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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...

How can you customize what you do to better serve your customers as individuals?

One of the most powerful things we can do to attract and keep customers is to tailor our products or services to them as individuals. We all want to be special and, whatever we’re buying, it’s our time and our money and we’d like it to be done our way.

Harvey’s hamburger chain, a Canadian brand icon, has successfully competed with the international fast food giants by offering to garnish your burger “*your way*”. You get to pick which of the nine garnishes you want. It’s a burger made for you. On their website, you can even vote for your favourite garnish.



Some pizza restaurants offer only their set menu of pizzas. Others make suggestions of popular combos, but still let you design your own, if you wish. I love mine with mushrooms, red onions, sliced tomato, bacon and extra cheese....and I hate it when they won’t let me order pizza “*my way*”.

When a hotel chain builds a file on you and knows your special needs and preferences and then actually uses that information to proactively serve you as an individual, they make it difficult for you to go to a competitor. It also allows them to send you tailored promotions that will be more likely to appeal to you and keep you coming back. Do you know your customers well enough to serve them as individuals, or do you try to sell them on the idea that “one size does fit all”?

Progressive Auto Insurance is currently running ads in which they invite you to tell them how much you want to pay for car insurance and they’ll do their best to design a policy to meet your needs.

Another Insurance company offers “insurance that’s just right for you”. They check 21 personal factors to create customized car insurance and people who switch to them save an average of \$300.

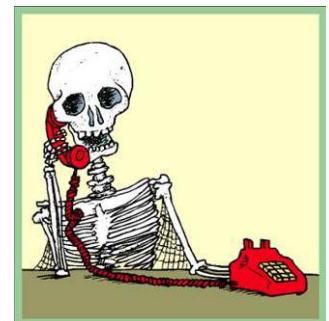


An American bank lets you go online and design your own customized credit card with specific financial terms and a unique graphic image of your choosing.

Faux Shows, a business started by two British radio announcers, creates personalized fake radio shows on DVD featuring bits of news and favourite tunes of a particular person or couple. These fake, personalized “shows”, costing about \$500, have become popular birthday, wedding or anniversary gifts.

It’s interesting that many years ago, when technology first started intruding into our lives, the big concern was that we would lose our individuality. We would all be treated the same. We’d all be a “number”. And, at the beginning, that’s the way it was.

I’m old enough to remember back to when, if you wanted to check on the status of a particular incoming flight, you phoned the airline and a real person on the other end of the line answered and gave you the update. Then, technology intervened and when we phoned the airline, we got an answering machine that played a tape that listed the status of every flight. We had to listen to info on 30 flights that we didn’t give a damn about just to get the info on the one we cared about. And if you missed it, you had to listen to the whole tape again.



But now, technology has developed to the point where it’s digital, personal and interactive. Now, we phone the airline, punch in one specific flight number, and immediately get info on just that flight. Or, we simply go online and look up the status of any specific flight, anywhere in the world, in 30 seconds.

Today’s technology allows you to know, serve and communicate with thousands of customers as individuals. The question is, are you using it to delight your customers, grow your business and improve your bottom line? Or, you could be like Harvey’s hamburgers and just commit to doing things “*your customers’ way*”. There’s no technology involved there...just nine condiments and a simple shift in thinking.

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