

BY BUZZ DELANO

Working with Inspiration

MY FAVORITE ADVICE FROM CEDIA MANAGEMENT CONFERENCE '08

Selling inspires. It inspires sales people who revel in the “close” and take satisfaction in fulfilling the needs of their customer. It inspires the customer who has a desire for something to seek it, engage in the cat-and-mouse affair leading up to the purchase, and finally to commit. It's a glorious result for both parties. Imagine if you could take your very best personal purchase experiences and apply them to your business when you sell a home system.

I'm fresh back from a terrific week at the CEDIA Management Conference in San Diego. It was an honor to serve as conference chairman and even more of an honor to work with such a great team of CEDIA professional staff and conference committee volunteers. Even with my duties at the conference, I was able to soak it up and take away some traditional conference “nuggets.” I was inspired by the vibe, conference content, presenters, and attendees.

Upon returning home, I went through my notes and reviewed the most profound phrases that I heard and absorbed. All are inspiring, but here are my favorites:

“SELL THE JOB RIGHT!” Thank you, Sam Cavitt and Mike Bradley. That sure sums it up. Selling the job right means maximizing the satisfaction for the customer while trying to be the most efficient and profitable you can be for your business. It takes a lot to accomplish both, but managing change orders properly—not underselling labor—and having a process for everything are excellent steps toward selling “right.”

When **CHANGE** occurs, be it a trend, the economy or the style of your business, somewhere along the way, someone gains



Industry accounting guru, Darrell McComber, advised CEDIA Management Conference attendees to watch their labor costs versus man hours.

“YOU WANT THE BEST EMPLOYEES TO KNOW ABOUT YOUR BUSINESS.” Thank you, Gigi Dryer. Properly selling the job requires having the right people on your team, and not necessarily just sales people. Your technicians, project managers, and everyone else affects your business' ability to sell effectively. Hire the wrong people or manage your employees poorly and you will lose sales. You have to know what to do for people, with people, and about people. If you can do a great job for your employees, apply the same magic to your customers. Be a “great place to work” and let everyone know about it.

“ESTABLISH YOUR PURPOSE VERSUS VALUE.” Thank you, Marilyn Sanford. Purpose is your reason for doing something, for wanting to achieve, and is essential to building values. You started your business because you were inspired by the possibilities of what you could do. Your purpose becomes your resolution to continue to achieve more. Upon establishing the clarity of your purpose to your employees, you help them to build the values that you express to your customers.

“SELL SERVICE CONTRACTS AS A DETAILED LINE ITEM.” Thank you, Gary Kayye. It's not just a piece of hardware that “has to be there.” Service contracts are an engagement in the sustained satisfaction of your customer. You wouldn't treat a service contract as a static line item on a bid without “detailing out” your commitment, would you? Of course not. You would inspire them to want your assurance that should something go wrong, they can call you to make things right.

“WATCH YOUR LABOR COSTS VERSUS MAN HOURS.” Thank you, Darrell McComber. Are you completing more work in less time? Well, if you are not then you have an opportunity to inspire a few more customers this year. Since the first custom installation caveman pulled the first run of 16/4, the cost of labor has been a major component of the profit, or non-profit scene. Today is no different except that we all now know that if we get better, we make more money and make more customers happy. Work on it.

“POUR SOME ON ME!” “Magic” is sitting here in my office right now, frosted and blue, it beckons me to uncork its possibilities. For those of you who experienced Kevin Carroll's opening keynote, you know what I'm talking about. From the blue bottle of Magic to the captivating red rubber ball in our lives, Kevin inspired us all to go for it. Go for it like a kid with no concern for anything other than achieving the red rubber ball. Once you do, it is magic and you'll want to do it over and over again.

“EVERYTHING MATTERS.” Thank you, Scott McKain. It sure as heck does, and it touches everyone. Your actions, your spoken word, your

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work ethic, your passions in life, and what you convey to those around you matters immensely. In your business, your employees are watching you and your customers are watching your employees. Pay attention to this truth. Always be conscious of your actions and your word. It could make the difference between someone being with you or against you.

"HOLD YOUR POSITION." Thank you, Roger Dawson. No, we did not have a military exercise at the conference. What we had was a commitment to remain steadfast in your sales and negotiation pose. You offer a highly skilled service and quality experience to your customers. When negotiating a contract with them, stay true to what you believe is best—not necessarily the highest price, but the best agreement. You want your customer to have a terrific experience with your business. Until your customer tells you something different that they want, you must keep on inspiring them to want what you have proposed. Only when your cus-

ACCOUNTABLE PEOPLE are driven and inspire others through their unfailingly consistent achievements

tomers moves their position, shall you consider the same. Don't give in first!

"CONSIDER IT DONE." Thank you, Eric Chester. What a concept. Take charge, make something happen, and come through for others. It is accountability at its finest. Is this happening in your business today? Accountable people are driven and inspire others through their unfailingly consistent achievements. They raise the bar and get more done and bring benefits to everyone around them. You want to be one of these people, and you need them in your business, too.

"SOMEONE ALWAYS BENEFITS FROM CHANGE."

Thank you, Richard Worzel. When change occurs, be it a trend, the economy or the style of your business, somewhere along the way, someone gains. Blu-ray prevails; Sony wins. The home loan market stumbles; good credit homebuyers get lower prices. Your business grows; you have an opportunity to make more money. Regardless of how things change, we can always count on change to throw us a curve and inspire us to try something different. Everyday it happens and every day you need to be ready for it. You should even be the change-agent, you might just be the one who benefits.

About 260 industry professionals were together for four days for one simple reason: to become inspired to get better. Each found different pathways to their inspiration at the conference or while socializing with peers. Getting inside your own head is the place to start. About 250 industry professionals opened up their minds at the conference and will be better off for it. Someone always benefits from change. Let it be you.

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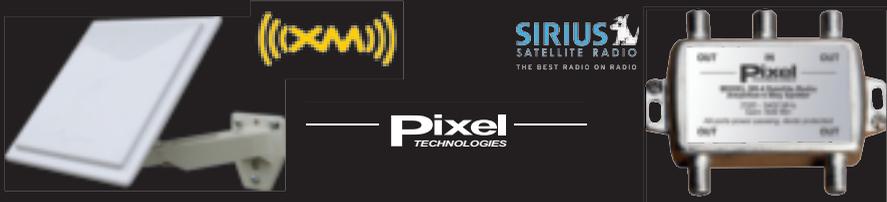
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