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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...

Stop trying to be more like the “big guys”:

Many of my small-business clients ask me how they can become more like the “big guys”. Meanwhile, my large clients keep asking me how they can become more like the small guys in terms of achieving greater customer intimacy, eliminating layers of red tape, responding to opportunities more quickly and engaging staff more effectively.

The big guys struggle to get it right. A very sharp lady recently told me that she had been in a mid-level management position with two of Canada’s big banks but that the working environment was so toxic, she left to work for a much smaller business.

Air Canada, another one of the “big guys”, ignores their front line staff and ticks off customers. I recently looked up two flights on their website and found just what I was looking for at \$449 each way. Because I wasn’t sure how to order tickets on line, I called their special Elite Customer help line, reserved for their most valued customers.

I asked the nice lady if there was an extra charge for ordering tickets over the phone rather than on their website. She assured me that there was not. So, I told her the exact flights and class of ticket that I wanted. I had even picked my preferred seats...the ones that were \$449 on their website. The formerly nice lady informed me that the tickets would be \$1100 each way. Now, that’s \$1302 more, round trip, for the exact same seat and the same class of fare.

I reminded her that she had only minutes before assured me that there was no extra charge for booking by phone. “Oh”, she said, *“I meant that there was no service charge like, you know, \$15 or something ...but the tickets are a lot more expensive over the phone. We’re not allowed to offer the prices shown on our website.”* This is just plain goofy. There’s no obvious logic to it and it pisses people off.

Another “big guy” that you don’t want to be like is Bell Canada. Last week some telephone marketing person from Ma Bell called us at 6:09 pm, interrupting our dinner. Strike #1. This hapless individual spoke in such heavily accented English that I simply could not understand him on the first 3 tries. Strike #2.

Can you give me your home number so I call you back and interrupt your dinner?





How could a company in the “communications” business be so stupid as to hire folks who can barely speak English to do telephone marketing? It boggles the mind. I’m all for inclusiveness but this makes no sense.

But it gets better...strike #3 was this. The gentleman informed me that *“Mr. Cooper, I am happy to tell you that Bell Canada will give you a free cell phone.”* (now, picture that he actually had to say that 3 times before I had any idea what he was saying). Why was this Strike #3? Because just 2 weeks earlier, I paid Bell Canada big money for a new cell phone...and now a complete stranger is calling me from Bell to offer me a free one. How’s that for the right hand not knowing what the left hand is doing?

So, the next time you catch yourself asking how you can be more like the “big guys”, be careful what you wish for.

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