

I CARRY THE BAG



THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF WHOLESALING

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WHY YOU SHOULD WANT YOUR FIRM TO

DO MORE WITH DATA

MAKING 2012 YOUR CAREER YEAR!



DO IT *well.* MAKE IT *fun.*

The Key to Success in Connecting with Others

Before the popularity of smart phones and digital music, I was shopping for a new CD player at a local electronics store. As I was browsing the many different models and features, the salesperson approached me and asked if I was looking for a CD player. I said that I was.

He replied, “You need this one. There is no reason to buy another one. It stores 100 CDs, has a remote control, and uses state-of-the-art technology.”

I usually interpret that to mean, “This one has state-of-the-out-of-date technology that needs to be sold so that we can free up shelf space for the newer models.”

To be honest, I had never listened to more than one CD at a time. I only had 75 and I couldn’t imagine when I would need to listen to 100 at any given time. Clearly, I did not have the forward-thinking vision to see that the future of music was thousands of songs at my fingertips - but we’re not discussing my shortcomings in this article.

Here’s the point. This salesperson was not in tune with me. He was pushing a product that I didn’t value. On top of that, he was stuffy, overconfident, and did not connect with me. Had he spent more time understanding me and then approaching me with a fun attitude, I’d probably have a 100-CD player right now that I’d be trying to sell on eBay.

Excellence and experience. That’s the philosophy of Do it Well, Make it Fun. It’s about doing the very best we can while making the process more enjoyable.

When it comes to wholesalers, I encourage you to think about this from the perspective of how you connect with your advisors. If you do a better job of connecting, it will dramatically change your results. You’ll make more sales, have more success, and, most importantly, experience more fulfillment in the work that you do.

Let’s look at how this works.

Good communication is about how we connect with others. To do that well, we need empathy, clarity, and humor. The more we understand others (empathy), the better we’re able to effectively communicate information (clarity). And if we make communicating more fun with humor, we become a more memorable person whom others enjoy.

The biggest challenge with most communication is that we don’t understand how we come across.

If I say to my wife, “When I look into your eyes, time stands still,” I have conveyed a loving sense of attraction and admiration.

If, on the other hand, I say, “Your face would stop a clock,” I’ve essentially said the same thing but the results are, well, not good.

The first step in connecting is that you must seek to understand how advisors prefer to communicate. Are they more concrete or more abstract? Do they like to chit-chat or do they want to get down to business? Are they introverts or extroverts?

The more you know, the better you can devise a communication strategy that is congruent with what your advisors prefer. That’s empathy. It’s understanding the world from their perspective.

Once you understand someone else’s style, you can move to the next step of communicating more clearly. Clarity is a process that connects what you want to say to what is understood. It’s the in-between step of how you say something.

In the example with my wife, my intent was to say something loving. But the way I said it had a tremendous effect on what was heard. Similarly, the sales person at the electronics store said things that didn’t matter to me and thus did not connect. Simply put, perception of the hearer is reality. In other words, what is heard is reality.

The last step in connecting with others is to make the process of communication more fun. Research shows that we are attracted to people with a sense of humor. If that’s the case, then it follows that humor is an excellent communication tool.

In my job as a hospice social worker, I once went to visit a terminally ill patient. Unknowingly, the directions I was given were wrong and I went to the wrong house. I knocked on the door and when a woman came to the door, I said, “Hi, I’m Ron Culberson, the hospice social worker.”

She took a step back and said, “I have a cold, but I’m not that sick.”

We both laughed and her funny comment got us both out of a difficult communication situation.


This was reactive, but humor can also be planned. My former tennis coach became a pharmaceutical salesman. When he visited physicians’ offices, he would do funny magic tricks as a way to entertain the doctors before pitching his products.

At one office, he put a tiny foam rubber rabbit in his palm and closed his hand, and when he opened his hand back up, there were 10 rabbits. He then launched into a sales pitch for his company’s contraceptive devices!

Financial services is a serious industry. And yet, most of your advisors would welcome a balance to the seriousness. A little bit of humor can go a long way to connect you more effectively with them.

Effective communication requires connection. Connection requires empathy, clarity, and humor. That’s doing it well and making it fun.

Ron Culberson, MSW, CSP is a humorist, speaker, and author of Do it Well. Make it Fun. The Key to Success in Life, Death, and Almost Everything in Between. He is the 2012-2013 President of the National Speakers Association. In addition to helping people be more successful through the power of excellence and humor, Ron writes humor for speakers, executives, and politicians. Find out more at www.RonCulberson.com and www.FunnierSpeeches.com.



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