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# D&M Communicator

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## SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST

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## From The Desk Of The President

While the stock market, the President, and leading economic indicators all suggest that the economy is starting to show signs of a recovery, from my vantage point it's not quite time to celebrate.

With cost-conscious CFOs and CEOs pulling out all the stops to cut costs and improve the bottom line, at D&M we are seeing some companies reduce their telephony services.

While in some cases cutting costs is justified, i.e., when you reduce your workforce and need fewer phone lines, cutting costs for the sake of cutting will not always reap the financial windfall you anticipate. In fact, the wrong cuts can be detrimental.



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

Instead of spending time trying to cut

your telecom costs, your time may be better spent reading several of the articles I have included in this issue that can help you grow your business.

As always, don't hesitate to call me, or a D&M Project Manager, if you have any questions about your voice, data, or Internet services. We can be reached at 1-732-335-5510.

steve

## Phone Systems For Small Businesses

The telephone communication industry has improved a lot and business owners find it difficult to select the appropriate phone systems for their small scaled business. There are a lot of choices of phone models and choosing the appropriate model for your business can be difficult.

### Running a smooth organization

Phone systems are one of the most important things needed to run a business. Through the telephone, you will be able to contact your customers, business partners, and other clients. It will also be easy for these people to reach you and do business with you. It would be a big loss for you if your business callers are redirected or routed incorrectly or are baffled by a lot of automated voice prompts.

**Cutting back on phone bills**  
With the present economic crisis, business owners should

also consider the affordability and the durability of the equipment they will use for their business. For starters or those who own a business with few staff on board, it would be best to invest in equipment that will be enough for the staff and just make necessary expansions when the business needs it in the future. This is for practicality purposes so you don't have to invest a lot on excessive equipment that is not needed.

### Phone system for small businesses

There are a lot of things that you have to consider if you're deciding to buy a telephone system for your business. For small businesses or those who have less than five employees, there are phone systems such as the NEC phone systems that have call coverage keys that allow faster answering of incoming calls. Aside from that it also has other features such as:

- Call Park - allows calls to be picked up easily within any portals in the office without dropping the call.

- Caller ID Callback - Helps in identifying the phone number of the caller and enables easy redialing of previous calls.

- Paging systems - The NEC phone systems have built-in paging systems which help in finding the requested party more easily and quickly.

These features help small business owners to ensure smooth communication between staff and business callers. No matter what type of business you run, it is important to have a phone system that optimizes communication.

Keep in mind that phone systems serve as your first line of communication to your customers or clients; thus, your phone system should be able to provide all your business needs without sacrificing quality. Through a good phone system, you will be able to ensure that you're providing a hundred percent customer service satisfaction.

If you have questions about your phone system, call D&M at 1-732-335-5510.

# Holding On Price In A Down Economy

Mark Hunter, a sales expert, recently provided some useful advice regarding pricing in a down economy. Hunter's philosophy on this subject can be summed up in several sentences: "Discounting on price is not a sales strategy. It's an impulsive move made by desperate salespeople. In a tough economy, customers think and expect everything is going to be discounted. Because of this, salespeople feel it necessary to oblige the customer to close the deal."

Unfortunately, as Hunter explains, this leads to a downward spiral, much like an addiction to an illegal drug. Once a discount is offered to one customer, it becomes easier and easier to offer it to another one. Before they know it, the discount is being offered to everyone. Like a drug, the "fix" is in the additional sales the salesperson is able to gain.

However, just like with an addictive drug, there is a "withdrawal." Sales come at a reduced or a very reduced margin. To make matters worse, the discount ends up altering the attitude of the customer who now believes the real value of the product or service they bought is the reduced price and not the full one. Overcoming this mislabeled sales strategy of offering a discount can only be done when the salesperson is willing to change his or her way of thinking, despite how difficult it may be.

The first step necessary to correcting the salesperson's mindset is to help them believe in their ability to close the sale. Competent salespeople know why the customer is looking to buy and are able to capitalize on the needs the customer has disclosed. When sales professionals begin to feel the need to discount, it's usually because they don't believe they've established a solid reason why the customer should buy from them. They have failed to ask the right questions to get the customer talking and then avoided the critical skill of following up.

When a salesperson has spent all of his time touting product

features and not uncovering the benefits to the customer, his presentation may not include what the customer actually needs.

Only when the salesperson has taken the time to probe deeper will he truly understand why the customer wants to buy. They need to ask the right questions and then listen to the responses. Then they will be able to capitalize on the information provided them.



**While holding your price in a tough economy may seem difficult, in order to survive it may be one of the keys to your company's survival.**

The second step necessary to avoid the need to discount is to keep the message on the immediate return-on-investment the customer will receive when making the purchase. Keep in mind that businesses don't buy anything, they only invest in things. Every purchase made by a business is seen as an investment in helping them achieve their own goals. For this reason, the message must focus on the immediate gain that will result from their decision to buy. This emphasis is best brought out when the salesperson ties their questions into exploring how and what the customer expects to achieve immediately, as well as how they've measured results in other purchases they've made.

The third step is found in knowing how to respond when the customer asks for a discount or states that the price is too high. Salespeople need to be ready for these

objections and not be concerned or disarmed by them. The first time the customer brings up this issue, the salesperson should not even acknowledge what was said. Often, customers feel an obligation to inquire, and once asked, they've done what they were "supposed" to do.

The salesperson should only respond to the customer when they have brought the issue up for the second time, and the way they handle it is critical. They need to ask a question that is pointed directly at the most significant need the customer has. This will serve to shift the customer's thinking back to why they're looking to buy to begin with. After they respond, the salesperson should continue the dialogue with a series of follow-up questions designed to uncover even greater needs. The more the customer is focused on their need, the less they will be focused on a lower price.

Finally, salespeople must keep in mind that there will be times when they must be willing to walk away from an order. Although this can be scary and risky during these tough times, it's essential for them to believe they don't need every sale.

Not only does walking away help them realize that there are other opportunities out there, it also serves to strengthen their resolve to hold the line and maintain the value of what they are selling.

Holding on price in a down economy is not easy, but it is doable, and, in fact, it is essential! When sales professionals believe in their product or service with complete conviction, focus on the immediate ROI, and ask the questions necessary to uncover the customer's greatest need, resorting to the mis-labeled sales strategy of offering a discount will be unnecessary. Maintaining your pricing integrity in a down economy is truly a winning strategy because, in the end, profit margins are higher, the ability to service a customer is better, and the confidence of the salesperson is greater. Especially in today's marketplace, that's worth pursuing.

# 6 Ways To Increase Your Sales NOW!

Now is the time to become a "smart" entrepreneur about your business by doing more, not less. What I mean by "doing more" is increasing your sales and marketing efforts. Instead of pulling back as many entrepreneurs are currently doing, beat out your competitors by finding new ways to stay visible.

An economic slowdown can be a problem for your business if you allow it to be. Or, it can be an opportunity to gain new clients and boost your sales if you know and have mastered the marketing and sales methods that work best during these times.

Right now, many successful entrepreneurs are rubbing their hands together in eager anticipation of new opportunities because they know many of their competitors are pulling back. With less competition, it makes it easy for them to go after business.

Although people may be more cautious in spending money, they still need services. **The person they'll do business with will be the one who provides the best value and finds creative ways to stay in front of them.**

Here are 6 sales and marketing strategies to maintain and even increase sales, no matter what's going on around you.

## 1. Follow Up

I'm amazed to hear entrepreneurs say they only follow up one or two times and sometimes never at all. People may not be ready to buy from you today but if they expressed interest, they'll proba-

bly be ready to buy in the next several months. **They say it can take 7-10 or more touches to move the client to making a buying decision.** You want to come up with creative ways to stay in touch, so when they're ready to buy they'll remember you.



## 2. Reactivate dormant accounts

Reaching out to past clients can make customers for life. Let them know you're there for them and be generous by offering some ideas to help them in their business. One phone call can make a huge difference. Think about it. When was the last time a past vendor called you with some ideas for your business? **When you go the extra mile and show them you're there to help them, they'll appreciate you and remember that when they're ready to do business.**

## 3. Make special offers

Offer a product or service at a special low fee for a limited time. Give catchy- Half Price Sale, Birthday Sale, My Dog Maxx's Birthday Sale, Xmas Sale, Coupon Sale, Free 30-Day Trial names to

these special offers. Some examples are: Close-out Sale, Scratch and Dent Sale, **You'll need to put a time limit on the offer to encourage people to buy now and not later.** Also, it helps to explain why you're having the sale, so they know you don't just drop prices whenever you feel like it.

## 4. Up sell to generate additional revenue

When a client purchases your product, you can offer other services at a nominal fee that will complement the product they've just purchased. This is done in many places. For example, at many hotels they now charge you a 'resort fee' of \$20 a day. And for that fee, they list a series of amenities you receive. **Although this is a small fee, with the volume of customers, this fee adds up.**

## 5. Add value to your existing service

During times when your customers may be concerned about pricing, another way to win them over is offering the best value for their dollar. You can do this by enhancing your service with "extras." **An extra might be faster delivery than your competitors, a larger selection, easier payment options, or a better guarantee.**

## 6. Be positive

I'm a big believer in staying positive. Now is the time to surround yourself with positive people, say positive affirmations daily, read books that make you feel good, listen to people who share their secrets for achieving success, take time to nurture yourself, and **most of all believe in yourself and stay in action!**

## "Did You Hear About..."

Early in his career, P. T. Barnum created an exhibit, entitled "The Happy Family," consisting of a cage housing a lion, a tiger, a panther, and a baby lamb.

The remarkable display earned Barnum unprecedented publicity and attendance figures.

Some time after its opening, Barnum was asked about his plans for the happy family. "The display will become a permanent feature," he declared, "if the supply of lambs holds out."

One day during his tenure as chief of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's Works Progress Administration (WPA), General Somervell was confronted with a "sit-down" strike; union members took over a public building and refused to leave.

After police had tried and failed to end the strike, Somervell found a more effective (and more peaceful) solution: he locked each of the building's bathrooms - and went home with the keys.

Six hours later, the strike was over.

At the turn of the Millennium, Bill Gates went head to head with the United States Department of Justice over Microsoft's allegedly monopolistic business practices, including the company's bundling of software applications with its operating system software.

During the ensuing trial, Gates claimed that, for technical reasons, the firm's browser, Internet Explorer, could not be unbundled from the rest of Windows - whereupon an expert witness for the prosecution went to work in the courtroom and unbundled Explorer in about ten minutes.

## Tips To Find Email Addresses

Whether you are looking to catch up with a former colleague or simply want to connect with a lost family member, it is common to want to find an email address online. There are several ways you can go about tracking down the information you desire. Here are a few tips to help you find email addresses on the Internet quickly and efficiently.

The most basic method is to search in the major search engines like Google or Yahoo. When looking in these search engines, type in whatever information you already have, whether it is a name or phone number. This method is one of the least effective ways to find information on someone, but it is worth a try.

The hope is that one of the search engines will have an address or name saved on the search results so that you can pursue it further for even more details. Although it can be quite time-consuming, you will not have to worry about spending a penny seeking information with this method.

The next method you can use to pursue desired information is to look at one of the many specialized search engines that are designed specially to help you find email addresses. You will find that many of these specialized sites, like switchboard.com, are free. With these sites you can find basic information such as names, addresses, email addresses, and even businesses that the person may work for. You can even take advantage of the phone search option that will allow you to find the phone number of someone you may be looking for.

The problem with the options listed above is that these will work for people who are not trying to hide their tracks. The more sophisticated person who is trying to stay out of the public's eye will go to greater lengths to make sure basic information is not available. This is when you will want to look at reverse email sites that are built specifically to find information about people who try to hide their tracks.

There are a plethora of web sites waiting to help you find email addresses. The best site we found was [www.theultimates.com/email/](http://www.theultimates.com/email/) However, this site does charge a nominal fee. Two other sites we liked were [www.emailfinder.com](http://www.emailfinder.com) and [www.people.yahoo.com](http://www.people.yahoo.com)

## How On-Hold Messages Help With Customer Retention

For businesses big and small, the telephone is essential. Your phone system serves as the first line of communication between your company and prospective and current customers, as well as business associates.

Once you have selected and installed a phone system that is suitable for your business, you can maximize its features to increase your sales and make your business grow. Actually, your phone system can be converted to a money-making tool by using effective marketing strategies.

For small staffed businesses, telemarketing can also be possible through on-hold advertising. This is an effective way to keep your customers on the line while they are on hold. This is also a means of reducing dropped calls which reflects your company's service level.

Studies have shown that more than 50% of callers whose calls are placed on hold will hang up. Perhaps the more shocking statistic is that of those callers who hung up, it is estimated that 25% will call a competitor.

In today's fast-paced business world, consumers have come to expect to be put on hold. The challenge you have is keeping them on hold and not getting them so frustrated that they want to call your competitors. This is where the on-hold message can become an essential component of your marketing mix.

On-hold advertising is one of the most widely used marketing techniques, and its popularity continues to grow.

Through on-hold advertising, you are marketing your services while maintaining customer satisfaction. While putting the line on hold is a common business practice, customers do not want a long waiting time. Time is important for everybody—not only to you but also to your customers; therefore, you, as a business owner, should strive to make maximum use of those rare instances when you have your customer's attention.

Remember, your customers and prospects may call more often than you think, so keep your messages relevant and current. In fact, if you operate a business where the prices change daily, or if you have daily or weekly specials, on-hold advertising is an ideal medium to convey this information.

Still not convinced your company can benefit from on-hold advertising? Perhaps these statistics will change your mind:

### AT&T REPORTS:

- An estimated 70% of business phone callers are put on hold.
- An estimated 60% of business phone callers put on hold will hang up without messages and music on hold.

### A NATIONAL STUDY BY NATA REPORTS:

- Phone callers with SILENCE-ON-HOLD will abandon their phone calls in less than one minute and 90% hang up within 40 seconds.
- Phone callers with MUSIC ON HOLD will stay on the line 30 seconds longer than with only silence.
- Phone callers with MESSAGES ON HOLD will stay on the line for up to 3 minutes longer.

### US WEST COMMUNICATIONS FOUND THAT MESSAGES ON HOLD RESULTS IN:

- 40% increase in retention of phone callers on hold
- 15% increase in inquiries
- 12% increase in requests for products and services mentioned on hold

### MORE ON HOLD MESSAGE FACTS:

- *Telemarketing Magazine* - "Over 70% of business phone callers are placed on hold..."
- OfficeTeam Survey - "The average executive spends 17 minutes per day on hold..."
- CNN Survey - "The average person spends 60 hours per year on hold..."

## Sales Tip Of The Month

Looking for a proven source of high quality sales leads? Look no further than your database of current customers.

Referrals from your existing clients have been proven over and over to be the best single source of pre-qualified leads. Not only can your current customers personally vouch for you and your company, but they can give you the names of decision makers who could also benefit from your products or services.

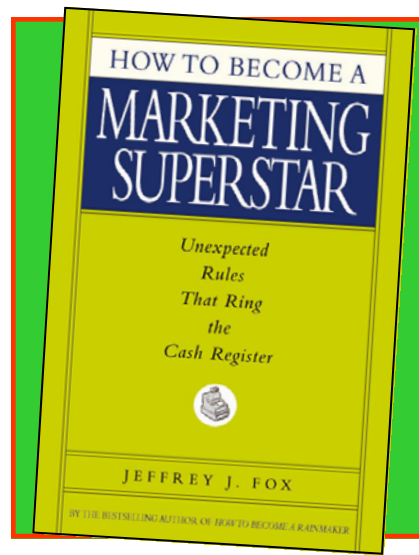
# How To Become A Marketing Superstar

**Book Review:** According to Publisher's Weekly, Jeffrey J. Fox's fourth entry in his How to Become series proves again that he has mastered the short format, advice-driven business book.

The book contains 50-odd short chapters boasting a surprising amount of useful information delivered in a street-smart style. In the chapter entitled "Banish All Buying Barriers," Fox advises readers to eliminate anything that makes it difficult for customers to buy. About merchants featured in Visa ads for not accepting AmEx, he says, "Not accepting the American Express card is dumb. Bragging about it is even dumber."

Fox lists words to avoid in advertising (e.g., "lifetime" and "quality") and questions to ask when drafting a marketing plan. Four "instant challenges" describe a marketing problem (e.g., how to sell shoe shines during a downpour) and ask

readers to solve it. (Try a sandwich board reading: "Acid Rain! Save your shoes. Get a



shine. Ask about the Rainy Day Special.") Throughout, Fox never loses sight of what he sees as marketing's ultimate goal, the "super

marketer's anthem: It don't mean a thing. If it don't go ka-ching!"

Don't be fooled by the compact size of this business manual. Fox explains his points concisely without all the fluff one sees in other pseudo-handbooks. The suggestions are practical and so simple that it's hard to believe large (and small) companies don't already operate in such a streamlined manner.

Jeffrey J. Fox is a superstar in the world of business writing. His previous best-selling titles include [How to Become CEO](#), [How to Become a Rainmaker](#), [Don't Send a Resume](#) and [How to Become a Great Boss](#).

Any employee, regardless of your title or responsibilities, can benefit from reading *How to Be a Marketing Superstar*. A copy should always be available at the CEO's desk as well. This is an excellent book with excellent advice.

This 192-page book, first released in 2003, is published by Hyperion.

## About D&M

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 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.



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