



# D&M Communicator

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## SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST

- **You Have Telephony Questions, D&M Has Answers** (page 2)
- **Don't Let Negative Employees Bring You Down** (page 3)
- **How Conferencing Can Save Time And Money** (page 4)

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## From The Desk Of The President

With the Summer Olympics only days away, we are sure to get a boost of patriotism as our country's premier athletes take center stage.

While you may not be a star athlete, we've packed this issue of the *D&M Communicator* with so much useful information, we can turn you into a star performer at your company!

Of particular interest is the Q&A feature (page 2). I have compiled the answers to the 12 questions we are asked most often. Also included is an article



**Steven Gerhardt, President, D&M Enterprise Group**

on reducing costs and increasing productivity through conferencing (page 4).

While I tend to be very upbeat

and optimistic, I realize not everyone is as happy-go-lucky as I am. With this in mind, I have included articles on dealing with angry customers (page 1) and working effectively with negative employees (page 3).

If there is a subject you would like me to cover in a future issue, let me know. I am always just a phone call away: 1-888-357-5055.

I look forward to hearing from you.

*steve*

P.S. Go USA!

## The #1 Mistake When Dealing With Angry Customers

We all deal with angry customers at one time or another. Angry and difficult customers are a major cause of workplace stress, and they eat up huge amounts of time and the resources of your organization.

There are a lot of tricks and techniques you can employ to deal with an angry customer, and we'll cover a number of them in future editions of the *D&M Communicator*. For now, let's focus on the most common mistake employees make when dealing with a hostile, difficult, or angry customer. By avoiding this particular error, you can save yourself a lot of stress and time.

### The #1 Mistake

When you are faced with an angry customer, you probably assume that the customer wants his or her "problem" fixed. That's a

logical approach and it's at least partly true. Angry customers expect that you will be able to help them in some concrete way, by meeting their want or need. However, there's more to the story.

Have you ever noticed that with a really angry person, even if you can "fix" the problem, the person still acts in angry or nasty ways? Why is that? Well, actually angry customers want several things. Yes, they want the problem fixed, but they also want to BE HEARD, TO BE LISTENED TO, and to have their upset and emotional state recognized and acknowledged.

What most employees do with angry customers is move immediately to solve the problem without giving that acknowledgment. Do you know what happens? The customer is so angry that he or she isn't prepared to work to solve the problem, doesn't listen, and gets in

the way of solving the problem. So the number one error is moving to solve the problem before the customer is "ready," or calm enough to work with the employee.

The result is the employee then has to repeat things over and over (since the customer didn't hear), and has to ask the same questions over and over. This repetition is what drives customers nuts.

### The Solution

The solution is to follow this general rule: When faced with an angry customer, FIRST focus on acknowledging the feelings and upset of the customer. Once the customer starts to calm down as a result of having his or her feelings recognized, THEN move to solve the actual problem. You'll find that this will save you a lot of time and energy.

# D&M Answers Your Most Frequently Asked Questions

**1) Q.** When signing a term agreement for voice services, should I sign a 5-year term for the lower price? **A.** No! D&M recommends that you never sign a term agreement longer than 3 years. When doing switched services you should sign for 1 year only.

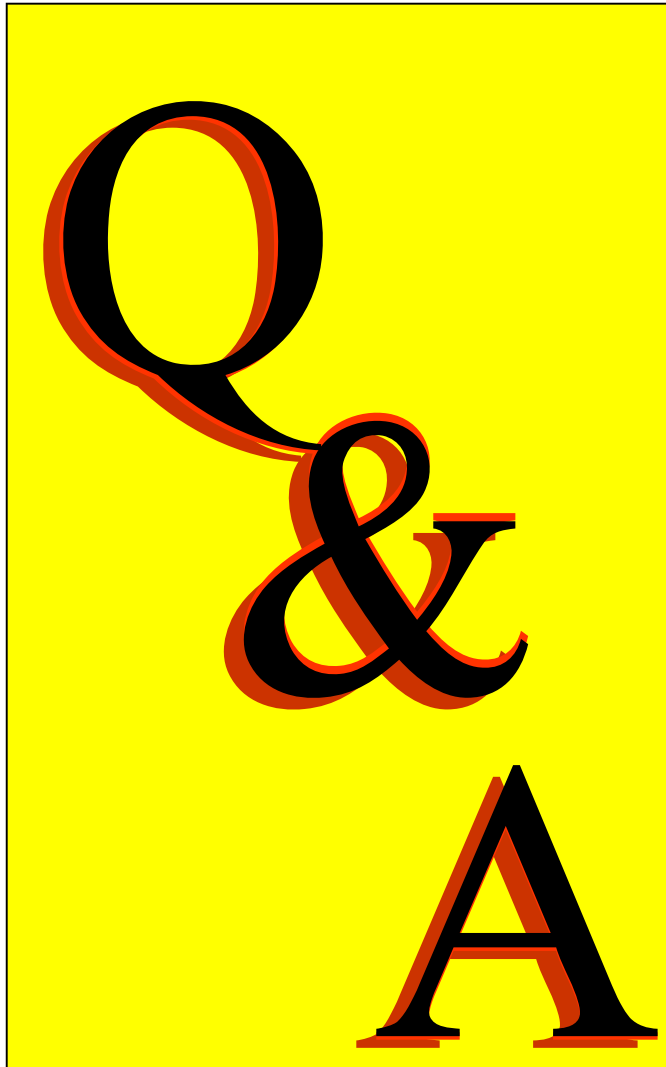
**2) Q.** What is the required data speed to run our office? **A.** There are many variables when figuring out the correct speed for your data. How many people in the office are connected to the Internet? What types of applications are you running? How big are the files? Are you downloading graphics or drawings? All of these factors determine the speed that you need to run your applications. Not all customers are the same. Call your D&M Account Manager to set up a review of your specific needs.

**3) Q.** Why should we do business with D&M (or any agent) and not with a direct representative from the carrier? **A.** As an agent, we work with multiple carriers and we can get you the best solution from various carriers — not just one. Agents (D&M is an agent) are compensated by the carriers based on a percentage of your bill each month. A direct representative gets paid once the service is installed. As a result, D&M has incentive to take care of its customers so you stay with us for many years. We also provide support to our customers so you do not have to sit on hold with the carriers, as opposed to direct reps who will only give you a customer service number to call.

**4) Q.** Our contract just auto-renewed. Can we get out of it? **A.** One thing D&M does for its clients is to have the evergreen clause removed from the agreement prior to signature. When carriers will not remove this clause, you need to send a letter to the carrier 60 days prior to the contract expiration date so your account does not auto-

renew. In those rare cases where we can't get this clause removed, D&M will send this letter on your behalf.

**5) Q.** Who owns my toll-free number? **A.** Every customer owns his own toll-free number. You can move the toll-free number to any carrier you wish. For you to move your toll-free number, you need to be in good business standing (i.e., your billing is current) for the current carrier to release the number.



**6) Q.** I have all of my service with one carrier. Should I move some service to another carrier? **A.** If you use only one carrier and that carrier has a network issue, you are out of business. It is very unlikely that 2 different carriers will have an outage in the same area at the same time. Redundancy is very important. At D&M's office, we have 2 Internet provid-

ers and 2 voice providers.

**7) Q.** What if I have a billing dispute with the carrier and they won't release my toll-free number? **A.** You have recourse! Remember, it's your number. You can pay a fee (\$37.50 up to \$100) per toll-free number and have the numbers NASC. This will take the number from the current carrier and transfer it to your new provider.

**8) Q.** Why do I keep getting charges on my Verizon bill that I do not recognize? **A.** Most likely these are cramming charges. Cramming charges are third-party billing charges that appear on your LEC bill. D&M will contest these charges, get credits, and prevent these charges from reappearing.

**9) Q.** How often should I review my voice and data services? **A.** We recommend that you do a full audit once a year and review your services monthly. Your calling pattern should be the same month after month. If you see a drastic change without a logical explanation, this should raise a flag.

**10) Q.** When is the best time to cut over our service when switching carriers? **A.** We recommend that you do this on a Thursday at the end of the day. If you cut over on a Friday and you have a problem, you run the risk of not having the right techs on duty after hours on the weekend.

**11) Q.** Why do I need to have a few extra POTS lines when I put in a T-1 or PR? **A.** If your circuit goes down you

will need a way for your customers to contact you, and you in turn, will need a way to contact your customers. We strongly recommend you have these lines as a back-up.

**12) Q.** How long does it take to get my new service? **A.** POTS lines take anywhere from 4 days to 2 weeks. If you are ordering a T-1, you should plan on 45-60 days.

# Working Effectively With Negative Employees

At one time or another, organizations develop an overabundance of "negative energy" or attitudes. Sometimes they can be linked to organizational trauma, like downsizing, budget restraints, or workload increases, but sometimes they evolve over time with no apparent triggering event.

The negative organization is characterized by increased complaining, a focus on reasons why things can't be done, and what seems to be a lack of hope that things will get better. It feels like the organization is stuck in a rut. And, it's contagious. Negativism can affect even the most positive employees.

What can you do? Based on an article by Arthur Beck and Ellis Hillmar, professors in organization development at University of Richmond, we suggest the following:

## Model Positive Behavior

It is obvious that if management is walking and talking in a negative way, staff will follow. Don't do it. Instead, take a positive approach with staff by showing confidence in their abilities. Expect a lot, support staff, hold them accountable, confront them, and be clear and honest. Set standards for your own work and relations with employees, and work toward meeting them to set an example of positive

behavior.

## Acknowledge Negativity

You can't ignore negativity and expect it to go away. If you do not acknowledge it, then staff will feel that you are out of touch, and will not be confident in your abilities. Acknowledge the frustration and negative feelings, and do not try to convince the person or people that they shouldn't have their negative feelings. However, when acknowledging employees' negative feelings, try asking for suggestions regarding what to do about them.

## Look For and Identify the Positives In All Situations

Sometimes we forget to find positives. When an employee makes an impractical solution, we are quick to dismiss the idea. We should be identifying the effort while gently discussing the idea. Look for small victories, and talk about them. Turning a negative organization into a positive one is a result of thousands of little actions.

## Give Positive Recognition Often

Provide positive recognition as soon as you find out about good performance. Do not couple positive strokes with suggestions for improvement. Separate them. For many people, combining them devalues the recognition.

## Refrain From Collusion on Negativity

It is easy to get caught in the general complaining, particularly in informal discussions.

When faced with negative conversations, consider changing the subject, comment on the negative content ("Let's talk about something more pleasant"), or ask what can be done about the situation (move from negative to positive slant).

## A Few More Quick Tips:

- Hold a strategic planning session to focus on a positive future (but make sure it is well facilitated).
- Encourage staff to find creative ways to make the work environment more enjoyable.
- Encourage staff to be involved in decision-making and delegate where possible.
- Introduce a "work-smart" program to de-hassle the workplace.

## Conclusion

It is not uncommon for organizations to go through periods of negativity. Managers play important roles in determining if that negativity will increase, or whether the spat of negativity will last for a relatively short period of time. Above all, remember that it is the little things that you do, day in and day out, that make the difference.

The content of this article is based on "What Managers Can Do To Turn Around Negative Attitudes" by A. Dale Tempe

## “Did You Hear About...”

A corporate executive, on vacation in a small, Greek coastal village, was strolling by the docks and taking in the local color. He complimented one fisherman on the quality of his catch. "How long did it take you to get all those fish?" he wondered.

"Not very long," answered the Greek. "An hour or two."

"Then why didn't you stay out longer to catch more?"

Shrugging, the Greek explained that his catch was sufficient to meet his needs, and those of his family.

The executive asked, "But what do you do with the rest of your time?"

I sleep late, fish a little, play with my children, and take a nap with my wife.

In the evening, I go to the village to see my friends, dance a little, play the bouzouki, and sing songs. I have a full life."

The executive said, "I have an MBA from Harvard. I can help you. You should start by fishing longer every day. You'll catch extra fish that you can sell. With the revenue, you can buy a bigger boat.

With the extra money the larger boat will bring you, you can buy a second boat and a third one, and so on, until you have an entire fleet of trawlers. Instead of selling your fish to a middleman, you can then negotiate directly with the processing plants and maybe even open your own plant.

You can ship fish to markets all around the world. In time, you can then move

to New York City to direct your huge enterprise." "How long would that take?" asked the Greek.

"Twenty, perhaps twenty-five years," replied the executive.

"And after that?"

"When your business gets really big, you can sell stock and make millions!" exclaimed the executive with zeal. "Millions? Really? "And after that?" the Greek asked.

"After that you'll be able to retire, live in a small village near the coast, sleep late, play with your grandchildren, catch a few fish, take a nap with your wife, and spend your evenings singing, dancing, and playing the bouzouki with your friends."

## Quote Of The Month

"I only want people around me who can do the impossible."

Elizabeth Arden  
(1878-1966)  
Canadian  
businesswoman,  
style mogul

# How To Cut Expenses & Improve Productivity Through Conferencing

The recent hike in gas prices isn't new to anyone. It's impossible to open a newspaper, switch on the television, or surf the Internet without some reference to the high price of gas and the effect that it's having — not to mention the hit to your bottom line.

As the cost of travel continues to increase, you need to find ways to keep productivity up while keeping costs down.

Whether you're commuting to work or on the road visiting customers, every mile you drive costs you time and money. For example, if you drive 20 miles one way to visit a client for an hour in a car that averages 20 mpg, your total trip commitment is 40 miles and about 2 hours of your time. After returning to the office, not only have you spent over \$8.20 in gas, based on the recent national average price per gallon of \$4.10,

but you've also spent an hour on the road. For that same \$8.20, you could have saved an hour of your time and still had your meeting — if you had only used conferencing.

An hour on the road may seem like nothing if you've got to travel across the country or to another state for a meeting. As the hassles of travel increase with higher airline ticket prices and longer security lines, consider an alternative — conferencing.

- Conferencing can turn the road-weary road warrior into

a more productive, savvy business person who:

- Has more time to spend on personal pursuits
- Has more time to spend on productive work instead of hours of driving and time spent in airports
- Saves the company money
- impacts the environment less one less trip at a time
- Enjoys the flexibility of meeting with multiple clients in different



**When you consider the cost to attend an out-of-town meeting, web conferencing becomes a very affordable option.**

geographic locations in the same day without ever leaving the office

Ask yourself "Can I be successful with a conference for this meeting?" Smart businesses are using conferencing on a daily basis. In a recent national survey, Wainhouse Research found that more than 60 percent of all meetings today are done virtually. That figure may seem high but when you consider the prevalent use of audio conferencing and the ease of web conferencing, 60 percent seems a bit low.

In May 2008, Roger Dow, president and CEO of the Travel Industry Association, was quoted in

a Cox News story that "more than 100,000 travelers each day are voting with their wallets by choosing to avoid trips." The interview was conducted via a conference call.

But it's not just executives that benefit from using conferencing as an everyday business tool. A wide range of functions within a business can benefit from using conferencing.

Consider the ease with which a corporate trainer can conduct training by using the tools found within web conferencing solutions. They can easily share a presentation, run a demo, or poll the participants.

A project manager can share a timeline and participants can make real-time changes via the web so that collaboration is easy and efficient. Technical support staff can use web conferencing to troubleshoot a customer's problem visually so that the frustrations of a client are addressed quickly.

Really, anyone in business today can use conferencing as a cost-effective way to do business.

When you consider that the cost of a conference call can be less than the cost of the gas, not to mention the time savings, there is no time like the present to start using conferencing for your next meeting.

To learn how D&M can set up a conferencing service for your company, call your D&M Project Manager at 888-357-5055.

# How P&G Developed A New World Of Innovation

**Book Review:** It's unusual to have a CEO write a how-to business book while he's still on the job. But A.G. Lafley of Procter & Gamble had a story that couldn't wait.

In his new book, *The Game-Changer: How You Can Drive Revenue and Profit Growth with Innovation*, Lafley shares the principles that turned his company around. He says they can do the same for other companies.

After Lafley tells each story, co-author and management consultant Ram Charan gives a management analysis. This is not like other innovation books. What makes it different is its concrete explanation of the company's methods and the examples it provides.

Sales were lagging at P&G, the maker of *Crest*, *Pampers*, and *Tide* among other products. When Lafley took over in 2000, he thought they were trying to do too much and weren't doing things well.

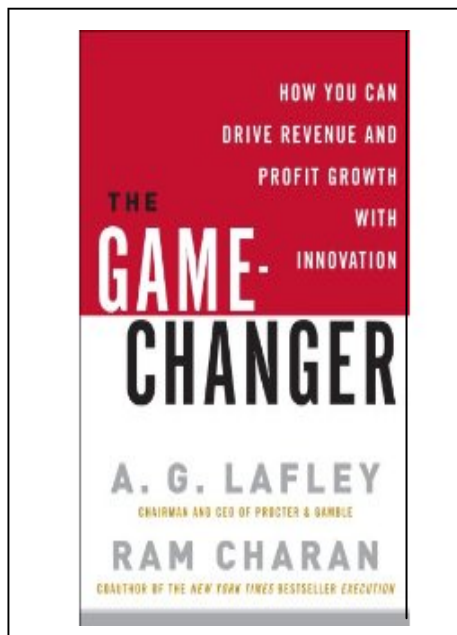
boss, not the management team. P&G researchers actually lived with families to come up with product ideas based on customer needs.

Lafley says companies need to see innovation not as something that only special people do, but as something that is routine, methodical, and takes advantage of the capabilities of ordinary people. Every employee should be thinking about it.

His other lessons tell how to:

- Develop a higher growth

- Create new customers and new markets.
- Revitalize a business model.



- Reach outside the business to tap the world's brainpower and creativity.
- Integrate innovation into the mainstream of managerial decisions.
- Manage risk.
- Make innovation the driving force of the business.

*The Game-Changer: How You Can Drive Revenue and Profit Growth with Innovation* by A.G. Lafley and Ram Charan, Crown Business, 352 pages, \$27.50.

## About D&M

include DS3, T1, as well as phone equipment installations.

As independent telecommunications experts, we have the luxury of offering our clients objective advice that truly serves their best interests. Once our clients' telecommunications needs are identified, we match these needs with the services offered by more than 20 of the nation's leading carriers and equipment manufacturers we represent. Because we have the ability to select from a wide variety of carriers and equipment, we can guarantee our clients that they are getting the **best solution** available at the **lowest possible cost**.

**HOW WE DO IT:** D&M does all the comparison shopping for you! Using proprietary software, D&M analyzes your existing communication, Internet, and data transfer usage. Once this analysis is complete, a comprehensive, customized proposal is prepared that shows the savings you can expect from competing carriers who can provide the same, or in some cases, superior service, at a lower price. Based on your needs, D&M will also recommend service and equipment changes that will save you money too.

In addition, D&M uses proprietary software, which we call our COMMauditor system, to analyze every invoice to ensure you are being charged at the contracted rate and that you are not charged for equipment or services that were canceled or never ordered. We also track all your telephony assets and vendor agreements.

The combination of increasing the efficiency of your business by ensuring you are using the proper services and equipment, along with monitoring your bills for accuracy, guarantees your company will be performing at maximum efficiency without overspending.

As your single point of contact, D&M makes it easy for you to spend your valuable time running your business while we make sure your telecommunications, Internet and data transfer needs are being supplied by the highest quality providers at the lowest possible cost.

Founded in 2001, D&M Enterprise Group has thousands of satisfied clients. D&M utilizes a consultative approach to thoroughly examine every aspect of each client's telecommunications needs and then recommend specific cost-saving and performance-enhancing solutions. We specialize in medium to large-scale applications that



**Where world class communications meet superior customer service**

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