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## BUSINESS MANAGEMENT NEWSLETTER

February, 2011

### Donald's Quote of the Month

*"Are you telling your customers what they need to know to make a good buying decision, for them...or are you withholding important info that they need?"*

*Are you an expert and caring coach, or forgetfully unprofessional... or an out and out intentional manipulator?"*

...Donald Cooper

This month's Newsletter is chuck full of business insights and some just plain interesting stuff. Total time to read it will be about 7 minutes. Time well spent.

### 1. Are you telling customers what they really need to know?

(Time to read this article is about 90 seconds)

Those of you who are familiar with my work know that I help owners and managers create an extraordinary business by doing the right thing extraordinarily well. How simple is that?

This past December my wife and I booked a cruise adventure to the Falkland Islands, around the bottom of South America and up the coast of Chile to Valparaiso.

We had a blast seeing penguins, fiords and glaciers. We also survived 100 ft. seas and 120 mile an hour winds. For 2 days between the Falkland Islands and the Straights of Magellan the ship tossed, pitched and rolled as waves as high as a 10 story building hit us every 20 seconds.

Furniture, food, art work and people were flying through the air. When we were able to be outdoors, the temperature was below freezing.



What does this have to do with telling your customers what they need to know to make good decisions for them? Plenty. At least 70% of the passengers on that ship should never have been sold that cruise. The passage between the bottom of South America and the Antarctic



Continent has been the most feared body of water on the planet for 350 years of human navigation. We had elderly people with canes, walkers, wheel chairs and electric scooters who should never have been on that ship and nothing in the Cruise Line Brochure or the travel agent's information warned folks that this itinerary was simply not suitable for people with mobility issues.

There was also no mention of the typical winds and temperature for the month of December in each port of call. I did the homework so we had long-johns, turtle necks, down vests, toques and mitts. But most folks brought shorts, flip-flops and a light windbreaker. After all, they were going "south".

It would have been so easy for the cruise line or travel agent to coach folks on who should book this particular adventure and what clothing they should bring. Instead, the cruise line ended up giving out about \$100,000 worth of cruise discount coupons to upset customers. OUCH.

Lots of businesses fail to disclose all the information their customers need. Many packaged food companies promote products as "low-in-fat" but willfully neglect to tell us that they're also loaded with sugar and salt. Credit card companies hide the stuff they don't want you to know in small print and legal jargon. Appliance stores sell extended warranties that make no economic sense.

So, here's the question for your business. What information, coaching or help do your customers need to wisely choose, effectively use and generally get the most value out of what you sell? How can you take the high ground and grow your business by being the "caring coach"? Sit down with your team and make a list of what folks really need to know to have an extraordinary experience with you and what you sell...and then figure out how you can deliver all of that effectively and joyfully.

Never forget that the easiest way to get customers on your side is to be on their side.

## 2. Are you taking attendance...or managing outcomes and results?

(Time to read this article is about 70 seconds)

Studies at communications giant British Telephone indicate that people working flexible hours are about 30% more productive than those on fixed hours. Those who want to work flexible hours include a very high proportion of mothers, but now also include an increasing number of fathers and those with eldercare needs. And, more and more, the group who prefers flexible hours includes those in their 20s and 30s.

Clearly, to attract top performers and have them be most productive, offering flexible hours is an increasingly important factor. However, to make this shift in culture work, businesses must make the important transition from "taking attendance" to assigning specific tasks or outcomes and then measuring results. This is especially important as more businesses have employees work from home or outsource some key functions where taking attendance is simply not possible.

Being "results driven" used to be seen by some as creating an overly tough, tense and demanding work environment but now, combining a "results and outcomes" culture with flexible hours, creates a culture of freedom and empowerment.

Now, for sure in some businesses like retail, we need to have a certain number of people "on the floor" at specific times, so folks cannot just decide to wander in at 11:15. But even here, whatever flexibility you can build in will be appreciated and improve performance.



For example, when I was a retailer, we had lots of college student part-timers and our rule was that if they had an exam to write, let's say, on a Friday, they were not allowed to work a Thursday evening shift because they should be home studying, or getting a good night's sleep. Once again, it's just about doing the right thing.

So, how could you make this important shift in your business to offer more flexible hours and from measuring attendance to managing outcomes and results? According to British Telephone, It could make a big difference in your productivity and your bottom line.

### 3. Exciting news about Donald Cooper Boot Camp Cruises:

(Time to read this section is about 60 seconds)

Our one and 2-day "Accelerate your business" Management Boot Camps have become very popular and we're looking at new ways to take them to the next level. One client suggested offering an even more intensive and transformational Boot Camp experience for business owners and managers in a 7-day cruise setting.

This is brilliant. "Boot Campers" would get two days of my intensive bottom-line management and marketing insights, a complete set of Implementation Tools and Templates, plus hours of 1-on-1 coaching and small group brain-storming.



And all of this would be in a relaxing cruise setting, away from the office, where you can focus on creating compelling customer value, clarity of purpose and long-term profitability. Spouses would be welcome to participate and the whole thing is a business expense. Because we'd be booking the cruise at group rates, the total cost for the Cruise and Boot Camp Package would be not much more than if you booked the cruise only, by yourself.

We're looking at running this extraordinary program in February or March 2012, out of both Ft. Lauderdale, to cruise the Caribbean, and Los Angeles, to cruise the Mexican Riviera.

Clearly, we will need at least 25 to 30 attendees, so we're in the information-gathering stage at this point. If you have interest in this program, would like more information or have thoughts or suggestions, please [click here](#).



#### 4. Getting real about health and fitness in life and at work:

(Time to read this section is about 60 seconds)

According to Nutrition Coach Summer Innanen and Cross Fit Guru Peter Roberts, there are 4 myths that are holding most people back from getting real about health and fitness in life and at work. Here they are...

##### **Myth 1: Making a Few Small Changes Will Dramatically Improve Things.**

'Fitness tips' that suggest taking an extra flight of stairs each day or simply stretching at your desk are frankly setting the bar far too low. Sure, walking up stairs may be good, but it's unrealistic to think this will make a significant change. Like everything else in life, you get out what you put in.

Eat healthy at least 85% of the time and exercise a few times a week with full body movements. If you don't know where to begin, start by reading "How to Eat, Move and be Healthy" by Paul Check.

##### **Myth 2: We can 'get by' with limited sleep.**

We know that sleep plays a huge role in mental acuity, daily energy levels, body fat retention and overall physical health. People who don't get 8 hours (at a minimum) will be less healthy than people who sleep more. For an interesting read on the importance of sleep, check out "Sleep Thieves" by Dr. Stanley Coren.

##### **Myth 3: Food Companies have your best interests in mind.**

Packaged goods companies thrive on promoting the latest trend or micronutrient because they know that capitalizing on a trend is an effective way to drive sales. They may promote a product as being low in fat or high in fiber...but forget to mention that it's loaded with salt and sugar.

The best foods for your health are mostly not marketed or advertised as "brands". Nor do they come in a fancy package. Eating meats, fish, eggs, veggies, fruits, nuts, seeds and other good fats are the best foods for your health. If you stick to these whole foods, you usually don't need to count nutrients or read labels.

##### **Myth 4: The latest fitness device, fad or DVD is better than what's already available.**

Forget the latest fads in exercise. Almost none of these will ever be used by serious strength coaches. Although they may be marketable, they don't actually work very well. Train your body with variations of a few basic movement patterns that involve several large muscles working together: squat, pick things up, push, and pull. It's pretty simple stuff and it's what the most capable athletes have been doing forever. For some very good information on strength training, check out the book "Starting Strength" by Mark Rippetoe, or find a strength coach to help you.

**Note:** Peter Roberts and Summer Innanen offer an excellent Corporate Weight Loss and Fitness Challenge program to businesses in the Greater Toronto Area who are committed to employee health and top performance. For more information, contact Peter Roberts at CrossFit Quantum at 416-421-5266, or by email at [pk\\_roberts@hotmail.com](mailto:pk_roberts@hotmail.com). Their website is [www.crossfitquantum.com](http://www.crossfitquantum.com).



## 5. “Bits & Pieces”. Quick thoughts to get you thinking...or smiling:

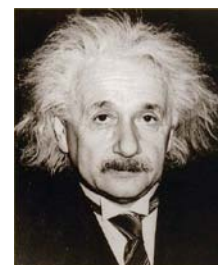
(Time to read this section is about 2 minutes)

**Item #1: Our very first “business opportunity” notice.** We’ve never done anything like this before...but here’s an excellent opportunity for any of our readers in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) who have built up a good business and who want to sell out in the next few years.

I’ve been introduced to an excellent gentleman who has been President of a \$50 to \$100 million North American business and who is now looking for a company to purchase and run in that same size range. If this circumstance describes you, or anyone you know, reply to [donald@donaldcooper.com](mailto:donald@donaldcooper.com) or call me at 416-252-3703, in strictest confidence. As he and his family are firmly grounded in the GTA, that is his area of interest.

**Item #2:** The NFL Super Bowl is over for another year and I’m reminded of a quote from football commentator and former star quarterback, Joe Theismann, who famously said, *“Nobody in football should be called a genius. A genius is a guy like Norman Einstein.”*

Green Bay Packers won this year’s Super Bowl in front of 103,219 football fans, which is about the population of the entire city of Green Bay. There’s an important lesson here. You can be from a small place and still be world class. “World class” is a state of mind ...not a location.



Norman Einstein

**Item #3: The 3 reasons people will “unsubscribe” from your business emails.** The internet is a powerful marketing tool. It allows us to coach, help and communicate with customers for little or no cost. But it also allows us to communicate with them so often and with no obvious value that they cut us off and go away.

In early January, I made a purchase at Harry Rosen’s...Canada’s premiere chain of high-end menswear stores. I immediately started getting one or two emails a week from Harry advising me of new arrivals or special sales. For me this was way too much of Harry...so I pulled the plug.

Here, according to a recent survey, are the 3 most common reasons for people unsubscribing from a business’s Newsletter or promotional emails.

- a) The emails came too frequently – 54%.
- b) The content became boring and repetitive - 49%.
- c) They receive too many emails in general and decided to cut back on the ones of low value – 47%.

I know that this adds up to more than 100% but, presumably, some people unsubscribed for more than one reason.



**Item #4: Kraft Foods kiosk recommends recipes based on your face.** Kraft Foods has developed a high-tech video kiosk to put in grocery stores that “reads” the age and gender of the people standing in front of it and, based on that information, delivers meal planning tips and recipes that are likely to be of interest to that specific demographic.



When technology was first introduced, the big fear was that we’d all be treated the same...we’d all be “a number”. But, today, technology is so powerful and so clever that it gives us the wonderful opportunity to serve and help customers as individuals. How can you use technology to deliver more value, coach your customers, or better serve them, as individuals?

**Item #5: The top 5 mobile phone sellers, globally,** in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2010 were Nokia, Samsung, LG Electronics, Chinese company ZTE and Apple.

Nokia, the world’s #1 seller, started out in making paper and rubber boots in Finland in the 1800s. The whole country of Finland has about the same population as Greater Toronto...about 5.3 million people. So, once again the point is made that being world-class is a state of mind...not a location.

**Item #6: Here’s a nifty sales tip.** I recently spoke for Abell Pest Control, an excellent service provider for three generations. One of their top sales people shared with me the secret of his success when calling on companies who currently use a competitor.

Rather than say anything negative about the competitor, he simply asks, *“Is there anything about their product, service or policies that you’re not thrilled with...or that could be improved?”* If the prospect mentions some shortfalls or concerns, the Abell guy states how his company performs in those areas and asks for an opportunity to serve. Very simple and effective.

If the prospect says that they’re completely happy with every aspect of their current pest control service provider’s work, the Abell guy politely says, *“That’s wonderful and it makes no sense for you to leave someone who’s serving you well. But if that ever changes, we’d love to be helpful.”* and he leaves his card. Abell is a classy outfit, and I love the way they think.

**Item #7: Netflix Inc.** the American company that sells movie downloads over the Internet accounts for 20% of all Internet traffic, in the USA, on any given evening.

**Item #8: Feeling lonely?** Astrophysicist Duncan Forgan of Edinburgh University believes there could be thousands of intelligent civilizations in our galaxy alone. And the Hubble Space Telescope has uncovered over 100 billion other galaxies. It boggles the mind.





## 6. Stop dropping your price. Instead, do a value-add:

(Time to read this article is about 60 seconds)

Dropping your price, except for a very specific reason and for a very limited time, devalues your product or service and destroys your Brand. It's much better to do a value-add.

If you build your business on coupons and discounts, you attract people who are loyal to coupons and discounts...not to you. If you build your business on value and values by creating a clear and compelling Brand that connects with your target customers, you'll attract people who are loyal to your values and to your Brand.

In a fine-dining restaurant the value-add could be a free glass of wine while guests wait for their table, or a free dessert for special occasions. In the pizza business, the most couponed and discounted business in the universe, the value-add could be 2 free toppings. Two free toppings, with a perceived value of \$5.00 costs under a buck, but "\$5.00 off" costs the business \$5.00.

For a retailer, the value-add could be a merchandise gift such as a beautiful tie as a thank you for buying a suit. Every time they put on the tie, they'll remember the retailer's kindness. A menswear retailer could also give customers a coupon from a dry cleaner for a free introductory dry cleaning, which costs the retailer nothing. The dry cleaner gives the menswear store the coupons to build their customer base.

One of the best ways to save your customer money is to partner with other businesses and get them to drop their price to build their traffic. We were at the theatre last evening and as "Season Subscribers" we had received from the theatre (at no cost to them) valuable Dinner Coupons from neighboring restaurants.

For a hotel the value-add could be restaurant or spa coupons, or savings at the local Museum, theatre or Art Gallery. For a service company, it could be a free one-month trial of a new service they offer or a report that shares important and helpful information. Or, it could be some valuable staff training. Wouldn't it be great if your accounting firm offered a free seminar on "Managing your numbers for a better bottom line". But nobody thinks of this stuff. So, if you do, you'll be a hero.

It's so easy to drop your price but it takes a little creativity to come up with a great, cost-effective value add...but it's a much better strategy in the long run. How could you create compelling, business-building "value-adds"?

## 7. Our quick Quiz of the Month:

(Time to read this section is about 40 seconds)

**"Thanks" to all of you who answered our January Quick Quiz, which was,** "Which country in the world has the highest population density and which country has the lowest population density?"

**The answer:** The country with the highest population density, with 42,830 per sq. mile, is Monaco and the country with the lowest population density, with just 4.4 people per sq. mile, is Mongolia.



“**Congratulations**” to Lisa Lee of Thor Motors in Orillia. Lisa chose our DVD Seminar on “How to sell more, manage smarter, grow your bottom line...and have a life!” as her prize.

**This month’s Quiz Question:** According to the UN’s “Human Development Index”, only 3 countries in the world are worse off today than they were 40 years ago. These countries are all on the same continent and all have failed in spite of being enormously rich in natural resources. The main reason is incompetent, corrupt and brutal leadership. **Name the continent and for “bonus points”...name the 3 countries.**

Send your guess to Sharen, our wonderful Director of Marketing, at [sharen@donaldcooper.com](mailto:sharen@donaldcooper.com) with the **subject line "February 2011 NL Quiz"**. Each correct answer received will go into the 'pot' and one winner will be randomly selected before our next Newsletter mailing. The winner will receive his or her choice of any of our excellent DVD Video Seminars, complete with step-by-step Implementation Guide.

#### 8. That’s it for this month:

Thanks for all of your great feedback and suggestions. And, do send us your stories and examples of great, horrible or just plain bizarre business practices that you find in your travels.

Kindest regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Donald" in a cursive style, with a horizontal flourish underneath.

Donald Cooper, MBA  
*Certified Speaking Professional*

For more information on how Donald Cooper can help you redefine and reinvent your business to create, deliver and communicate compelling, customer-owning Value, or to book Donald, contact **Sharen Skene**, Director of Marketing at 1-416-or by email at [sharen@donaldcooper.com](mailto:sharen@donaldcooper.com) in Toronto Canada.

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