



Donald's "Quote of the Month"

"Most of the business cards that people give me are ineffective or deficient in some major way. Is your business card an actionable marketing document...or are you just wasting your money?"

"Greetings". We have more timely and thought-provoking articles for you this month, so read on. The whole thing will take about seven minutes to read.

1. Are your business cards "actionable marketing documents"...or are you just wasting your money?

(time to read this article is about 2 minutes)

Over the years I've been asked to judge a number of Business Card Competitions and what I've discovered is that many business cards completely miss the mark when it comes to accomplishing the very purpose for which they were created! So, here are my thoughts on how you can create a much more effective business card.

Our objective is simple...to create a business card that's an actionable marketing document. A card that clearly communicates who you are and what you do in a way that creates confidence and gets you more business.

Some people believe that business cards are ineffective and obsolete because nobody actually keeps them any more. What they don't realize is that you often give a person your card, not because you believe that they'll treasure it for the rest of their lives, but in order to get their card in return. When you give someone your card, always get theirs. "Give a card...get a card!" If they take your card, they may or may not follow up with you. But, if you get their card, you can make sure that you follow up and start the relationship.

So, let's look at the basic elements of an effective card to see how yours might be improved. Take out your business card right now and check it out as you read on...

A) Your Message:

Ideally, to be an actionable marketing document, your card should communicate...

- The name of your business, your name and your title or position.
- What you do and for whom you do it (your target customers), if you serve a specific niche market.
- How you do it wonderfully or differently...and,
- How to contact you.

More than 80% of the cards I see leave out some of this critical information. Many of them offer no clue as to what the company actually does. Even if you're with a division of a large and famous company, it's still important to make it clear which division you're with and specifically what it does.

Include your job title! This one is controversial....but it shouldn't be. People want to know who you are and what your position is. Trust me, they want to know. Lots of folks tell me that titles aren't important or that "everyone in our company is equal" so they leave this important information off their card...and it's a big mistake! Everybody in your company is not equal...get over it! People want to know if they're dealing with a sales person, a marketing VP, or the company founder.

The President of a large graphic design company, with whom I was co-judging a Business Card Competition, lists his title on his card as "Chief Oyster Shucker". And he was judging other people's business cards, for God's sake!

The "for whom you do it and how you do it wonderfully or differently" part can be communicated through a slogan, positioning statement or even a well thought out company name. For example, when the name of your business is "Speedy Muffler King" you've already communicated a lot of information, whereas "International Digital Enterprises" probably needs some clarification.

Your logo, slogan or positioning statement should be included. They're an important part of your brand positioning. If you're a member of an important industry association, their logo should be on your card. This makes you an "insider". If you have an earned degree that's relevant to what you do or, if you've won an important industry or company award, include that. If you've been in business for 150 years, add that. These things all create confidence.

Make sure that your full contact info and website are all included and big enough to be read by people over 50. Include your area-code with your phone and fax numbers and, if you do business internationally, also include your country code. Make it easy for people to find you and do business with you.

You'd be amazed at how many cards I get that have no address on them. These are most often folks who operate home-based businesses and they're so ashamed of that fact that they leave off their address. Big mistake! If I do business with someone and they screw up, I want to know where to find them and, if they don't give me their address, I think that they're actually planning to screw up and they're already trying to hide. Every time I hear on the radio that the police are looking for some murder suspect, it seems that these people reside at "no fixed address". Don't be a "no fixed address".

Some folks in sales and service positions (especially real estate agents) have their picture on their cards to make a more personal and memorable connection with people...and it seems to work. Management and executive cards, on the other hand, never have photos. If you are going to use a photo, do us all a favor and pick one that was taken in the last 20 years so that we don't get such a big shock when we actually meet you!

How on earth do you get all this information on a business card? Here's a tip...**"Don't waste half your card!"** Use both sides. The front of my card states who I am and how to reach me and the back states exactly what I do, including our registered trademark, Human Marketing®, our most requested titles and the logo of my industry association, The International Federation For Professional Speakers.

Folks who disagree with me on this tell me, *"I leave the back of my card blank for people to write on."* But if you print on the back what they need to know to do business with you, they don't need to write anything. And, trust me, if you put a little thought into it, you can write better stuff about you than they can.

B) The Design:

Have your corporate name, logo, business cards, fax cover page and letterhead all congruently designed by an experienced graphic designer. Each of these elements is an important part of your brand communication and getting them right doesn't have to cost a fortune. Ask friends who have neat looking stuff who they used. Most printers have graphic designers on staff, or know where to find them. **Note:** The nice girl behind the photocopy counter at Business Depot is NOT a graphic designer!

Grossly oversized or tiny little business cards may be cute but mostly, they don't work. My cards are 1/16th of an inch bigger in both directions than most cards to subtly make impact and create a little more space for my message...but they still fit in everyone's card storage systems.

C) The Card Stock:

Choose the best, heaviest card stock available, with a nice soft sheen to it. If your printer offers only the standard flimsy card stock, find another printer. It's your reputation that's at stake here. The extra cost is worth it. If you buy 1000 business cards for \$30, printed on crappy embossed paper, you didn't save money...you just wasted \$30! Let's be blunt here. When you hand someone one of those awful thin cards, what you're saying is, "Here's a cheap piece of crap to remember me by!"

So, there you have it...the simple A, B, C's of creating a better business card that is an actionable marketing document. A card that effectively communicates and gets you more business.

2. What are your target customers searching for that they can't get elsewhere?

(time to read this section is about 40 seconds)

In her latest book, **POP! Stand Out In Any Crowd**, international speaker, author and communications consultant, Sam Horn (<http://www.samhorn.com/>) wrote this...

Ask yourself, "What are my target customers looking for they can't find elsewhere?" Offer that and people will flock to you. Remember, *"The best way to stand out from the crowd is to lead it, not follow it."*

As an example, Sam writes about an independent bookseller in the Raleigh-Durham, North Carolina, Airport who noticed that many frequent travelers were frustrated because most book stores feature the same 10-20 best-selling authors. *"I make a point of stocking books other stores don't. I recently bought a huge collection of Civil War books that includes first editions from the 1920s. You're not going to see that down the hall."*

So, the question for you is, **"Are you different in some way that really matters to your target customers...or are you mediocre and boring?"**

Is it a little more work to come up with unique and compelling products, services or experiences that will 'grab' your target customers, clearly differentiate you from your competitors, make you 'famous' and grow your bottom line? Absolutely. But, if you don't, you're boring, you're mediocre, you're a commodity, you're competing on price alone...and that's a battle you probably can't win.

Is it worth the extra effort to be extraordinary, to stand out and to be 'famous'? You be the judge. But, if you're not prepared to do the extra work to make that happen, stop whining.

What would 'extraordinary' look like in your business? Start by asking the magic question, *"What are our target customers searching for that they can't get elsewhere?"* Then, get creative, get gutsy and get 'famous'.

3. Attention clients and "fans" in the Oakville, Milton, Burlington & Georgetown/Halton Hills areas:

(time to read this section is about 20 seconds)

Here's an excellent opportunity to attend a full day **Donald Cooper Management "Boot Camp"** for a VERY reasonable price.

I'm doing a special Boot Camp for for business owners and managers in the Burlington area on October 2nd. For all of our clients and "fans" in these areas, this is an excellent opportunity to get me for a day...for only \$50 per person.

For more information, simply visit <http://www.halton.ca/Business/> or call toll free at 1-866-4HALTON (1-866-442-5866).

If you are interested in organizing a similar event in your community please contact Sharen at sharen@donaldcooper.com.

4. Three simple steps to building a world-class Brand:

(time to read this article is about 1 minute)

There are lots of differing opinions as to what a Brand is. On the surface a Brand is just a company name, product name, logo or slogan. But these are simply memorable icons designed to trigger a powerful set of assumptions about such things as quality, service and value...and about who *you* are if you purchase that Brand.

In truth, **a Brand is a promise** to always deliver a consistent set of standards, values and experiences that your target customers want in their lives. So, it all starts with being clear about who your target customers are and what's really important to them. That's Step #1.

Next, you must effectively communicate a clear Brand promise that will...

- a) 'Grab' those target customers.
- b) Clearly differentiate you from your competitors.
- c) Make you 'famous'...and,
- d) Grow your bottom line.

Third, you must keep that promise in everything you do. It really is that simple...not easy, but simple.

So, what is your clear Brand promise? What **value and experiences** do you always deliver? What are the **values** that you promise to always live by? What's your Brand **personality**? Are you serious, reserved and formal or are you more playful and relaxed? If your Brand was a person, who would you be...Madonna or Martha Stewart, Bill Clinton or Bill Gates, Michael Jordan or Denis Rodman?

When you're clear about who you are and what you'll deliver, you need to keep that promise, every customer, every time. Every product or service you offer, every person you hire, every decision you make either delivers your Brand promise, or it damages your Brand. Below are the five steps that you must work through to ensure that you actually deliver what you promise...

- a) Create a complete list of all points at which your business and your Brand 'touch' your target customers.
- b) Define in detail the experience that you promise to deliver at each of these 'touch points'..
- c) Audit what we're delivering right now.
- d) What must you fix, create or stop doing to deliver your Brand promise at every "touch point"?
- e) Develop an Action Plan stating specifically who will do what by when. Then constantly measure outcomes, reward success and deal with non-performance.

A great example of not keeping a Brand promise is airlines who put Priority Tags on the luggage of their business class or frequent flyer customers with the promise that their baggage will come off first so that they can be quickly on their way...but then fail to put into place the processes to make absolutely sure that this always happens. Broken Brand promises dishonor customers and drive them away.

5. Does your business need to sell more, manage smarter and grow the bottom line?

(time to read this section is about 20 seconds)

My clear commitment to business owners and managers throughout the world is to help them rethink, refocus and re-energize their business to sell more, manage smarter, grow their bottom line...and have a life.

In fact, that's the title of my most requested presentation. If your business, your industry association or your local Chamber of Commerce has a business meeting or conference coming up in the next 6 to 8 months, this is the presentation that will change everything.

A brief 1-page Info Sheet on this outstanding program can be found at the end of this Newsletter. To enquire about my availability for specific dates, just email the wonderful Sharen lady at sharen@donaldcooper.com or call her in Toronto at 1-416-252-3704.

6. Bits & Pieces:

(time to read this section is about 1 minute)

ITEM #1: What do you expect when we have winter for 6 months of the year? The Canadian Open Golf Championship hasn't been won by a Canadian in 54 years.

ITEM #2: The "Loonie" truth. The original design for the Canadian one dollar coin, now affectionately known as the Loonie, was meant to show a scene featuring early Canadian explorers known as "voyageurs". But the stamping dies were lost by Canada Post in transit to the Royal Canadian Mint in Winnipeg, so the 2nd choice design of the common loon was 'pressed' into service (no pun intended).

ITEM #3: In our "**signs of the times**" department, a British clothing manufacturer with the unfortunate name, "BladeRunner" is producing stab-proof school uniforms. The Kevlar-lined outfits, costing \$275, have been developed amid growing concern about the number of teenagers who have been stabbed to death in British schools.

ITEM #4: In our "**the road to hell is paved with good intentions**" department, 92% of people who own exercise equipment and 88% of people who own health club memberships do not exercise.

ITEM #5: Stop blaming motorized vehicles for global warming...it's "cow farts" that are killing us. It's true. Livestock (domesticated farm animals of all kinds) put more greenhouse gases into the earth's atmosphere than all of the cars, trucks, trains, aircraft and container ships combined. And, as the billions of people who live in developing countries become more prosperous and can afford more animal protein in their diet, that problem will only get worse.

ITEM #6: China is now the **world's largest producer** of cameras, cell phones, laptop computers, TVs, pork, apples, apple juice, pears, clothing, casual footwear, violins, guitars, pianos, toys, sporting goods, luggage, steel, stainless steel, copper, aluminum, cement and cotton.

ITEM #7: Oil is not going back to \$40 a barrel. This past June the world used 45 million more barrels of oil than it produced. Gasoline shortages exist in dozens of countries and oil-fired electricity plants around the world can't keep up with the demand, resulting in blackouts and 'brownouts' in many countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

7. Leadership in difficult times:

(time to read this article is about 30 seconds)

While announcing a 2nd quarter loss of \$38.8 million at Canada's biggest lumber company, Canfor Corp's new CEO, Jim Shepard, also announced that...

- Payroll must be cut by 25% to get back to break-even.
- He personally is taking a 25% pay cut.
- The company Directors had agreed to a pay cut of 35%.
- The mill in Mackenzie, BC, scheduled to close would remain open, saving 320 jobs.
- The corporate jet would be grounded, saving \$1 million per year.

In making the announcement, Mr. Shepard added that he thought it inappropriate to fly into a community in a private jet to announce cutbacks or closures.

"Three cheers" for Jim Shepard. It's a lot easier to be a leader when your main job is to be a cheerleader. But when your business or department faces difficult times or tough choices, do you have the courage to do what needs to be done...and the good character to do it with fairness, dignity and grace? That's what great leaders do.

8. It's great to "thank" your customers...but it's important to get it right:

(time to read this section is about 40 seconds)

Customers want to know that you appreciate their business. A simple "thank you" is often enough. I constantly return to the same gas station because the owner always says "thank you" and I like that. If I buy gas somewhere else, I feel that I'm letting him down.

For a larger purchase, a follow up phone call, a note of appreciation or, perhaps, a small gift will amaze and delight your customers. For added impact, get creative and tailor the gift to the customer or to the purchase they made. When we bought our waterfront condo, our real estate agent gave us a one year social membership at a Yacht Club located right in front of our building. That was very neat.

Do be careful, though, when thanking your customers. Not getting it right can go horribly wrong. For example, when luxury-car salesman Leroy Greer, of Missouri City, MO. had his local flower shop send a dozen roses and a cute teddy bear to his **girlfriend** with a card reading, "Just wanted to say I love you.", the florist probably should not have sent a thank you note to Leroy's home where his **wife** opens the mail.

Leroy is now suing the florist for \$1 million for mental anguish caused by the mix-up and resulting divorce.

9. Our "Quiz of the Month":

(time to read this section is about 30 seconds)

"Thanks" to all of you who answered our July Quiz Question, which was, **"What do the CEOs of Archer Daniels Midland, a \$36-billion food company and PepsiCo, the \$33-billion soft drink and snack company, have in common?"**

The correct answer is...that the CEO's of both of these huge, global, multi-billion dollar companies are women. That shouldn't be remarkable, or noteworthy and, perhaps, some day it won't be. But, sadly, today it still is. Both of these ladies are doing an extraordinary job...so, good on them.

"Congratulations" to Alan Brown of AMJ Campbell Van Lines, this month's winner who selected as his prize our DVD on "How to sell more, manage smarter and make more money".

This month's Quiz Question:

The #1 source of foreign investment funds for Mainland China is Hong Kong...but you'll be amazed to know what the #2 source is. It's not Japan or the USA. It's not even Great Britain or Germany. Don't even bother guessing...you'll have to look it up.

Send your guess to Sharen Skene, our wonderful Director of Marketing, at sharen@donaldcooper.com. Each correct answer received within 10 days will go into the 'pot' and one winner will be randomly selected. The winner will receive his or her choice of any of our excellent Video Seminars worth \$60 to \$80.

10. When is the last time you did something for the 1st time?

(time to read this article is about 40 seconds)

Most of us tend to get into a rut at some point in our lives. We get comfortable and a bit complacent with the way things are. But, most of our extraordinary life lies somewhere outside of our current comfort zone.

Even if we're physically active, we tend to return to the same activities time and time again and, in doing so, we miss the great joy of exploration and discovery that made us so "alive" when we were kids.

So, when is the last time that you did something for the first time? You don't have to be like Roz Savage, the amazing English woman who gave up her life as a management consultant to row across the Atlantic Ocean from Britain to Barbados, solo, last year at the age of 38. Yes, you read correctly. I said "row", "Atlantic Ocean" and "solo" in the same sentence. By the way, apparently, she had such a great time that this year she's rowing across the Pacific (rozsavage.com).



What have you "always wanted to do", or see, or experience? It doesn't have to be death-defying or even physically challenging...just do something different. Try something, learn something, plant something, eat something, go someplace, let go of something, be alive!

Take a country hike, or a city hike; teach a child to do something; go to a play, or the ballet...or a rodeo. Take up scuba diving...it will change your life. Open the Yellow Pages at "Restaurants" and pick one. Buy flowers for the person you love most. You may have done that before...but I bet not for a long time.

Start with something simple like driving home from work a slightly different way, then work your way up from there. For years I drove to Montreal on business, always taking the 401 multi-lane expressway for maximum efficiency. Then, one day I got out of the fast lane and traveled along old Highway #2, following the north shore of Lake Ontario through dozens of small towns and villages, just as my Father had done in 1937 on his first business trip to Montreal, in a model A Ford...and it was wonderful.

Make a commitment right now to do something for the first time every week of your life. Start a list now; add to it; cross things off as you do them; little things, big things; planned things and spontaneous things...**and it will be wonderful.**

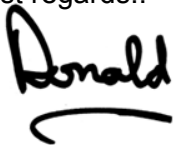
11. That's all for this month!

"Thanks" for all of your great feedback and suggestions! We especially love to hear of your successes using our insights.

Don't forget to visit our Free Articles section on our website for lots more valuable info on how to sell more, manage smarter and make more money in your business.

Finally, if you know of others, anywhere in the world, who will find value in this E-Newsletter, we'll appreciate your sending this along to them and inviting them to sign up at www.donaldcooper.com.

Kindest regards!!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Donald". The signature is stylized with a long, sweeping underline.

Donald Cooper, MBA
Certified Speaking Professional

THE DONALD COOPER EXPERIENCE

Speaking & coaching internationally on marketing, management & business excellence



Donald Cooper, MBA, HoF
Certified Speaking Professional

HOW TO SELL MORE, MANAGE SMARTER, GROW YOUR BOTTOM LINE...AND HAVE A LIFE!

Managing any business today is tough...and getting tougher. We're all faced with more demanding customers, more and stronger competition and shrinking margins. **Mediocrity is no longer an option!** On top of that, great staff are hard to find and keep...and that problem won't go away any time soon.

To be successful, we must create *both* compelling customer value and world-class operating efficiency. Everyone on our team must be clear about our direction and our values. They must be committed to specific outcomes, be held accountable for their performance and rewarded for their success. Then, non-performance must be dealt with promptly, fairly and firmly. Failure to deal with non-performance is one of the biggest problems in many businesses today.

Through Keynote Presentations, interactive Workshops and 2-day transformational Management Boot Camps, Donald helps business owners and managers to rethink, refocus and re-energize their business to achieve 3 powerful outcomes.

1. **Create, deliver and communicate compelling value and customer-owning experiences** that will "grab" their target customers, clearly differentiate them from their competitors, make them 'famous'...and grow their bottom line.
2. **Develop more effective management practices** that will improve clarity, innovation, commitment and accountability. Management practices that will help them attract, lead and retain the very best staff at every level of the organization. Practices that will make them more price-competitive, service-competitive and profitable.
3. **Visualize and create an extraordinary, sustainable and more profitable future.** A future that fulfills them, challenges them and creates the lifestyle that they want for themselves and that they've promised to those that they've invited into their lives through marriage, birth or employment.

Many business owners and managers spend 90% of their time working "in" their business and very little time proactively working "on" their business. They retreat to the familiar by doing the things that they've done for years, are comfortable with and know they're good at...and it's limiting their profitability and their future. Donald Cooper makes working "on" your business doable, effective, profitable and fun.

Donald doesn't just talk about it. **He has actually done it...and done it well!** He has been both a world-class manufacturer and an award-winning retailer. Cooper Canada became the world's leading maker of hockey equipment and a Canadian brand icon. Then, as a retailer, Donald fundamentally redefined the retail experience, for which he received seven Awards of Excellence for marketing and business innovation. He has succeeded and failed...started over...and succeeded again.

Combining "straight talk" with humor, passion and clear bottom-line insights, Donald makes a profound connection with the minds and hearts of even the most cynical business audience. In recognition of his transformational content and extraordinary ability to challenge, inspire and entertain, Donald has been awarded the CSP (**Certified Speaking Professional**) designation by the National Speakers Assoc. in the USA. This is the highest earned designation in the world of professional speaking. He has also been inducted into the **Canadian Speaking Hall of Fame.**

"Every business owner needs to spend a few hours with Donald Cooper...it changes everything!"
...Randy Ketelsen, President of America's #1 recreational vehicle dealership.

For more information, or to book Donald, contact Sharen at 1-416-252-3704 or sharen@donaldcooper.com in Toronto, Canada.