shoeboxes full of pumps, platforms and those sliding metal things you measure feet with.

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- **Could your business use some extra cash?** Qualifying for funding is easy if your business has been open for at least 2 years and is non-seasonal, has no open bankruptcies and processes at least \$2500 in Visa/MasterCard sales each month. If your business meets our pre-qualifying terms, you could get up to 125% of your monthly credit card processing volume.
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the internet. There are a number of websites that sell the identical product that this store does as well as "big-box" sporting goods stores all around the city, and many at prices far less. These entrepreneurs know that people could come to their store and get fitted and then go on a competitor's website to buy the same shoes for less. Their goal is to give such superior service and show knowledgeable fitting skills that the customer wouldn't think twice before saying, "I'll take them!"

5. Potential Service: These young managers decided that their prices were higher than their competition but that their "knowledge" of a how a customer's foot moves as well as their shoe needs would be a competitive advantage.

6. Potential Customer Experience: Their current customer base is their biggest advocates. Word on the street says that the personal attention is much better than at the sporting goods stores. They even go so far as to say that their customers are more likely to cut from other parts of their budget before they cut from their running "budget".

7. Potential Expansion: These owners are looking to expand further in the area. By following the "template" they have developed for their first store, they have the potential of being successful in other locations.

All seven of these steps can be applied to any company to stay recession resistant. The key is to focus on a productive customer service model that creates customers who become loyal cheerleaders for your business and wouldn't think of shopping elsewhere.

I may not be a runner, but I know there are a few stores that I will shop at even when money is tight. I will just choose to stop buying something else. The question is, what business did I decide not to patronize? Will it be yours?



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THE LAW OF CAPITAL BY BRIAN TRACY

The Law of Capital – your most valuable asset, in terms of cash flow, is your physical and mental capital, your earning ability.



One of the best investments of your time and money is to increase your earning ability.

Your Earning Ability

You may not even be aware that, unless you are wealthy already, your ability to work is the most valuable asset that you have. By utilizing your earning ability to its fullest, you can bring thousands of dollars each year into your life. By applying your earning ability to the production of valuable goods and services, you can generate sufficient money to pay for all the things that you want in life. The amount of money that you are paid today is a direct measure of the extent to which you have developed your earning ability so far.

Use Your Time Well

The first corollary of the Law of Capital says: "Your most precious resource is your time." Your time is really all you have to sell. How much time you put in and how much of yourself you put into that time, largely determines your earning ability. Poor time management is one of the major reasons for poor productivity and underachievement in every industry in America. It is the number one problem for both managers and salespeople in every field.

Invest Yourself Carefully

The second corollary of the Law of Capital says: "Time and money can be either spent or invested." One of the smartest things that you can do is to invest three percent of your earnings every month back into yourself on personal and professional development, on becoming better at the most important things you do. In fact, if you just invested as much in your mind each year as you do in

your car, that alone could make you wealthy.

Invest one hour of your time reading in your field every day. Listen to audio programs in your car. Attend every course that can advance you in your career. Get personal and professional coaching to help you to get the very best out of yourself.

Get Better At The Things You Do

There is nothing that will give you a bigger and better "bang" for your buck than reinvesting

a part of your time and money back into your capability to earn even more. All wealthy and successful Americans have learned this sooner or later, and all poor and unhappy Americans are still trying to figure it out.

Increase Your Return On Life

The third corollary of the Law of Capital says: "One of the best investments of your time and money is to increase your earning ability."

The purpose of corporate strategic planning is to increase "return on equity" or ROE. This requires organizing and reorganizing corporate activities so that the company is earning a higher return on the capital invested in the organization. In your work life, your personal equity is your mental and emotional capital. Your job then is to earn the highest possible return on your human capital, to increase your "return on energy." This way of viewing yourself must become a key part of your attitude throughout your work life.

Action Exercises

Here are two things you can do to apply this law immediately:

First, take a list of your output responsibilities, the things you do that represent accomplishments, not activities. Examine the list and rank the tasks by priority, on the basis of the value of the work to your company.

Second, take a list of all the things you do, day in and day out. Take this list to your boss and ask him or her to rank your tasks in terms of how valuable he or she considers them to be. Then resolve to work on your most valuable tasks every minute of every day.

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FIVE WAYS TO BECOME WEALTHY

BY BRIAN TRACY

The Five Roads To Financial Success And How To Choose Your Own

There are basically five ways that you can become wealthy starting with nothing in America based on over 25 years of research into American millionaires. Number one, you can inherit it. Less than 10 percent of wealthy Americans inherited any of their money, and it's less and less every single year.

The Second Way

The second way that you can become wealthy is you can achieve it professionally. You can become a doctor or a lawyer or an architect or an accountant. You can become extremely good at what you do, be paid very well, and hold on to the money.

Where do you start? You start by getting your finances under control. The very first thing you do is you make a decision to get your finances under control. Some years ago, a man named George Classon wrote a book called *The Richest Man In Babylon*. It's a classic on financial success and what Classon said in that book was that the key to becoming wealthy is to pay yourself first. Take ten percent of your earnings, of your gross income every month and put it aside. Learn to live on ninety percent or less of your gross income. So the very first thing that you do is you begin to save your money.

Action Exercises

Now, here are two things you can do immediately to put yourself onto the high road to personal wealth:

If you have the ability to start your own business and you don't do it, you're a fool

The Third Way

The third way you can achieve it is you can become a senior executive of a large corporation. You can be highly paid; you can have stock options and bonuses. And if you stay with the company long enough, for enough years, you can be paid enough to become wealthy.

First, resolve today to begin saving your money a little bit at a time. Set a goal to save 10% of your earnings, to put it away and to never touch it. This will change your life.

The Fourth Way

You can win it. But only a tiny fraction of one percent of wealthy Americans got that way by winning their money some way or another. As a matter of fact, the odds against you winning the lottery are the equivalent of lightning striking twice in the same place. They're millions and millions to one.

Second, immediately register your own business or sole proprietorship. Open a bank account, get business cards and letterhead and create the corporate entity under which you can do business. Your business opportunities will appear far sooner than you think. If you build it, they will come.

The Best Way

The fifth way that you can become wealthy is you can start your own business and earn it all by yourself. Starting your own business has been and will always be the high road to becoming wealthy for most self-made millionaires. Entrepreneurship is America offers more opportunities and opens more doors than all other possibilities put together. This is why it has been said that if you have the ability to start your own business and you don't do it, you are a fool. I'll repeat that. If you have the ability to start your own business and you don't do it, you're a fool.



Brian Tracy is the most listened to audio author on personal and business success in the world today. His fast-moving talks and seminars on leadership, sales, managerial effectiveness and business strategy

are loaded with powerful, proven ideas and strategies that people can immediately apply to get better results in every area. Check his web site www.briantracy.com

YOUR OPINION COUNTS!

As a service to our worldwide audience, Focus on Shoes 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 2008. For that purpose, we will be conducting the 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 or not affiliated with any trade show.
- Please rate only those events that you have attended within the last 6 months.

Upon completion, please send this form to FOS.

Your personal information will not be disclosed, nor shared with anybody. Thank you!



Show	Organization, Planning, Promotion	Attendance, Traffic	Convenience	Services offered at the show	Cost of attending/ exhibiting	Value for your business
AccessoriesTheShow						
AmericasMart Alpha- Atlanta Apparel Market						
AmericasMart- Atlanta Apparel Market						
ASR (Holiday)- Action Sports Retailer						
Atlanta Fashion Shoe & Accessory Market						
Bread And Butter Barcelona						
Chicago Shoe Expo						
Children's Club						
Expo Riva Shuh						
FAME						
JeanShow						
KIDShow						
MAGIC						
Michigan Shoe Market						
Moda Las Vegas						
Moda Manhattan						
Modaprima						
Pool Trade Show						
Project Las Vegas						
Project New York						
Shoes & Leather Industry Exhibition-Guangzhou						
SMOTA- Shoe Market of the Americas						
Southwest Shoe Expo						
STYLEMAX- Holiday/Resort/Spring Preview						
The Atlanta Shoe Market						
The Brighte Companies						
The Chicago Collective						
The Collective/ Blue						
The New York Shoe Expo (FFANY)						
The Niles Show						
Transit- Los Angeles Footwear & Accessories Show						
Urban Trend Show & G I Collective						
Urban Trend Show & Urban Style Coterie						
The WSA Show & The Collections At WSA						
WWIN- WomensWear In Nevada						



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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 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) Exclusive (\$400+)

Store Type: Independent Boutique Dept. Store Chain Store 1-5 Locations Chain Store 5+ Locations

Merchandise: Shoes Only Apparel Only Accessories Only All

Type: Dress Casual Athletic Comfort/Slippers Special Occasions Western Dance Medical Shoecare/ Footcare Urban

Ethic Beach Gothic/Alternative/Other _____

Best Selling Brands _____

Notes About Your Store _____

Your Primary Business Sources (describe):

Trade Magazines _____

Trade Shows _____

Consumer Magazines _____

Internet Catalogs Just Looking

How Do You Find New Merchandise? At Trade Shows Responding To Ads Sellers Contact You

At Trade Show You: Know Exactly What You Need And Who Sells It Know Exactly What You Need But Don't Know Who Sells It

How Frequently Do You Purchase Merchandise For Your Store? At Trade Shows 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. _____

In this issue of FOS, what you liked/disliked the most _____

What would you like to see in future issues? _____

Any suggestions / comments to help FOS become more helpful to your business? _____



Q: Somebody said, that luxury goods sales works well during bad economy. Is this true?

A: Yes, very high end luxury is not often hurt by a bad economy as these customers are not affected by the economy's up and downs. But this is a very small market. What luxury retailers who were offering products to upper income but not high income customers are finding that the slowdown in the economy is affecting that upper income customer, they are cutting back and hurting the sales of those retailers.

Q: I am a boutique owner. Please advice on how to manage through this bad economy times and how long will it last?

A: This too will pass! There has never been a recession in the past 50 years that lasted longer than 18 months and I suspect that the recession we are now in (and yes, I believe we are in one!) will last through at least this fall and most likely we will begin to pull out of it by October or November of 2008 and it could even slip into early 2009 but I am optimistic about a late fall recovery. The key to survival is not to panic. Examine your expenses, see what you can cut back on, but be careful of cutting advertising, staff and training as these are the three things that will bring you more sales. Make sure your staff knows that every customer counts and the focus has to be on average transaction and items per transaction.

Q: What is your outlook and forecast for fashion retail for the next five years? Should we be ready for any BIG surprises?

A: No, I do not see any big surprises, but fashion retail will continue to advance and become more sophisticated. The days of three to four stock turns a year will be gone and twelve to eighteen turns will become a prerequisite to being in the business. I also think that small is the new big and that we will see the big get bigger but also many small independents surge ahead and establish substantial fashion businesses.

Q: Merchandise return- any suggestions to reduce numbers?

A: Yes, track, track, track! You must track your serial returners, those customers who constantly return items. Also make sure that your price tickets cannot be easily removed and

make it a condition of return that the price tickets are still on the garments. If you have every customer in your database you can track their return rates. Also make sure that you are tracking net returns. You may have a very good customer who buys thousands of dollars of product and regularly returns a small percentage that were never worn and you can put right back into stock. It is the customer who tries to return worn items or items that they keep for weeks before returning them which leads to markdowns.

Q: I would like to sell to big department stores. What are the specifics of selling to big department stores buyers, what are their priorities, requirements? Please advise. Thank you!

A: Big department stores often not only ask for very special low pricing, they also want insurance of the sale of the items. This is called markdown dollars that they request if an item does not sell to their expectations. They also will often want co-op advertising dollars, staff training and many other free give aways. You should think long and hard as to whether it is really worth it to sell to a

department store. Often the larger order ends up not being as profitable as you originally thought!



James E. Dion is an internationally known consultant, keynote speaker, trainer, and author of the best-sellers *Retail Selling Ain't Brain Surgery*, *It's Twice As Hard, Start and Run a Retail Business* and *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Starting and Running a Retail Store*. James consults, trains and speaks on consumer trends, retail technology, selling and

service, retail merchandising and operations, marketing and leadership. With a MS degree in Psychology and a PhD in Industrial Psychology combined with over 30 years of progressive retail experience working at Sears, Levi Strauss and Gilmore Department Stores, James is one of the most sought after consultants and speakers in the US and internationally. He can be reached at jimdion@dionco.com; www.dionco.com

Hot
Tatted





hotdogs, milkshakes

fashion

nered diva

Irish Crazy

generous

ch men

New York

pendent

ty girl

run way

shakes

USA = Rock & Roll

art, fashic

Milan, New York

Hillary

sarcastic me= no

handsome m

milkshak

genero

equestri

hotd

bu

nt

ANTIK DENIM



Antik = America
In Jeans We Trust

Trade Shows 2008 Calendar

FFANY

June 3rd - 5th 2008
1370 Avenue Of The Americas
Suite 1101

Chicago Shoe Expo

June 26th - 27th 2008
Embassy Suites Hotel

Michigan Shoe

June 29th - June 30th 2008
Embassy Suites Hotel
19525 Victor Pkwy
Livonia, MI 48152

WSA Show

July 28th - 30th 2008
Las Vegas Convention Center
Central Hall - Booth # 7137

FFANY

Aug 6rd - 8th 2008
1370 Avenue Of The Americas
Suite 1101

Atlanta Shoe Show

August 15 - 17th 2008
Cobb Galleria Centre
Two Galleria Parkway
Atlanta, Georgia 30339

WWDMagic

August 25 - 27th 2008
Las Vegas Convention Center



1-800-367-9220



XOXO

FOOTWEAR