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BUILDING TRUST: Listen to Your Customers

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Marketing professionals agree that an open dialogue with customers is key to establishing a relationship of trust. A dialogue means that for each partner there is a time for talking and a time for listening. Unfortunately for far too many companies this remains more a fanciful notion than reality. This is true regardless of the business arena in which one operates. Bruce Kasanoff, founder and President of HowPersonal.com, has developed ten ways to build trust. Each is highlighted to the right.

1. Remember information for people, not about them. Each person should benefit from the information you remember for them, and they must approve in advance what you intend to do with that information.

2. Don't confuse a relationship with advertising. If you are advertising, you don't have a relationship. Personal information should not be used for advertising purposes.

3. Don't blab about your relationships to others. If your friends told you personal information, you wouldn't give it to others. So don't sell, rent or share information about your customers.

4. Assume the answer is no. Advertisers like to brag that they allow people to "opt-out." That's like assuming a person will marry you unless they "opt-out." Unless a customer gives explicit permission, don't include them.

5. Serve instead of sell. Personalization is about service, not selling. Service is what wins, keeps and grows customers. Selling is useless without service.

6. People can't approve what they don't understand. Most people have no idea what technology now allows. Don't believe surveys that say people "aren't worried" about privacy.

7. Find products for customers, not customers for products. Most companies already have customers. Serve them better, and work harder to satisfy a broader range of their needs.

8. If you have permission, use personal information to deliver the four major benefits of personalization: save me time, save me money, provide me better (often less) information, or treat me special.

9. Feedback must change behavior. If you want a strong relationship with individual customers, respond immediately and meaningfully when they interact with you.

10. Good intentions aren't enough. Be sure your security systems are first-rate and your people practice what you preach. Respect for privacy isn't a statement; it's a way of life. ◇

Baby Boomers refers to people born between 1946 and 1964. In general they are liberal spenders, which makes them a profitable target market.

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On the **MOVE!**

Larry D. Strand

Dean of the School of Business

The opening of the new library has created new space availability, and that means the School of Business will be moving! While this won't happen until next June, we'll keep you posted.

Peter Drucker believes that a business should be defined by answering three important questions: *Who are our customers? What do they buy from us? What are they looking for in our products?*

The School of Business continues to grow, resulting in a search to fill two faculty positions for Fall 2002. We trust the Lord to bring those faculty who have a strong record of teaching success and a desire to provide student mentoring, both from a biblical worldview.

This January we introduce our capital project to raise \$5,000,000 in the next few years to construct a School of Business building. The 30,000 square foot facility will house 11 classrooms with state-of-the-art technology, breakout rooms for team projects, 13 faculty offices, administrative staff offices, a computer lab/classroom, and an indoor/outdoor cafe.

Our recent survey of the inaugural class and mentors confirms the mentor program as a key distinctive of the program, as well as in our recruiting efforts. The overwhelming response was most positive from both sides of the relationships.

If you, or someone you know, has a few years of managerial experience and is thinking of pursuing an MBA, please contact us at mba@biola.edu. ◇

Business as **MISSION**

What do running a business and spreading the gospel as a missionary have to do with each other? "More than you think!" responds Steve Rundle, co-founder and Chairman of the Strategic Capital Group, Inc., a venture capital fund specializing in "Great Commission Companies." We caught up with Steve and asked a few questions about this growing missionary model called "business as mission."

What has been the impetus for this model?

The end of colonialism (1960s) and the collapse of the Soviet Union (late 1980s) rekindled a spirit of national and cultural pride in many countries. These nations are now fiercely protective of their independence and deeply suspicious of outsiders. One casualty is the missionary visa. Much less tolerant of foreigners in their country for the sole purpose of converting others to their religion, these same countries encourage and are aggressively seeking entrepreneurship and capital from abroad.

What exactly is "business as mission"?

Initially many missionaries disguised themselves as business professionals and used that as an "entry strategy." The object was to do the least amount of "work" as possible to appear legitimate, yet few were fooled. The results have been generally mixed and many now recognize that this "ends justify the means" approach is dishonest and a poor witness. A legitimate, true job-

creating, profitable business not only meets specific economic and social needs; it also creates its own context and resources for ministry that can provide long-term access to people who are difficult to reach by more traditional strategies.

How have you bridged this "real world" activity with your academic endeavors?

I am currently co-authoring a book (InterVarsity Press) on the topic and have taught a "Business as Mission" course. The purpose of the course is three-fold: (1) to provide a greater understanding of the economic, cultural, and missiological issues involved in using business in missions, (2) to foster an appreciation of the strengths and weaknesses of the various business models being used, and (3) to provoke interest among those with entrepreneurial and mission interests in considering "business as mission." ◇

Steve Rundle, Ph.D., is assistant professor of economics in Biola's School of Business, attends Sierra Madre Congregational Church and lives in Pasadena with his wife and three year-old daughter.

Defining **SUCCESS**

What factors help make Christian business people truly successful? For Tim Brown, a Fluor Corporation sales and marketing vice president and School of Business Advisory Board member, a biblically-based personal philosophy and Christian business mentor are critical building blocks.

What two or three things do you believe are important for Christian business people to be successful?

Two things immediately come to mind, especially given the competitive world Christians live and work in. The first is to establish a personal business philosophy to guide the Christian businessperson. Once that is established it is critical to have a mentor that can provide valuable insight to help live out your philosophy when the world's challenges arise.

What is your personal business philosophy?

Act with biblically-defined integrity. Nehemiah is an excellent case study of a successful executive and has provided me with my business philosophy: Prayer before action gives purpose and power to the actions, actions without prayer makes the results of the actions questionable. A number of other management principles are there as well that I have found very useful.

Why, or how, is a mentor important?

Climbing the corporate ladder of success alone can be a very painful and frustrating experience. Having someone come along side you to encourage, pray and genuinely listen will bolster your ability to face the storms of life. For example, what do you do when a deserved raise or promotion does not happen? When you work for a less-than-desirable boss? When you have a subordinate that attacks and undermines you? When a friend goes behind your back and discredits you for his/her own gain? An experienced Christian business leader who

has gone through these kinds of experiences is an invaluable resource.

Please elaborate on your comment about Christians living and working in business and a competitive world?

Someone may ask what are the rules of the game of business? Well, there are no rules in the competitive world of business. Sometimes there is a stated code of ethics and a desire for integrity. But by what definition and whose set of values? We Christians do not have the same liberty as those we compete against. We are held to a higher standard that the competition does not play by or even recognize. We are to be molded into the character of Christ. We are to be a people of integrity and above reproach in everything we do. This "limits" how we must play the game of business. We can not do what the world does and when a major challenge comes we are tested to the core of our being in how we handle it. We must hold on to our values and principles without compromise while navigating our careers up the corporate ladder. ◇

Prayer before action gives purpose and power to the actions, actions without prayer makes the results of the actions questionable.

Tim Brown is Vice President of Sales and Marketing for Fluor Telecommunication Services. Fluor Corporation is one of the world's largest, publicly owned engineering, procurement, construction, maintenance, and business services companies. Fortune magazine's 2000 ranking of "The World's Most Admired Companies" names Fluor Corporation as No. 1 in the Engineering, Construction category. Engineering News-Record magazine consistently ranks it among the top three on its "Top 400 Contractors" list and on its "Top 150 Global Design Firms" list.

The Value of MENTORING

John Beehner, author of the book *True Wealth ... By the Book*, routinely asks Christian executives “Are you a Christian business executive or an executive who happens to be a Christian?”

The dilemma begins when some Christian business executives are called “hypocrites.” Ever been in a meeting with business owners who say, “watch out” when someone calls himself a Christian businessperson? Very often they don’t get the work done on time, bill you wrong, or never pay.

John Beehner notes this is the bottom line: every one of us is a hypocrite—Christian and non-Christian alike. It can be something simple like not returning a phone call when we promised or “the check is in the mail.”

One advantage of having a Christian business mentor is the encouragement to “walk our talk,” to take on the image, nature, and character of Jesus Christ. To lean on our own understanding may be sound from a purely business perspective but wrong biblically.

Do you have a Christian business mentor that helps you “walk the talk”? Perhaps there is someone from church or in your company to whom you go regularly for a biblical reality check?

If not, it’s something to think about. It's something we have thought about considerably and why providing this kind of a mentoring relationship is an integral part of Biola’s MBA program. ◇

“GO TO” WEB SITES

Thanks to e-mail, you probably have “Heard the One About . . .?”, since there's no better way to spread URBAN LEGENDS, chain letters and other Internet myths. Compiled by journalist David Feldman, here's how to get the lowdown on what's real and what's not.

www.hoaxbusters.ciac.org

From the Department of Energy, this site is especially good at exposing chain letters and fake giveaways.

www.quackwatch.com

The best site for exposing health-related scams.

www.snopes.com

Uncannily accurate, and written with wit and style, this is the most reliable source for getting the scoop.

www.truthorfiction.com

Strong on verifying inspiring tales and pleas for help.

www.urbanlegends.about.com

This is a comprehensive site and often provides variants of the urban legend and it offers chat. ◇

The Mentor

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