

# Persist Without Exception

## THIS YEAR'S CEDIA MANAGEMENT CONFERENCE UNDERScoreD FOUR KEY POINTS

For those of you who attended the CEDIA Management Conference last month, this will be a good refresher, a reminder, and perhaps a nudge that you too need to do something with what you learned there. If you did not attend, you missed a good gig but then you were also back at work selling products and improving your business, right? Either way, I expect that you had a productive week.

Throughout the four days at the conference, several key points resonated with me, and I have decided to identify a few nuggets and impart them to you. Two nights after the conference, I typed up my lefty-scrawl notes from the cross-industry presentations and as I'd hoped, most of them still made sense to me. Here are my observations:

### ► DON'T BE AFRAID OF FIRST WHEN YOU ARE LAST

Entrepreneur and former Philadelphia 76ers president, Pat Croce, talked about the drive to succeed and developing relationships to reach success as a team. This was great stuff but going for the top when you are down virtually ensures that you will get better. It worked for the 76ers under Pat, and it can work for your business. Let's say that you have come off a tough period of time in your business. Sales have declined, you lost a good employee, your rent has gone up, and a new competitor is affecting your business. You don't like this. You are used to success.

Well, becoming better sure sounds good now, doesn't it? Start by pulling your employees together to talk about the business problems you have and then let them know you want to overcome these challenges. Tell them you need their help, that by pulling together, working effectively and making some changes, that you will see things turning around. Say it. Do it. Prosper from it.

### ► BE A SINGLE POINT OF CONTACT

Motivational speaker Warren Greshes raised the notion of being a great sales person as a single point of contact. Greshes referred to being the expert, advisor, and resource that a customer can count on for knowledge and support in all aspects of their business experience with you. Be that person, know what needs to be known, be good at it, and you will sell more. You are on a journey to-



CEDIA Management Conference chair Jared Blackford (inset) entertains the lunch-time crowd at Ponte Verdra Beach, Florida.

gether with your customer and you are their guide. So be there for them—all the time, for everything.

In your business, the single point of contact for a customer might be a stretch if you feel that person must be you. Certainly this is valid in many small businesses, but it is not the way it should be. If you have employees and any one of them also adequately does something that you also do, then you need to set about inspiring that person to new heights and making them a single point of contact for some parts of your business.

### ► DECISION VELOCITY

This one really got me going. As soon as I heard workplace coach Alan Fine say the term "decision velocity," I perked up. Decision is a powerful-sounding word and velocity is a great noun expressing swiftness and influence. Decision velocity applies in your business each and every time you have a decision to make. Yes, it is something that you should do well. Let's start with creating a winning sales proposal for a prospective client. You have done the client interview, you have either conducted a site visit or reviewed their plans, and you have concluded that the client is one that you can make happy.

Then something terrible happens. You begin to scope out the job and discover that there is a discon-

nect on the expectations between you and the customer. The job will take longer, require additional products and result in higher costs than you originally estimated. You lose confidence that your proposal will be out of line for their expectations. You have a very important decision to make right now. Do you re-think the proposal and find ways to scale it back? Do you just go for it with your instincts? Do you call the client and explain that, upon reflection, you have discovered new considerations for the proposal and before you complete the proposal, you would like to talk with the client again?

What's the right answer? Well, that is up to you depending on how

you run your business and how you might want to change how you look at your business and make decisions. Take this test right now and ask some of your people what they would do and why, if they faced this decision. Either way, make a decision that is rational and speedy. You don't have time to waste and neither does your client.

### ► PERSIST WITHOUT EXCEPTION

And finally, my favorite was delivered by Andy Andrews, author of *The Traveler's Gift: Seven Decisions that Determine Personal Success*. Persist without exception is deeper than never giving up. It is about constantly finding ways to do more, be better, listen more, overcome obstacles and generally keep your heart and mind running for success in work and with family; to have the constancy of your character reinforced in all that you do. In this way you will become motivated and determined to persist throughout your daily existence.

Now, persist with selling, exceptionally!

Buzz Delano (buzz@delanoassociates.com) is an industry consultant focused on growth strategies and new market plans for manufacturers.

