



Donald's "Quote of the Month"

"As we start a brand new year, the question is, what have you committed to do 'better' in your business in 2008...and have you a specific action plan in place to make it happen?"

Greetings and welcome to a brand new year. This month's Management Newsletter will take about eight minutes to read.

1. What will you do better in 2008?

(time to read this section is about one minute)

As we start 2008, do you have a commitment to grow your sales, manage more effectively and improve your bottom line? What specific activities have you already implemented to make those things happen? What remains to be done to ensure that 2008 is your best year ever? Remember, the definition of insanity is doing the same things over and over and expecting different results. Specifically, who will do what, by when, with what measurable result, rewarded how?

- First, what will you do to improve clarity in every part of your business? Clarity about the customer value and experience that you will always deliver, the extraordinary future that you commit to create in the next 3 to 5 years and how you, as a business, will behave along the way. First, you must be clear about those commitments in your own mind. Then, you must communicate and reinforce them in everything that you say, do and decide.
- What compelling value will you add to your products or services, or to the experience of doing business with you in 2008, to make you more competitive? What will you do to be remarkable? Then, how will you communicate and promote the 'new and improved' you in a way that 'grabs' your target customers and clearly differentiates you from your competitors?
- What will you do to improve staff training in every part of your business or department? You can't grow your business without growing your people. What does your team need to learn to perform more effectively, now and in the future? Specifically, how will they get that knowledge? What new talent do you need and how will you attract and keep those extraordinary people?
- What will you do to improve the processes in your business? Processes that deliver consistently wonderful customer experiences and make you more efficient.
- What will you do to grow your customer base? As one client told me recently, *"No matter how well we serve our customers, we seem to lose about 20% of them every year, for one reason or another. So, we must constantly be adding new customers, just to stay even."* How will you target new customers, follow up on new leads more quickly, consistently and effectively...and keep growing your sales?
- How might you better stay in touch with existing customers by, first, improving your customer database and then by creating an informative, high-value monthly or quarterly E-Newsletter?
- How will you improve your own management skills? What's your biggest area of weakness in managing your time, your team or your bottom line? Do you invest enough time working 'on' your business?

These are just a few thoughts on how you might improve your business in 2008. Take just 30 minutes to think about other areas that need work and then get specific about how you will make that happen.

2. If you thought that slavery was abolished in the 19th Century, you're not paying attention.

(time to read this section is about 40 seconds)

Note: *This is not an article about a business challenge but, rather, about an incredible human tragedy that we all need to be aware of.*

We all learned in school that slavery was abolished in the 19th Century...but, sadly, this is simply not true. In fact, more people are forced into slavery now than at the height of the slave trade 250 years ago.

A few weeks ago, five men and one woman were arrested in Toronto for enslaving young Eastern European women into a brutal life of prostitution. I was shocked, and you should be too. But there's an even more shocking and depressing reality behind this news item. It's estimated that over 4 million women, children and men are enslaved every year around the world. Some as domestic "servants", some as agricultural or factory workers...but mostly as sex slaves.

Now here's the thing...at the height of the slave trade in the 1700s, it is thought that about 1.7 million slaves were captured and sold each year. And now in our modern and supposedly civilized world, that number is more like 4 million souls. The National Geographic Society estimates that over 27 million people are enslaved around the world, right now. If this appalls and horrifies you, as it should, go to www.freetheslaves.net to learn more about this appalling situation...and how you can help.

Here's how I commit to help. For the first reader who contacts us and books me to speak at their next Conference, I will donate my entire fee to Free the Slaves, in your name. For more info, contact Sharen Skene, our wonderful Director of Marketing, at sharen@donaldcooper.com.

3. Five important business lessons from the bird feeder:

(time to read this article is about 90 seconds)

Note: *This article first appeared in this Newsletter a few years ago and has become a "January classic". It not only delivers several insights about starting and growing a business, it's also a great example of how we can all learn important life and business lessons from the everyday events around us.*

At the end of every year we retreat to our country place on Sparrow Lake for three wonderful and peaceful weeks to reflect, refresh and relax. Although it's only 90 minutes north of Toronto, it feels like a million miles from anything 'city'...especially in winter! But, even here, one learns important business lessons.

As soon as we arrived this year, I hung a bird feeder right outside our kitchen window. Think of this as a new business start-up with a great product (ok, so it's peanuts from Bulk Barn), no customers, but great potential in the form of a nearby forest full of hungry birds. This new venture had 'success' written all over it!

But how, I wondered, do I promote my 'grand opening'? First, I thought of advertising but birds don't read newspapers, don't listen to the radio or watch TV. Then, I thought that maybe I should create a 'grand opening special' by lowering my price...but heck, I was giving my peanuts away. How much lower could I go than that? I even considered sampling, but didn't fancy myself standing outside, under the feeder, at minus 30 degrees, holding out a handful of frozen peanuts.

Here's what happened during the first five days of my new 'business venture'...

Day #1: No customers. Not one single bird. Our new business was a failure!

Day #2: Things are looking up! We are visited by one chickadee, who apparently loves free, imported Spanish peanuts. He stays to shop the entire day.

Day #3: Things are really looking up. We have dozens of chickadees and two kinds of nuthatches. Apparently birds tell other birds.

Day #4: We have dozens more chickadees, endless nuthatches and two sizes of woodpeckers ...both males and females. Apparently, peanuts are a one-size-fits-all item.

Our 'grand opening' is officially declared to be a huge success! We now have line-ups. It's like an IKEA grand opening...our customers are actually fighting for the 'merchandise'.

By the end of the day we're running out of peanuts and make a special trip to town to replenish our inventory and purchase two additional feeders to expand our operation, eliminate line-ups and improve our customer service.

Day #5: Our customer base grows even more with the addition of one blue jay and a red squirrel. He doesn't fit our demographic, but we welcome him anyway, as long as he doesn't frighten away our primary target customers.

So, here are your five important business lessons from the bird feeder...

1. You can't build a business in one day. Be in it for the long haul.
2. Word-of-mouth works! One delighted customer can profoundly affect the success of your business.
3. Don't run out of what your customers want.
4. Expand your business only when you have lineups. Don't get ahead of yourself. Too much inventory or too much overhead can kill you.
5. You may get customers that you didn't expect. Welcome them...embrace them! They create a whole new possibility to grow your business.

Another thing we learn from this little adventure is that insights and ideas are all around us if we just remain curious, passionate and open to possibilities.

4. How can I help?

(time to read this piece is about 30 seconds)

As we venture into 2008, your business or industry association may well be planning a conference or management event to inform, focus, re-energize and update yourselves about what must be achieved in 2008...and beyond.

This is where I can be helpful. If your business, or entire industry, needs to hear the "straight goods" on how to achieve any of the following key outcomes...

- Create compelling customer value and extraordinary customer experiences that 'grab' your target customers and clearly differentiate you from your competitors.
- Improve clarity, focus, commitment and accountability at every level of your business.
- Attract, lead and keep the very best staff team.
- Visualize and proactively create an extraordinary, sustainable and more profitable future in an increasingly competitive world.

...I can definitely be helpful. To enquire about my availability to speak at your next Conference, or to refer me to your industry Association, just contact the wonderful Sharen lady at sharen@donaldcooper.com or by telephone in Toronto, Canada at 416-252-3704.

5. Some sensational new business ideas from around the world to trigger your creativity.

(time to read this piece is about one minute)

In past Newsletters, I've urged you to subscribe to the free Springwise Newsletter (Springwise.com) that, every week, will bring you great new business ideas from around the world. Whether you're planning to start a new business, or just want to be more creative in your existing business, it's helpful to get a regular dose of innovative ideas to keep you thinking about possibilities. Here are a few examples from recent Springwise Newsletters...

- a) The \$2.00 Baby Sport water bottle nipple adaptor converts any standard water bottle into baby bottle. (www.babysportonline.com). What simple, brilliant and obvious new product or service could you develop to grow your business...or create a new business?
- b) A Dutch company (www.current.com) has developed a technology whereby neighbouring houses with wind or solar power generators can create a mini neighbourhood grid to share their excess power on a cost-effective basis. How might you use the concept of sharing resources, cooperating or collaborating to create opportunities for your business?
- c) Using children's photos, sent to them via the internet, Kideo Personalized Children's Cartoons (www.kideo.com) creates short personalized animated movies of children playing along side Dora the Explorer, Spiderman or the Care Bears. The child's first name is also spoken several times by the characters.

For old-fashioned parents, Flattenme Books (www.flattenme.com) creates lavishly illustrated, personalized story books that integrate a child's picture and name throughout. How could you customize, personalize or individualize what you do to better "fit" your customers individually, or to create something that's uniquely theirs?

- d) Tomboy Trades (www.tomboytrades.com) sells steel-toe work boots and matching tools belts in pink, green, blue and red to women in construction. How might you modify your products or services to appeal to a whole new target customer?

6. Bits and Pieces:

(time to read this piece is about 60 seconds)

Item #1: The cost of food in China has increased by about 40% in the last two years. Why? Two reasons. First, as more Chinese people have more money to spend, they want to eat more and eat better...so the demand for food has grown significantly. Secondly, as more poor farmers migrate to the cities in search of better paying factory jobs, agricultural production has suffered.

The result is that, in China today, the average family spends a whopping 35% of its total income on food. In the USA only 15% of a family's income is spent on food, on average.

Item #2: Accounting 101...Frank D'Angelo style. Canadian upstart brewer, Steelback Beer, recently filed for bankruptcy protection. While it had annual sales of only \$2.5 million, founder and CEO, Frank D'Angelo spent \$5.4 million on marketing and promotion this past summer. Now that he has some time on his hands, Frank might want to sign up for some Accounting courses.

Item #3: Are you regularly communicating with customers and prospects? A sales trainer friend of mine recently interviewed the top 9 Ford sales people in dealerships across Canada to find out what they had in common. He discovered that they all had very different personalities, selling styles and levels of product knowledge. The only thing that all of them had in common was a systematic approach to staying in touch with

customers and prospects. Then, rather than standing around the dealership talking with the other salespeople during slow periods, they are working quietly in the corner staying in touch with the folks on their database.

Item #4: Another sign that the "Green Movement" is catching on. A new magazine and website has been launched promoting "Green Weddings". The name of this new mag is "Portovert", which I simply don't get. Can you figure out the connection between "Portovert" and the concept of green weddings? It's a mystery to me.

One of the magazine's first articles featured a "wedding carbon calculator" to estimate the carbon emissions produced by various elements of a typical wedding such as guest travel and lodging, the power and heat consumed by the church and the banquet hall and the carbon footprint of the food served. It sounds like eloping on a bicycle with a hemp sack full of nuts and berries is really the way to go here.

While we're at it, there's also a website, ethicalweddings.com, that presumably promotes the concept of weddings with a vegetarian buffet, gifts produced by happy, well-paid, unionized workers and the throwing of "fair trade" rice.

Item #5: If you live just east of Toronto, here's an excellent opportunity to attend a full-day **Donald Cooper Management "Boot Camp"** for a VERY reasonable price.

I'm delivering my one-day Management Boot Camp for business owners and managers in Clarington, ON on February 6, 2008.

This full-day Boot Camp is organized by the Municipality of Clarington and The Clarington Board of Trade. For all of our clients and fans in this area, here's a great opportunity to get me for a day...for only \$75 per person.

For more information, contact Jennifer Stycuk at jstycuk@clarington.net or 1-800-563-1195. For more details or to register, see the end of this Newsletter.

7. How would you rate "Teamwork" in your business?

(time to read this piece is about 40 seconds)

There's always lots of talk about "Teamwork" in business, but like many other aspects of management, there's often confusion about what an effective team really is and how to make it work. Here are a few insights that will be helpful.

Simply put, a team is a group of people working together to achieve specific objectives. So, first, there must be specific objectives and specific time limits. In sports, every team member is mindful of how many minutes are left on the clock. There must be a sense of urgency. Then, each member of the team must be committed to ...

- a) Sharing knowledge & skills,
- b) Sharing the work...and,
- c) Supporting each other.

Therefore, to create an effective "Team", each team member must...

- 1) Be committed to the specific goals and deadlines of the team.
- 2) Have useful knowledge and skills that they're willing to share.
- 3) Commit to doing their share of the work.
- 4) Uplift & support other team members.

Using these simple criteria, how would you rate the "Teams" in your business? If your teams aren't working as they should, it typically has to do with one or more of the four factors above.

8. Our quiz of the month:

(time to read this article is about 40 seconds)

"Thanks" to all of you who answered our December Quiz Question, which was, "In Canada we associate Christmas with winter, snow and cold weather. Name any country in the world where their Christmas break and **summer holidays** are taken at the same time."

The answer, of course, is any country in the Southern Hemisphere such as Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Chile or Argentina.

Congratulations to Simon Parry of Helen Thompson Travel in Toronto, ON. He takes home one of our DVD Seminars as his prize.

This month's Quiz Question:

I'm constantly working to help clients visualize and create remarkable businesses with compelling customer value and extraordinary bottom lines. To be "remarkable and extraordinary" requires more creativity and more hard work, but in today's competitive world, mediocrity is no longer an option.

In the business of fashion, part of being remarkable is finding exciting new venues for your next fashion show. The fashion press people have "seen it all" and they're no longer impressed with yet another fashion show set up in a Victorian train station or abandoned brickyard. So, last Fall, veteran fashion designer Karl Lagerfeld truly raised the bar by holding his show on what he billed as the world's longest fashion runway. So long, in fact, that it can be seen from space. **This month's quiz question is, "What was that remarkable venue?"**

Send your guess to Sharen Skene, our wonderful Director of Marketing, at sharen@donalddcooper.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 DVD Seminars.

9. Are you proactively building a million-dollar database?

(time to read this article is about 60 seconds)

My wife and I spend three joyful weeks every December at our country house in the Muskoka Lakes area north of Toronto. What I've discovered about most of the business people in that region is that they do nothing to proactively grow their businesses. They have, however, become quite proficient at complaining about how 'slow' business is.

In just one day before Christmas...

- I bought a new power drill at a local lumber yard,
- shopped at a gift shop,
- browsed through the studio of an artisan potter,
- bought flowers at a flower shop,
- purchased a gift certificate at the local live performance theatre...and,
- had lunch at a local chef-owned restaurant.

The sad thing is that not one of those six businesses asked me if I'd like to be on their database to be advised about upcoming events, special offers or community happenings. Not one of them is building a database that will allow them to communicate, add value, build relationships, create loyal fans...and grow their business. Not only will this simple step add to your bottom line every year but, some day, when you want to sell out, your business with a large, active and loyal database will be worth a lot more than your business without one.

So, what are you doing to build a million-dollar database in your business? And then, how will you proactively, creatively and responsibly use that database to communicate with customers in a way that delivers real value to them, increases your sales and grows your bottom line?

Important PS: Lots of business people tell me that their customers simply won't give up their name and personal contact info. That's a sure sign that your customers don't like, value or trust you...and that's a huge problem. It's a sure sign that you've failed to build a meaningful relationship with these folks.

If people believe that you will honestly send them valuable and interesting information, news, insights, reminders, updates and special offers of interest to them...and that you won't abuse the relationship or "sell" their info to others, they'll gladly give you their contact info. So, if you can't build trust, you can't build a database. But then, without "trust" you can't build anything.

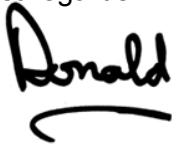
10. That's all for this month:

"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 **subscribe** at www.donaldcooper.com or **send an email to sharen@donaldcooper.com**.

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



Donald Cooper, MBA, HoF

DONALD COOPER MANAGEMENT BOOT CAMP

Speaking internationally on marketing and management excellence

**RETHINK, REINVENT & REFOCUS YOUR BUSINESS
TO IMPROVE CUSTOMER VALUE, MANAGEMENT
EFFECTIVENESS & PROFITABILITY...IN JUST ONE DAY!**

My transformational One-Day Management Boot Camp ...now at a price that every business can afford!

We're bringing my one-day intensive **Management Boot Camp** to Clarington on February 6, 2008...and we're offering it at a price that every business can afford!

1: Here's the incredible value that this one-day program will deliver!

Managing a business today is tough...and getting tougher. But you already know that. 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 you must create compelling customer value, world-class operating efficiency and a business environment that attracts and keeps the best people. Then, everyone on your team must be clear about your commitments to customers, to each other and to the bottom line. They must be committed to specific outcomes, held accountable for their performance and rewarded for their success.

So, where do you begin? **As a leader or manager, your first job is to create clarity about where the business is going, how we'll get there and how we'll behave along the way. Frankly, most businesses don't have that kind of clarity...and it's killing them!**

Imagine instead, a business in which the people in charge have a clear picture of where the business will be in 3 to 5 years...and how it will get there. For example, they know...

- a) How big the business will be.
- b) The extraordinary customer-owning value and experience it will deliver.
- c) How and where it will operate and how it will compete.
- d) The values it will live by.
- e) The talent it will need.
- f) The technology that will drive it.
- g) The working capital it will require... and,
- h) The extraordinary profit that it will generate!

Then, imagine that business being so well run that it attracts and keeps the very best people in the industry and that those people know exactly what the business stands for and what it commits to become...and they're all passionate to help make that happen! A business where success is celebrated and rewarded...and non-performance is dealt with.

Imagine a business that truly gives back to the communities in which it makes a living and respects the planet on which we all journey. **Simply put, imagine a business that becomes an extraordinary success by doing the right thing, extraordinarily well.**

That's exactly the business that I'll help you and your management team create, in just one day. Together, we will rethink, refocus and re-energize your business to achieve three key outcomes...

- 1) Create and deliver compelling, **customer-owning value** that will "grab" your target customers, clearly differentiate you from your competitors, make you 'famous'...and grow your bottom line.
- 2) Develop more effective **management practices** that will create innovation, efficiency, commitment and accountability at every level of the organization. Management practices that will make you more price-competitive, service-competitive and profitable.
- 3) Visualize and create **an extraordinary and more profitable future for your business**. A future that fulfills you, challenges you and creates the lifestyle that you want for yourself and that you've promised to the people that you've invited into your life through marriage, birth and employment.

Simply put, I will deliver the "straight goods" on how to proactively work "on" your business...not just "in" your business. How to lead your market and your business...and how to create some work-life balance along the way. Included in the program are simple, effective management techniques and specific Implementation Templates that will vastly improve your ability to focus, challenge and inspire everyone on your team.

But there's more! I'll show you how to more effectively **manage your team** to get results. I'll share my simple process for solving 3 of the biggest management challenges facing most businesses today...

- 1) **Ineffective implementation,**
- 2) **Lack of accountability...**and,
- 3) **Failure to deal with non-performance.**

...and, then I'll give you the "**4 questions**" to ask when things aren't being done they way they should be in your business. Four questions that will make you a world-class manager in no time!

2: Here's what clients say about my Workshops & Boot Camps:

- *"Donald's management 'Boot Camp' has delivered the best take-away value of any program that we've attended. He delivers effective tools that will have a profound impact on any business."*
- *"You have made it clear and simple as to how to reinvent my business. Thank you!"*
- *"An awesome reality check for business leaders."*
- *"This has been an important day for the future of our business."*
- *"Your Boot Camp has put me back into "the right gear" for growing my business."*

3: So, what's the cost of rethinking and transforming your business?

This full day Boot Camp is organized by the Municipality of Clarington and sponsored by Ontario Power Generation Darlington and The Clarington Board of Trade. Because of this, the fee to attend this business-transforming day is \$75 (+ GST). (*Businesses outside of Clarington will be eligible to register as of Monday, January 21, 2008.*) It's very important that your management team attend with you ...plus, perhaps, your accountant or other key business advisor.

IDEA: Invite your valued clients! As a way of saying 'thank you' to your valued clients why not purchase a table of seats and invite your clients?

What do you get for this investment? You get a full day with Donald, including lunch, the complete 100+ page Workbook, hundreds of breakthrough insights, the 12 step-by-step Implementation Templates that will guide you through a specific process to improve clarity, focus and accountability in your business...and our monthly E-Newsletter.

To find out more, contact Jennifer Stycuk at jstycuk@clarington.net or 1-800-563-1195

REGISTRATION FORM

One-Day Management Boot Camp with Donald Cooper

Wednesday, February 6, 2008 – Clarington, ON

Registration & coffee: 7:30-8:15 am **Boot Camp:** 8:15 am – 4:30 pm (lunch is included) **Q&A:** 4:30-5:00 pm

FAX your completed registration form to 905-623-0584

Company Information: (Please print clearly)

Company Name:		
Address:		
City:	Prov /State:	Phone #: ()
Main Contact:	Title:	
Email Address:		

Names of Attendees: (Please print clearly)

First & Last Name:	Title:
First & Last Name:	Title:
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Method of Payment: (Please print clearly)

<input type="checkbox"/> Visa or <input type="checkbox"/> Mastercard CARDHOLDER'S NAME:
Card number: _____ Expiry Date: / /
Cardholder's Tel. # () Cardholder's Email: _____
SIGNATURE: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Cheque payable to Municipality of Clarington is enclosed. Mail to: Municipality of Clarington, Attn: Jennifer Stycuk 40 Temperance Street, Bowmanville, ON L1C 3A6 ** Fax this completed form to confirm your seat – fax: 905-623-0584 **

				Total Amount
Attendee(s)		X	\$75 + GST = \$78.75	

Additional info: contact Jennifer Stycuk at jstycuk@clarington.net or 1-800-563-1195