



Donald Cooper, MBA, HoF

**Donald** is respected by clients in over 40 industries throughout the world as a “thought leader” and passionate visionary in the key areas of management, marketing, and service excellence.

Drawing from his experience as a world-class manufacturer, award-winning retailer, business speaker and coach, he has helped thousands of businesses to sell more, manage smarter and grow their bottom line.

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## An article by Donald Cooper, MBA...

### The amazing marketing value of “lists”.

How could you use simple lists to reduce customer’s stress, create confidence and grow your sales?

Years ago, we bought mountain bikes from a Toronto bike and ski shop that I’d done business with for years. It was towards the end of the day and they seemed to want to make the \$2800 sale and get us out the door.

But, as we started our cycling experience, we began to realize that we needed helmets, cycling gloves, special cycling shoes, padded bike shorts, bike locks, bike covers, water bottles, small clip-on communicators so that we could talk to each other, nylon pullovers for bad weather, maps and books about bike routes...and panniers to hold all this stuff.

As we became aware of all the paraphernalia that we needed for a complete cycling experience, we became resentful that our former “bike hero” didn’t even mention any of this stuff. We wished that he had sold us the complete package...but he didn’t.

So, we found a new “bike hero” who had **a list**. They had a complete list of every imaginable piece of equipment, clothing, gadget, accessory and information that cyclists might need to have an amazing experience. In addition, they had lots of info on great cycling trips throughout Europe for which they’ve partnered with a travel agent...and on which they get a little commission for any bookings they generate.

And, on the back of the list they list tips on bike maintenance, bike safety and biking skills.

Because they had a complete list, they made it easy for us to buy...and for them to make the complete sale. They created confidence in their knowledge and professionalism, they sold us \$1800 worth of “stuff” in 20 minutes and I bet that the gross margin was excellent.

In December, when most bike shops are doing zero business, they print their wonderful list on red card stock with a Christmas border around it and send it out to their database with the suggestion that folks check off the bike accessories that they’d like for Christmas and then pass the list on to family and friends as a Christmas wish list. And December has become one of their best sales months.

Here’s another example of the power of lists. A wedding planner friend of mine offers brides-to-be a three-page list of the hundreds of decisions that need to be made and every detail that needs looking after to plan an amazing wedding...all in the order in which they should be addressed.



Some folks would say that she's helping brides to organize their own wedding, and not hire her. But her experience is that most brides are surprised and overwhelmed by how much there is to do and they immediately realize that they need professional and experienced help...and, when they see how big the job is, they don't argue about the fees.

Progressive Auto Insurance's market positioning is that they'll save you money. To support that commitment and to keep themselves focused, they provide you with their car insurance quote and a list of what their competitors would charge for the same coverage. That's gutsy...but when you actually deliver what you promise, it's very effective.

Every November a clothing manufacturer that I know sends his customers a marketing and promotional calendar for the following year. This is basically a list of all the dates and occasions around which retailers should be organizing a promotion, advertising or special event. For independent retailers, who have little time to proactively work "ON" their business, this "list" is a huge help. By creating a simple list my friend has elevated himself from salesman to business coach.

Whatever business you're in, your customers are confused, overwhelmed and short of time. How could you proactively use simple lists to create confidence in your professionalism, help your customers to save time, make better decisions and have a complete and extraordinary experience...and grow your bottom line?

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