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A Business Necessity – Communication

By **Belver Ladson**

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This business necessity is often something we tend to NOT think about since we feel it's something that is always there. What is this necessity? Communication. Communication happens every day. We talk to people. They talk to us. We read letters that come in the mail. We send information via the computer to friends and family all over the world. Communication is everywhere.

When it comes to a business, communication (or the lack of it) can mean the difference between a thriving business with good customer relations or a business that continually has problems since customers can't get in touch with you to order products, to handle problems AND receive good reports.

So, here are some of the inexpensive ways to keep in touch with your customers and have them keep in touch with you!

Email

This is one of the basic necessities of running a business online. You should have one basic e-mail address (maybe

support@yourbusiness.com

) or specialized addresses if it would make it easier for

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you to keep track of incoming messages. Some specialized e-mail addresses might include (returns@yourbusiness.com), (ordering@yourbusiness.com), etc... Email is not 100 percent reliable. There can be problems with web hosting, computer problems and many other circumstances that can make your e-mails not reach their recipients and vice-versa.

Telephone

Most people think of telephone communications as being able to have a telephone line that is only used for the business. In some instances this is true, but there are more options. If you can't get a second phone line that will only take business calls, you can still be able to be in phone contact with your customers.

One recommendation is to use a cellular phone for your business calling. There are some very inexpensive cellular phone plans nowadays that can work very well. If you can't afford the monthly fees associated with some cellular phones, you might want to look into pre-paid cellular telephones. With this type of telephone you pay for minutes which will be used with the telephone. The difference between a prepaid cellular phone and one which accepts monthly payments is that the prepaid cellular phone doesn't require monthly payments.

For some prepaid plans you need to purchase time every few months (mandatory), this might be a small amount of time (often under \$20) to keep the account open. If you find that the minimum amount of time is too much for your budget we have another idea.

To use a prepaid plan the most efficient way, you may want to purchased a prepaid cellular phone and **ONLY** use the voice mail option. Have people call your cellular telephone number and then return the

call. Or better yet, just sign up for a voice mail account. You can get many voice mail accounts for under \$10 per month.

Regular Mail (Snail Mail)

When it comes to an online business, many business owners often neglect to give their customers a mailing address to keep in touch. People might visit your business online, but many would like to contact you via regular mail. Having a mailing address also "cements" your business into your customer's minds. You're not just some person floating around on the internet. If you are not comfortable with using your home address you might want to purchase a post office box at your local post office to receive mail. These are just three important ways to keep in touch with your customers.

Your Business Personality

You might be saying to yourself, "How can a business have a personality? It's not a person." That is true. A business isn't a person, but people run the business. People interact with the customers. People take payments from the customers, etc....etc...

It is truly necessary that your business' personality be one that is inviting to customers. Potential

customers have to feel that you WANT them to visit your store or website. People have to know that when they purchase a product from you that it will be an enjoyable experience and not a time filled with complicated twists and turns or having to deal with people who don't seem to care. Ok, let's see how your business personality is made!

The Outer Shell Of Your Business Personality

The outer shell of your business personality is whatever vehicle you use to reach your customers. It doesn't matter if you use an internet website, a brick and mortar store, a kiosk/booth or anything in between. What you use to reach your customers has to let them know that you WANT them to purchase your products. Here are a few questions you can ask yourself:

Have I let the customers know what I sell? – this might seem like something people automatically do, but think again. Does your business name tell people what you sell or is it a combination of your children's names that ended up sounding cute? Do you have samples of your products available for people to see as they scan your "store" (website, etc...)?

Or

are they greeted with a lot of text to read and a flyer to look at? Often, you only have a few seconds to grab a customer's eye so you need to concentrate on showing them your best in the quickest amount of time to get them interested in making a purchase.

The Inner Shell Of Your Business Personality

A second part of your business personality is how your business "speaks" to your customers. This is related to the previous section of this article, but now we're speaking about the words and images you use to sell to your products. When speaking to your customers be sure to greet your customers in the way you want your business to be perceived. No need to be "cute" since that can lead to people not understanding what you are trying to say. So, for instance, using a line, such as, "Pretty Rosie Posies

Are In Bloom" might sound extremely cute, but does it convey to your customer what you are selling?. There ARE circumstances when these phrases might be appropriate, but use phrases like this sparingly.

Putting Your Best Foot Forward

Most of all, try to put the best parts of yourself into your business personality. This is inevitable, since, for most of us, we are the "public person" who deals with customers.

If you have people working for you who deal with the public, make sure they are speaking and interacting with the public in a proper way that gives your customers the care and service YOU want them to have when dealing with your business. Try to give customers your best at all times.

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Exploring the "Should's": Is it Necessity, Desire, or Guilt?

By Jennifer Koretsky

How many times a day do you find yourself using the word "should"? ADDers are full of "should's": I should do the dishes, I should clean out the fridge, I should see that movie, I should call my friend, etc. The word "should" can be very dangerous to an adult with ADD, because it often results in guilt.

In order to break through this and help you prioritize the things that you "should" do, try exploring your "should's" by asking yourself the following question:

Is this a necessity, a desire, or guilt? Here are some examples:

I should do my taxes.

Necessity: If you don't do your taxes, you can find your finances slipping out of control. You can end up owing the government penalty fees. And you will absolutely have undue stress. This "should" is a necessity.

I should buy that CD.

Desire: This is something that you want to make you happy. You like the music you hear, and therefore you want to own it. This "should" is a desire.

I should clean my house more often.

Guilt: If the "should" comes when you compare yourself to others, then guilt is probably involved. It often happens when we feel like we are not living up to the performance or expectations of others (or our perceived performance/expectations of others.) If you visit a friend's house and it's neat and clean, you may falsely interpret this to mean that your friend cleans all the time. In reality, your friend may have spent hours cleaning her/his house before you arrived to make it look nice! If you are physically and mentally comfortable with the amount of time you spend cleaning your house, then cleaning more often is not a necessity, it's not a desire, it's a "should" that is just useless guilt!

Try this exercise for a whole day. Every time you find yourself using the word "should," ask yourself if it's a necessity, desire, or guilt. I promise that you'll feel a lot better about all the things you think you "should" be doing!

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Jennifer Koretsky is a Professional ADD Management Coach who helps adults manage their ADD and

move forward in life. She encourages clients to increase self-awareness, focus on strengths, and create realistic action plans. She offers a 90-day intensive skill-building program, workshops, and private coaching. Her work has been featured in numerous media, including The New York Times Magazine. To subscribe to Jennifer's free email newsletter, The ADD Management Guide, please visit

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