



JUST FOR FUN

Random Notes...

"Success is not final; failure is not fatal:
It is the courage to continue that counts."

-- Winston S. Churchill

"It is better to fail in originality than to
succeed in imitation."

-- Herman Melville

"The road to success and the road to
failure are almost exactly the same."

-- Colin R. Davis

"If you are not embarrassed by the first
version of your product, you've launched
too late."

— Reid Hoffman, co-founder of LinkedIn



Being in Business Means Being a Difference Maker
It is inherent in the very nature of what you do as a
business owner. Learn how different leads to better.

If you just do what everyone else is doing you will
get the same results as everyone else. To enhance
your success you **MUST** stand out from the crowd,
you **MUST** be proactive and you **MUST** separate
yourself from the Ordinary! **Business is Not a herd activity!**

Next month we are going to explore the value of Passion in your business. One of my passions is for The Children's Dyslexia Center of East Central Illinois They are having their spring chicken noodle dinner fund raiser on Monday, April 29 @ the Masonic Temple 109 North St. in Danville. Serving from 11a.m. to 7p.m. **Cost: \$8.00 come enjoy it with us. It is always real good & their program works wonders for struggling readers. The program is FREE to the students & parents. They depend on support from the Community & you can help!**



Increasing Your ROI Using
the Most Unique, Innovative
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Your Business Is...
Our Passion!

Issue 4

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An Experience I Will Treasure for Life!

When some one says the word Caribbean, what comes to mind? Well, for many it conjures up visions of palm trees, blue water, warm temperatures (even in January), Island living and luxury. Most of those thoughts are certainly true. However, there are other words that describe the Caribbean as well. Words like hurricanes, tropical breezes, greenery, paradise and more.

Back in 1989 my late wife, Jo Ellen, and I had the opportunity to move to America's Paradise. Have you ever lived in Paradise? At that time I didn't even know there was an American Paradise. I discovered it in an ad in the back of a printing trade magazine. Yes, a trade magazine for the printing industry.

The ad was for a company wishing to hire some one to work in a print shop in America's Paradise. My curiosity got the best of me and I called the number. The phone on the other end answered Caribbean Printing. I was hooked! I inquired about the position and thought, "Cool". Jo Ellen thought "Cool". So, we made arrangements and went to America's Paradise...



St. Croix in the U.S. Virgin Islands. We spent a week there. I worked half a day each day for a week and we played tourist for half a day and fell in love with this beautiful island and the waters that surrounded it. As you now know, I am a small town Indiana boy (Covington) who had hardly ever seen the ocean let alone the Caribbean. Suffice it to say, I was dazzeled and decided it might just be an interesting experience to live on an island in the Caribbean.

So, we returned to my little home town in Indiana and began planning to move to a new and different culture. Little did we know what an adventure we were embarking on.

We got our lives settled up in Covington and off we went. Now, I have to say this. Most of my life I had lived in small communities that were unsophisticated and mostly lilly white. I was raised to never judge people based on things they had no chance to choose. This included race, ethnicity and other traits. However, I quickly found out how it feels to be in the extreme minority. In those situations there are always some who do make judgements based on those types of traits.

the passion pit

Tips for Your Business

Top-Shelf Tip No. 218:

"Once we rid ourselves of traditional thinking we can get on with creating the future."

James Bertrand
Want Innovation? Learn From Ants

As we've discussed in previous issues of Promotional Consultant Today, innovation plays an important role in any organization, both large and small, but there's a significant difference in how innovation shows up in each type of organization.

Large companies usually have innovation teams focused on large-scale problems and large- scale production. Ron Ashkenas and Markus Spiegel, authors and contributors to HBR.org, note that these types of teams move in a specified direction at predictable speed.

On the other hand, innovation is not as organized and formal in small companies. It's usually more spontaneous and nimble, driven by those wearing multiple hats.

Ashkenas and Spiegel have studied more than a dozen global organizations and their approaches to innovation—some successful and some not so much. In this issue of Promotional Consultant Today, we share four of their findings on innovation.

1. It takes the mindset of an ant. Teams functioning like machines—blindly following highly defined processes and execution plans—were the least effective at achieving their goals and coming up with innovations. The most successful teams operated less like highly efficient machines and more like ant colonies, where they quickly adapted to changes in their environment. They had a set of simple rules and a clear goal, allowing them to be more flexible and able to learn along the way.

2. Centralize your mission; loosen your structure. As Ashkenas and Spiegel point out, ants have no central control, no single "master ant," yet the entire colony works together as one community. They're able to align their individual activities to the powerful common purpose that each ant shares—the survival of the nest. Thus, when the environment shifts, individual ants adapt their roles for the collective good.

Leaders of effective innovation teams communicate and centralize the mission of the team, but give the team members the freedom to do what's needed to achieve their part. This allows the team to adapt when they hit dead ends. This is also why companies like Google align their people through yearly and quarterly goals, while giving them the ability to work toward these results in multiple ways.

3. Communication is key. Back to the ants. We've all seen long ant trails leading to a food source. If the source is particularly good, the trail intensifies and more ants follow it. It's a time- and energy-saving way to communicate.

Rich, frequent and candid communication is also important for organizational teams to find innovations as quickly as possible. People need to bounce around ideas, share insights and challenge each other's assumptions. Leaders need to make sure their teams have the time, space and tools to make this happen. Bring your team together often and create a comfortable atmosphere for dialog and brainstorming. Make it easy to share ideas through tools like instant messaging and file sharing.

4. Experiment with ideas. Always test new ideas and new ways of doing things. It's at the heart of innovation. Ashkenas and Spiegel us the example of Intuit, who puts new product ideas on the internet before they are developed to test whether there is a market. If there's interest, they proceed with development; if not, they modify the idea or quietly withdraw it.

Encourage your team to test ideas through action instead of just through studies and analyses. Of course, this requires both dollars and resources to build prototypes and mock-ups early in the discovery process and to engage directly with customers to get rapid feedback and test assumptions.

Embrace these management concepts behind innovation and watch your "colony" flourish.

Source: Ron Ashkenas is partner emeritus at Shaffer Consulting, where he helped leading organizations achieve dramatic performance improvements and coached CEOs and senior executives on strengthening their leadership capacity. He's also an avid author and contributor to publications such as Harvard Business Review on topics related to organizational change.

Markus Spiegel is partner at Schaffer Consulting where he helps organizations to master the challenges in complex environments. His experience includes working in the automotive and financial services industry, including key roles at the BMW Group. He is also a contributor to Harvard Business Review.

Compiled by Cassandra Johnson

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A \$25 Gift Certificate to the Business of Your Choice

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Why Should A Business Market?

The simple answer to that question is to avoid a scenario like the three to the left. Two very attractive stores, fully stocked & totally devoid of customers. The third is the end result of the first two. In most cases when a business has the problem shown in the first two the third result means a great loss in time and money. Certainly the goal of a busness owner is not the store closing scenario. Most businesses want their store full of paying customers happily spending money to carry out the merchadise on the shelves.

Unfortunately, many business owners think all they have to do is build it and they will come. While some will come uncalled, most have to be enticed. That is what marketing does, it entices. Acquiring customers costs money! Everything in business costs money. Inventory, utilities, labor, insurance, location, on and on. The only way to pay for all that is by having customers who buy your inventory. The only way to get customers is to buy them! That’s what marketing does, it buys customers. The business that is willing to pay the most gets the most cusotmers.

Now, no one should pay more for a customer than the customer is willing to pay for the goods or services that the business offers. That’s why it can be so hard to market properly. First, you have to determine the lifetime value of a typical customer or client. This is done by hard work and analysis. The answer is different for every business, but it boils down to how long a typical customer will be a customer and how much will that customer spend over that period of time. If you determine your typical customer will be with you over 10 years and he/she will spend \$10,000 over that period you might consider spending \$2,000 marketing to a customer over that same 10 year period. Would you trade \$2,000 for \$10,000? That totals an 80% profit. Not too bad. Now, these numbers are simple so it is easy to see how this works. Your situation may be quite different. But, no matter what, if you want to have a steady stream of customers you have to be willing to pay something to get them. If you don’t, you will end up with the empty store and eventually the store closing sale.

To paraphrase an old adage, a person buys a business, he/she doesn’t advertise it, he/she has a sale, doesn’t advertise it, ends up advertising the busness for sale. Don’t let that be you.

Continued from page 1
The people of St. Croix are generally warm and friendly, but they are also a little mistrusting of those who come from different cultures and especially those who come from the mainland and are pigmentally challenged. They have their reasons and are somewhat justified in their thinking. Fortunately, my upbringing came through and after a short while we became accepted and settled in to enjoy our Caribbean experience.

After we had been living in St. Croix for 3 months we experienced the most life changing event either of us had ever gone through, a Hurricane. On Sept. 17, 1989 Hurricane Hugo visited St. Croix with winds of up to 150 mi. per hour. It set down on the island for 18 hours. We were dead center and the eye passed over us and the winds died for a while then came back with a vengeance!

When we emerged on Sept. 18 our whole world had changed. The upstairs, where our landlord lived, was completely gone. Only the walls around the bathroom remained intact, (that is where he spent the night holding up a mirror and protecting his doberman pincer) the island looked as though it had been bombed and the vegetation, that had been green and lush, looked wind burned.

Looting was widespread, and no stores were open to get food, water or supplies. We had no power for 9 months and we basically lived out of a cooler. Needless to say camping is no longer one of my favorite hobbies.

We survived and actually experienced 4 more hurricanes during our stay on St. Coix. None as bad as Hugo; but my advice is to never buy a ticket to a Hurricane as they are not a good spectator sport. We stayed on St. Croix for another 9 years and in spite of the Hurricanes it was one of the coolest experiences of my life.

If you have never seen the Caribbean I highly recommend you put a visit on your bucket list.

Until next month this Is Joe Massey, Wishing You Success In ALL You Do!

Basic Chili to Warm Your Bones

Yield
Makes 6 to 8 servings
MyRecipes December 2002
RECIPE BY Southern Living



Look no further for the ultimate, easy chili recipe. With just a push of a button, your weekday dinner is taken care of as the chili cooks away in the slow-cooker. Add chili to your next barbeque to top grilled sausages for an upgraded version of chili dogs. You can easily substitute ground turkey instead of beef for a lighter option and the rest of the ingredients should already be stocked away in your pantry. To top the hot, spicy chili, add shredded Cheddar cheese and corn chips for extra flavor and texture.

Ingredients

1 1/2 pounds lean ground beef
1 onion chopped,
1 small green bell pepper chopped,
2 garlic cloves minced,
2 (16-ounce) cans red kidney beans, rinsed and drained
2 (14-1/2-ounce) cans diced tomatoes
2 to 3 tablespoons chili powder
1 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon pepper
1 teaspoon ground cumin

How to Make It Step 1

Cook first 4 ingredients in a large skillet over medium-high heat, stirring until beef crumble and is no longer pink; drain. Place mixture in 5-quart slow cooker; stir in beans and remaining ingredients. Cook at HIGH 3 to 4 hours or at LOW 5 to 6 hours.

Step 2

Notes: If you want to thicken this saucy chili, stir in finely crushed saltine crackers until the desired thickness is achieved.

PS: I love to dunk a peanut butter sandwich in my chili! I have even been know to put sweet pickles in there. Try it, you might like it!