

GETTING *results*

MAGAZINE

FALL 2018

**WHY THE
FUTURE IS
BRIGHTER
THAN YOU
THINK**



JIM JUBELIRER

5 WAYS TO BUILD UP YOUR BUSINESS

By Verne Harnish

1. DON'T BE MYOPIC ABOUT MARKETING

Most entrepreneurial companies treat marketing as glorified sales support. Even worse, they fail to use it to crank up the flow of qualified job applicants they need to win. Take a cue from one fast-growing company I know that needed to lure workers physically fit enough for trash collecting. It posted ads in local gyms asking, "Would you like to be paid for your workout?" The fliers cost next to nothing, and the owner found plenty of energetic candidates.

2. FIGHT PROCESS PARALYSIS

Functions such as recruitment, billing, and customer care are like hallway closets. You have to clean them up once in a while not just throw more people at them so they don't get sloppy. Nurse Next Door, a home health care provider in the U.S. and Canada, found that its payroll and billing accountant was working weekends before it streamlined her workflow. That saved her a good 20 hours a week. Now the firm teaches the same pared-down approach to its franchisees.

3. LOVE YOUR ACCOUNTANTS

Most entrepreneurs undervalue and understaff their finance department, viewing it as a necessary evil to keep the tax collectors at bay, issue and pay invoices, and provide monthly accounting statements. Big mistake. Hire a sophisticated pro who can gather the granular data you need to see where you're making money by product, customer, location, or salesperson. It's the quickest way to double profits and cash flow in a year.

4. TEACH YOUR PEOPLE WELL

If you want the company to grow by a factor of 10, you need 10 times the leadership skills among your key people. They'll need to excel at predicting where the market is heading, communicating the company's values, goals, and priorities and delegating successfully to their teams. Give them time away from the fray to attend the conferences, classes, and seminars they need to make a bigger contribution so you don't have to pay for their on-the-job mistakes.

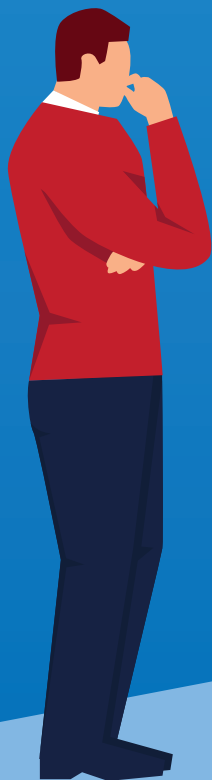
5. INVEST IN SYSTEMS

Fast-growing firms need to upgrade their infrastructure at three critical points or their teams will get lost in inefficiency: At 10 employees, you need a better phone system; at 50, sophisticated accounting software; and at 350, a single database that links all key information, so a simple change of address by a customer doesn't trigger a cascade of mistakes. Procrastinating on this will kill your growth.

Trust me: Your most aggressive rivals made these changes last year. ♦



“If you want the company to grow by a factor of 10, you need 10 times the leadership skills among your key people.”



VERNE HARNISH is founder of the world-renowned Entrepreneurs' Organization (EO), with over 12,000 members worldwide, and chaired for fifteen years EO's premiere CEO program, the "Birthing of Giants" held at MIT, a program in which he still teaches today.

Founder and CEO of Gazelles, a global executive education and coaching company with over 210 partners on six continents, Verne has spent the past three decades helping companies scale-up.

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MANAGING EDITOR Erika MacLeod	CONTRIBUTORS Jim Jubelirer Verne Harnish Jack Daly Graham Weston Courtney Gilcrest Alex Maness	
GRAPHIC DESIGN Carmen McKay		
CONTENT COORDINATOR Stacey Cowperthwaite		

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WELCOME TO *GETTING RESULTS* MAGAZINE

Welcome to the latest issue of *Getting Results*. I am excited to announce the rebranding of my website, jimjubelirer.com. I help visionary leaders see the future more clearly in order to develop trust and confidence that solutions can be found to the world's most pressing problems. What is your Massively Transformative Purpose (MTP)? What would you pursue if you knew you couldn't fail? Join me in using the best tools, techniques, and resources for business and leadership development.

My revitalized website has lots of useful content about business coaching practice and public speaking. In this issue, you will read about "Exponential Mindset: How to Thrive as the Pace of Change Increases." I have developed a workshop for business owners to learn about the positive state of progress in the world today and how to leverage new trends to thrive in the future. This experiential workshop is for everyone that wants to scale up their companies and enjoy the ride!

For questions, comments, or suggestions about content you want to see in future issues, contact me at (919) 969-7818 or jim@jimjubelirer.com.

Sincerely,

Jim Jubelirer
President, Jubelirer Results Group
(919) 969-7818
jim@jimjubelirer.com
jimjubelirer.com



The Autonomous Revolution: The Impact of Self-Driving Cars on Our Society

By: Jim Jubelirer

We are in a significant technology transition right now, fueled by the convergence of sensors connected to the Internet of Things with high-speed connectivity everywhere, enabled by ever-faster computing power and sophisticated applications. Other enabling technologies are the revolutions in materials sciences, battery storage, and solar power. As a result, we are starting to see electric-powered self-driving cars owned by fleet operators (called “autonomous fleets”) as opposed to the individually owned and operated gas-powered vehicles that we drive today.

Electric cars will be as cheap as regular cars by 2025. Because electric vehicles have many fewer moving parts, the reliability and lifespan of these cars will also improve dramatically (from 200K-300K miles to 500K-1M miles). The design will be more like an airplane - the Boeing 737 has a 30-year duty cycle. Owners of

these fleets will want to lower their costs, so the auto manufacturers have an incentive to produce more durable cars. Of course, this will decimate the conventional market for consumer cars.

Will the traditional brands lead into the future? They are certainly interested in doing so. Change is coming, and they need to adapt or get left behind. Mark Fields, CEO of Ford Motor, stated: “The next decade will be defined by autonomous cars. It will be as big a transition as our original manufacturing line for the Model T. When you look at the benefits of autonomous vehicles, we want to lead the way.”

The self-driving component of the autonomous revolution is also progressing rapidly. Existing car manufacturers, new car aspirants, current software giants (think Apple and Google), and startups around the world are working hard on this. Partial self-driving car capabilities exist today - my Tesla Model 3 comes with Fully Self-Driving (FSD) Mode. A recent

hardware upgrade, which will be installed on my car for free, improves the accuracy of the road-sensing camera by 10X.

WHEN WILL AUTONOMOUS VEHICLES BE THE NORM?

Experts consistently under-estimate technology adoptions rates and over-estimate the accuracy of their estimates. The most aggressive estimate is that in about 10 years, a majority of cars will be self-driving. A middle-of-the-road estimate is 20 years. Oil executives are suggesting demand for gasoline-powered cars will remain strong for 50 years. The losers in this transition (e.g., car dealers, parking lot owners, insurance companies, and trial lawyers-all very powerful interest groups!) will do what they can to slow progress through effective campaigns designed to spread fear, uncertainty, and doubt. I will be fascinated for the rest of my life to watch this transition unfold.

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Graham Weston is a prominent figure in San Antonio business and real estate circles. He is owner of Weston Properties, with its flagship Weston Centre the premier office space in San Antonio since 1992.

He is perhaps best known for his role providing seed capital and later management expertise to the startup tech company, Rackspace, where he was chief executive officer until 2006, when he became chairman.

RA

I never really considered myself a “techie,” but boy, could I nose out business opportunities. I launched a variety of businesses beginning at the tender age of 13, ranging from selling pork to livestock photography to, eventually, real estate and development. Yet there was a growing force that I simply could no longer resist: the Internet. Though comfortably ensconced in my thriving real estate business, I sensed opportunity and I wanted “in.” When I encountered three local Trinity students seeking funding for an Internet-hosting business, we banded together and I became the first investor and cofounder of their fledgling company, Rackspace.com. Within six months, I had put my real estate business on hold and assumed the roles of CEO and Chairman, positions I held until 2006.

A full two decades after we founded Rackspace, I still enjoy recalling the early days at the company and describing how we ended up veering from our initial concept. At the beginning, I assumed I would model it after the real estate industry. Instead of renting apartments, however, we’d be renting out server space to customers. Back then, we helped our Internet Service Provider (ISP) customers with just about anything and everything, including fixing computers and networks, just to generate revenue. But when we zeroed in on the dedicated-server rental concept, we chose to focus on that to the exclusion of everything else. Our ideal customer was self-sufficient in the model of Amazon or Google where transactions were made purely online, with no customer support and virtually no customer contact of any kind.

CKSPACE

LIVING THE SERVICE MANTRA / GRAHAM WESTON

To give you an example of how diligently we stuck to this philosophy, one founder actually had his email autoresponder message state his mailbox was full and divert people to the customer support number, while his phone message did just the opposite refer people to a full mailbox. In reality, we were not dealing with this “novice” group of customers at all, deeming them incongruent with our desired customer profile. The angry emails started pouring in, and they were decidedly not in the form of emotional rants. Instead, they included logical arguments supported by details of customers’ multiple contact attempts and their resulting frustration.

I grabbed one such relatable email remember, I’m not a techie myself and showed it to our founders to discuss. Somehow, generating all this anger seemed contrary to the principles of good business management, and the alarm bells were ringing. If there were so many people out there wanting to do business with us, shouldn’t we find some way to accommodate them and, of course, monetize our idea in the process?

A Reversal to Fortune

We decided to do a complete one-eighty. The company was only nine months old at the time, and I knew that it was not too late to change our culture to one of service, with customer satisfaction as our ultimate barometer of success. I realize that every company these days has a mantra of customer service, but what does it take to actually make these words a reality?

I called on David Bryce, the most customer-focused executive I knew at the time, to shepherd this change. He joined the company in 1999 as the vice president of customer care. Handing me a book by famed customer service advocate Leonard Berry, Bryce set the company on a brand new path, which he called “fanatical customer support.” In a nutshell, we did anything and everything to service our customers, as quickly and as efficiently as possible. When they called on us for help, we would be there. Period.

HERE ARE A FEW EXAMPLES OF HOW THIS NEW PHILOSOPHY OF FANATICAL SUPPORT PERMEATED EVERY ASPECT OF RACKSPACE’S CORPORATE CULTURE:

Commitment to Resolution – No matter how complex the customer problem, it always had an “owner,” someone to coordinate the various support players to get the job done. No flipping the account from person to person. The point person continued to claim ownership throughout the resolution period, vowing to own the problem until it was fixed.

Eliminated Fallback Possibilities – We decided to literally give our support staff “no way out” when it came to servicing our clients. We had installed a new phone system, but tough as it was, we disabled our voicemail and auto-attendant capabilities so it was always on us to answer each call. We had zero tolerance for the “I can’t get to it right now” mentality. Instead, you made it happen.

Assigned a Time Frame – Time matters when it comes to customer support, so resolving problems quickly became a priority. Answering phone calls within three rings or fixing the problem within one hour became the standard. We created a “hustle” mentality and lived it each day.

Considered Customers Blameless – When a customer called, we did not spend precious time trying to figure out who caused the problem or play the blame game. We knew that this approach was counterproductive and would not help fix the problem any faster. We only cared about a quick resolution so that our customers could get back to work.

Created a Manifesto – Our mantra of “fanatical support” became a way of life within Rackspace, and everyone who was hired understood that service was the name of the game. Our company culture was defined by it and became known for it, even after the company went public in 2008.

Once we set these rules in motion, the marketplace responded. We grew by 50 percent a year for over 10 years, adding 50 to 100 employees a month. Our commitment to service was not an added expense that dragged us down but a tremendous motivator to help us always do better. I apply these same principles now in mentoring budding entrepreneurs, and I recommend them to you too. Let them guide your business and you will see that they will pay you back in spades. ♦

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5



“Civilization requires energy, but energy use must not destroy civilization.” -Pope Francis

Now, let's explore the impact of the autonomous revolution on public infrastructure, the energy sector, the finance industry, and the justice system. You will be surprised to learn how far the ripples of this revolution extend.

PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE

Oxford Economics forecasts \$5T (yes, Trillion) will be invested on roads in Asia-Pacific, more than the rest of the world combined. Lyft has calculated self-driving fleets will require just one lane versus the four lanes that it takes today. Additionally, our system of paying for roads will transition away from being based on these usual methods:

- Gas taxes—because these cars won't be powered by gasoline
- Vehicle registration and driver's license fees—because we won't have them

ENERGY

One third of all energy is used for transportation. Has the era of peak oil come to an end? Opinions vary. The International Energy Agency is less optimistic than industry forecasts, and Bloomberg is more pessimistic. Even oil industry leaders believe in a low-carbon future; they just want it to happen later than sooner. Recently, Pope Francis hosted a gathering of the energy sector's leading thinkers and policy makers to discuss ways of reducing emissions of carbon dioxide and methane. He began the meeting by declaring that “Civilization requires energy, but energy use must not destroy civilization.”

So how and where will electric fleets get charged? It won't be at our home or workplace if we aren't owning the car. It may be one big central location—all the parking garages will be empty. Or how about where car dealerships are located (prime real estate all across the country)—since there won't be any more

car dealerships. In the same way that we are seeing the manufacturers need to change, so are dealerships. Tesla sells direct to consumers (no dealer markup!) and AutoNation services Waymo's self-driving fleet.

Where will the electricity come from? UBS calculates that 14 to 27 “giga-factories” would be enough to produce batteries for all of the world's electric vehicles. Where will all the raw materials come from to make those batteries? We will need 30x more lithium and 20x more cobalt (the choke point in the supply chain). Researchers are also working hard at developing new types of battery chemistry.

FINANCE

Insurance, car rentals, and car loans are just some of the industries that will change. Self-driving cars are going to be a lot safer than cars with human drivers, and as a consequence, premiums will fall significantly. Forty million people sell a car each year, generating enormous revenue for government agencies, dealerships, and finance companies. This will disappear. The car rental market will also disappear, as fleet transport replaces the “one car, one driver” model. Even advertising is going to have to change. Insurance companies spend \$6 billion on advertising, and just the top three auto advertisers spend another \$8.4 billion. At least 10 percent of all ad spending will go away.

JUSTICE SYSTEM

The autonomous revolution isn't just limited to hardware and software companies. Cities, regions, even entire countries are also racing to establish the legal and regulatory framework necessary to lead the change. Big questions need to get answered about how the “mobility value chain” will evolve. Will the software be proprietary or open source (once again, think Apple

and Google)? Will governments require technology companies to be more transparent about their privacy policies (especially when your car is generating gigabytes of data a day!)? Who owns that data and who will have access to it? There is an all-out race from Silicon Valley to China underway, and change will happen faster than you think.

There are already several countries that have laws on the books that outright ban the sale of gas-powered cars. And when Germany, China, and California take action, that will set the direction for the entire industry. Governments are already using a combination of carrots (e.g., tax incentives) and sticks (e.g., laws and regulations) to incentivize us to get into electric cars.

Lastly, there will be no DUI or distracted driving when humans aren't driving. One third of civil trials are auto related. Level 5 cars (no steering wheel) will eliminate 95 percent of accidents. The big question is about liability. Who's liable? The car maker? The fleet operator? The person sitting inside the car? The software provider? Now is a great time to go to law school, as an entire new generation of case law will be created.

CONCLUSION

The Autonomous Revolution is a great example of exponential disruption. At this stage, the hype is greater than the reality. As we have seen with other technologies, these big changes appear deceptive right before they become disruptive. Change is coming. Faster than you think. There will be winners and losers. You'll hear more from, and about, the losers than the winners. Entrenched industries and ways of thinking will resist the change. Having accurate information about the state of the world will increase your confidence, success, and happiness. ♦

Source: Jim Jubelirer is indebted to Frank Chen, of Andreessen Horowitz, for much of this original research. Watch his excellent video series: http://bit.ly/jubelirer_futurecars.



JACK DALY

Insights From The Expert

1. HOW DO I DEVELOP A GROWTH PLAN FOR THE SALES ORGANIZATION?

Steven Covey said it best: "Begin with the end in mind." The first thing we have to wrestle down is what is it we are attempting to build. Some call that vision. Let's say you have an \$8 million company that has a vision of growing to \$20 million. Figure out the progression of how many years/months it will realistically take to get to \$20 million. Along the way, additional new sales hires will be necessary, based on your experience of what is a legitimate load for a salesperson to carry. Additionally, be sure to build in the needed timeline for adequate training rather than rushing the salespeople into the field to "sell," when in reality, we are rushing them to "fail."

2. HOW DOES A SMALL FIRM RATIONALIZE HIRING A SALES MANAGER WHEN THE SALES TEAM IS SMALL?

Again, a part of the answer is similar to the above answer, which is dependent on the overall vision and timing of the planned growth. The rationalization basically comes down

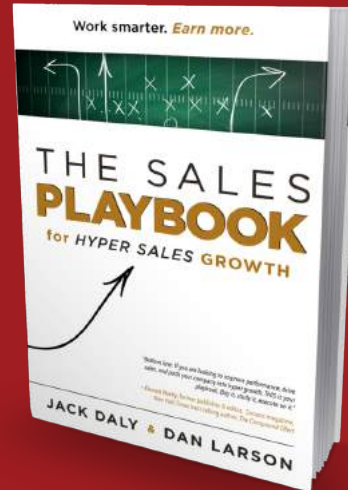
to this if you are serious about the growth plans, then the Sales Manager will make it happen by growing the sales team in quantity and quality. If you hire the right Sales Managers and pay them appropriately, they should pay for themselves in less than a year with the increased business the sales team generates.

3. HOW DOES ONE GO ABOUT CONVERTING AN INSIDE SALESPERSON TO AN OUTSIDE SALESPERSON?

Generally speaking, it's not advisable. Nor is going in the opposite direction! Inside salespeople are typically "farmers," and their profile does not work in the field proactively gaining customers. Outside sales is typically best done by a "hunter," and this profile doesn't work well in a reactive mode. Note this move can occasionally work, but I wouldn't chance it. Go with the better odds!

4. WHEN IS IT TIME TO ENTERTAIN GETTING AN ASSISTANT?

Yesterday! Figure out the high payoff activities (HPAs) and stay solely focused there. Calculate your hourly rate, and anything that can be done by someone else at less of a rate should be flipped accordingly. Model the Masters (Top Performers) and you will discover the presence of assistant(s). If you wait to hire until



JACK DALY is an experienced and world-recognized sales speaker and sales training expert who inspires audiences to take action in the areas of sales, sales management, and corporate culture. He brings 30 plus years of field-proven experience, from a starting base of CPA-firm Arthur Andersen to a Captain in the US Army to the CEO of several national companies. Jack is a proven CEO/Entrepreneur, having built six companies into national firms, two of which he subsequently sold to the Wall Street firms of Salomon Brothers and First Boston. His professional sales-trainer know-how has turned him into an accomplished sales coaching authority and author of books including *Hyper Sales Growth*, *The Sales Playbook for Hyper Sales Growth*, and *Paper Napkin Wisdom*, all Amazon no. Best Sellers.

you become a top Producer, you will never get there. This is an investment that has great ROI. Do it now.

5. ADVICE ON COMPENSATING SALESPeOPLE?

My favorite word here is “alignment.” When the comp of the salespeople is aligned with that of the ownership, then the magic happens. We no longer hear about “motivating” the salesperson. We no longer hear about the lack of work effort. My bias is to have the salesperson work as close as possible to “at risk/commission only.” All too often I hear about it not being acceptable in a country or an industry. This is a cop-out. Find a way to match the payout with the rewards, and all should be happy as long as they are willing to work and the talent is there. If not, why hire them?

6. HOW ABOUT COMPENSATING THE SALES MANAGER?

Again, alignment is the key. However, I believe a base salary of some amount is appropriate. The “at risk” portion should be the greater amount by far and should be directly tied to the results of the sales team. If the Sales Manager is not willing to bet on the company or his-or herself, you have the wrong person. ♦

JackDaly.net

Why the Future Is Brighter Than You Think

BY: JIM JUBELIRER, JUBELIRER RESULTS GROUP

We are hardwired to fear. Fear is in our DNA; it's in our nervous system. It's an evolved defense mechanism we use to survive as a species. Our innate negativity makes negative news three times more impactful than good news. Three times more! Even if you're an optimist and a positive thinker, it's so easy to go into Fear, Uncertainty, and Doubt (FUD). It's just natural, and it's who we are.

The news and entertainment industries and our political system are built upon their ability to prey upon our fear. It doesn't matter where the news comes from: CNN, Fox, NBC, local news—the same negativity pervades the industry. After all, “if it bleeds, it leads.”

The New York Times recently used the word crisis 30 times a day, every day, for an entire month. YouTube has become an essential channel for spreading extremist viewpoints. Given its 1 billion active users each month,

YouTube may be one of the most potent radicalizing instruments of the 21st century. Furthermore, extreme content from dubious sites churns through news aggregation sites like Reddit, up into Facebook feeds, and then on to mainstream media.

When we (Baby Boomers and Gen Xers) were children, our parents consumed the news just twice per day—the morning newspaper and evening TV news. Now we are bombarded 24/7 with “Breaking News,” social media, emails, and even the news

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF ALL TREMENDOUS OPPORTUNITIES TODAY. YOU CAN DO MORE THAN YOU EVER THOUGHT POSSIBLE!

crawler that streams across the bottom of the TV picture. The 24/7 news cycle places a great emphasis on the most extreme content, further amplifying the media's negativity bias, and our own.

The best way to counteract negativity bias is to surround yourself with positive people and information. For a more accurate understanding of our world today, I recommend the following resources:

OurWorldinData.org,
HumanProgress.org, and
Gapminder.org.

I also want to show you why now is the best time in human history to be alive.

OUR WORLD TODAY

The longevity, peace, free trade, abundance, and technological advances we are experiencing today all make for a better world to live in than ever before. Let's dive into each of these a bit deeper.

LONGEVITY

One hundred years ago during World War I, 16 million people died. In the flu pandemic that same year, 50 million people died (and the population was much smaller then!). Since then:

- Human lifespan has doubled
- Literacy has gone from 23 percent to 86 percent worldwide
- The cost of food has fallen 30-fold
- Your chance of being killed in war is only five percent as likely as in 1917

PEACE

A person's chance of dying due to violence is the lowest it has ever been. The 1928 Peace Pact was signed by every country in the world. What happened next? World War II. What happened after that? No more world wars. Global per-capita military

spending is down 28 percent since 1988. Nations used to go to war to get land to grow food to eat. Now it is cheaper to buy goods and resources than to go to war to acquire the property to produce those goods and get resources.

FREE TRADE

Free systems of trade and technology produce more extreme inequality but are overall beneficial to most people. Global trade is generating greater opportunity, tolerance of diversity, social mobility, commitment to fairness, and dedication to democracy. The long arc of progress shows us these trends are unlikely to slow down—even if nationalistic movements are currently in vogue. Another benefit of expanded trade is that trading partners have an incentive not to kill each other. For instance, the Chinese South-North Water Transfer Project (a \$90 billion Chinese aqueduct that is the largest engineering project in the world!) could be wiped out by the US in a few hours. China has made that investment because they feel safe from attack.

ABUNDANCE

Will we see a world of abundance for all? In China alone, 750 million people have risen from poverty in last 25 years—more than were alive in the world the day the Declaration of Independence was signed! More people live in cities than outside of them. Urban settings (as compared to rural settings) provide greater access to education and opportunities, and urban citizens have a smaller environmental footprint (e.g., less driving, more modest homes, etc.).

TECHNOLOGY

Computer storage is 25 million times cheaper than when I graduated from college in 1980. Your smartphone has more computational power than all the

governments on the planet had just 30 years ago. Telecommunications advances are going to connect every single human on the planet with a gigabit connection speed, effectively for free.

TECHNOLOGY BECOMES SAFER OVER TIME

Driving is one fourth as dangerous as it was in 1973. Advances in seat belts, airbags, guardrails, and even EMT coverage have all contributed to an increase in safety. Automatic sensing technologies in current cars are making driving even safer. The automatic elevator was invented around 1900, but it took more than 50 years (due to the 1945 NYC elevator operator strike) before the public became comfortable and automatic elevators became ubiquitous. Now we never have to worry about riding in an operator-less elevator!

FORECASTING THE FUTURE

Here is my guaranteed forecast of the future:

- Change is coming faster than you think
- There will be winners and losers
- You'll hear more from, and about, the losers than the winners
- Entrenched industries and ways of thinking will resist the change
- Having accurate information about the state of the world will increase your confidence, success, and happiness

My goal is to inspire people to trust the future tomorrow and to take advantage of all tremendous opportunities today. You can do more than you ever thought possible! ♦



BUILDING A RELATIONSHIP WITH A CEO? WOO THE INNER CIRCLE FIRST

By John Ruhlin

When building partnerships with other businesses, most entrepreneurs naturally target the C-suite leaders first. That's understandable: CEOs, after all, are the decision-makers, so naturally you and every other entrepreneur is going to clamor for a meeting with the top brass.

However, the problems you want to solve are not likely to be the same ones keeping those executives up at night. What's more, your constant calls and follow-up emails are actually a turnoff for CEOs. And your messages will probably just get buried in the 84, on average, other emails, that CEOs typically receive in a day. Getting the face time you need to close a deal is a challenge, all right.

This is why you should rethink identifying the "right people" to contact. Every business leader maintains a core staff that manages his or her schedule, advises on business decisions, coordinates events and acts as this leader's gatekeepers. For this reason, your only shot at landing a meeting with the CEO is to find an internal advocate who can prioritize the proposal and

educate the boss about its value. Your best strategy, then, is to develop a relationship with the company head's assistant or a well-placed manager, to dramatically boost your chance of making a deal. And the best way to do that is to give thoughtful corporate gifts.

Who are your allies? Gifts are a great way to connect with staff members who work hard for little recognition. Depending on the organization, you might find the best allies in division heads or assistants, event planners or junior team members looking for ways to get noticed. Showing appreciation and respect for their time helps earn their trust and assistance.

Assistants make especially powerful advocates. They're most likely to remember reps who send gifts or add thoughtful touches to their interactions, and they're willing to reciprocate by getting proposals in front of decision-makers.

Internal allies can also spot the right openings and say, "Now that you've wrapped up that project, do you want to spend a couple of minutes talking about company X?" That will be far more effective than sending the CEO 10 emails or calling every other week.

TO MAKE THESE CONNECTIONS, USE THE FOLLOWING GUIDELINES TO ESTABLISH RELATIONSHIPS WITH KEY INFLUENCERS:

1. TREAT THEM WITH RESPECT.

When building relationships, many entrepreneurs talk down to everyone except the head decision-maker, and that's a big mistake. Employees in junior or administrative positions are far from insignificant, and treating the boss' team badly all but guarantees that your deal will fall through.

Give gifts to event planners, administrators and other support staff at the same caliber as you would



John Ruhlin is the founder of Ruhlin Group. John's company is trusted by the leaders of fast-growing companies to develop relationship-building strategies and VIP gifting programs to increase referrals and strengthen retention with their most important clients, employees, and prospects. His book, GIFTOLGY: The Art and Science of Using Gifts to Cut Through the Noise, Increase Referrals, and Strengthen Retention, was released in June, 2016.

Visit ruhlingroup.com

executives. They'll appreciate it more than their bosses will (because these gifts are totally unexpected), and they'll often want to reciprocate by helping you get your proposal through. Don't overlook the people who surround your target prospect; they hold more power than you realize.

2. DEVELOP THE RELATIONSHIP. IT'S NOT ENOUGH TO SEND ASSISTANTS NICE GIFTS EVERY ONCE IN AWHILE.

Be helpful, with no strings attached. Help them in their job searches, or offer to be a connector when they're looking for new opportunities. I always oblige when clients' assistants ask for recommendations. These people frequently act as bridges to the decision-makers in their next jobs as well.

I was once wooing an NBA team head for a potentially massive account. As part of my regular interactions with his assistant, I sent her a quality knife set as a gift. She spoke so highly of my company after receiving it that, seven months later, she opened the door to six other

divisions within the team, and we landed a six-figure deal as a result.

3. APPRECIATE DECISION-MAKERS' FAMILIES.

We all have someone in our personal lives who influences our opinions. So, establish relationships with other people's personal influencers. I like to send a special subscription gift, such as a custom leather tote bag or handmade cutlery, to my clients' spouses. They're always touched that I thought of them, and that goodwill deepens my company's relationship with the client.

Surprising people with gifts isn't just a feel-good strategy it's sound business advice. When an assistant or spouse receives an unexpected present from a company, he or she develops a sense of loyalty to that brand. These people talk it up to the decision-maker and foster a positive association going into sales talks or negotiations.

So, in the end, CEOs may make the final decisions, but successful relationships begin with their inner circles. ♦

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