

The Three C's Of Collaboration

This is part three of a three part series on effective collaboration. If you missed any of the previous articles please contact us today.

Collaboration will be most effective when there is communication, coordination, and cooperation.

Thinking about how they interact and what distinguishes one from the other helps us understand collaboration better.

Communication is the cornerstone of collaboration. It can be established through written words, sound, signal, or body language. How well the communication is received – seeing it visually, hearing it audibly, or feeling it kinesthetically – is the ultimate measure of the transaction.

Communication is understanding. Feedback is the only way we know what the receiver heard, or what they think we have communicated. It is important to note and evaluate verbal and nonverbal communications.

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How to Maintain a Positive Attitude

Many sales professionals know that a positive attitude is a key element, perhaps the most important element, to success in sales. Even though they know this, most sales professionals find it extraordinarily difficult to maintain a positive attitude all day, every day. The reason? Most likely because they

believe that their attitude is the result of external circumstances rather than something that is within their control.

Here are some tips to help you stay positive:

1. Create a new definition for yourself of "external circumstances." You might think that hitting a few red lights on the way to an important meeting with a prospect could be seen as "bad luck" and put you in a bad mood. Definitely not a mood you want to convey to your next potential client! However, if you view those red lights as an indication to yourself of how wise it was of you to leave early, they take on a whole new meaning. If you are late because of those lights, take it as an opportunity to collect yourself and brainstorm a damage-control strategy.

2. Begin every day with 15 minutes of positive input. If you fill your mind with positive thoughts, you'll have a larger library of positivity to pull from when your day might not quite go as planned. Read an inspirational book or listen to motivational CD's in the morning. We happen to know where you can get a few of those! Might we suggest popping in your Sales Development CD's on your way to prospecting meetings? (If you need one contact us today)

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Verbal and nonverbal should always be sending the same message. When verbal and nonverbal conflict, whatever is being communicated nonverbally will be what is “heard” and remembered. Make sure you pay attention to both your verbal and nonverbal messages. Written communications are excellent for reference or clarification and should be concise, clear, and easily understood. Verbal communications should also be clear, concise, and easy to understand. When communication does not exist, or there are mixed messages or unclear understanding, there will be poor coordination and operation for the task at hand.



Coordination starts with practice for mastery of individual skills – running, throwing, catching, blocking...or selling, managing, resolving conflicts, computing, or analyzing. These skills are studied and mastered individually before interacting with others in a coordinated activity. Then the individual skills are practiced with others. Some activities take a great deal of interactive practice to find coordination. Fortunately for us, coordination itself is a skill that may be transported to new disciplines and can be developed with practice.



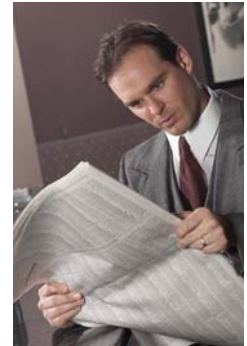
Cooperation is a less explicit contributor to collaboration, it results from conscious intention, just like communication and coordination, but cooperation is the ingredient that gives meaning to collaboration. The outcome is determined by the complementary use of talents

and skills by two or more collaborators. Collaborators may work together at the same time, or they may work separately at different times. Either way, in a smooth collaboration all efforts are coordinated through cooperation to achieve tangible output.

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3. Choose your news. You get bombarded everyday with a news media that believes in the mantra, "If it bleeds, it leads!" followed by commercials designed to make you feel better. Our media strives to ramp up your feelings of anxiety by highlighting horrific stories and follows them with advertising that helps you to buy comfort food or medications to relieve the pressures of everyday life. Unplug yourself from this negative imagery. Find alternative sources to keep yourself up to date with the day's events, such as public radio or print news. It's easy to choose what to read and listen to.



4. Surround yourself with positive people. Business associates, friends, and relatives who have a negative view about life can make it hard for you to maintain your positive attitude. These people can drain you mentally and physically. Wherever possible, avoid them or at least limit your contact with them. If you cannot avoid them, don't get drawn into lengthy gripe sessions. Listen empathetically and turn the conversation to a more positive topic as soon as you can. On the other hand, positive people can enhance your life and help to keep you upbeat and with a good outlook on your world.

Successful

Attitudes

Leverages

Everything in

Sales

Human beings, by changing the inner attitudes of their minds, can change the outer aspects of their lives.

– William James

Attitude is a little thing that makes a big difference.

– Winston Churchill

IRS Announces 2006 Standard Mileage Rates

WASHINGTON — The Internal Revenue Service issued the 2006 optional standard mileage rates used to calculate the deductible costs of operating an automobile for business, charitable, medical or moving purposes.

Beginning Jan. 1, 2006, the standard mileage rates for the use of a car (including vans, pickups or panel trucks) will be:



- 44.5 cents per mile for business miles driven;
- 18 cents per mile driven for medical or moving purposes; and
- 14 cents per mile driven in service of charitable organizations, other than activities related to Hurricane Katrina relief.

The new rate for business miles compares to a rate of 40.5 cents per mile for the first eight months of 2005. In September, the IRS made a special one-time adjustment for the last four months of 2005, raising the rate for business miles to 48.5 cents per mile in response to a sharp increase in gas prices, which topped \$3 a gallon.

“The IRS took the extraordinary step of temporarily increasing the standard mileage rates in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina,” IRS Commissioner Mark W. Everson said. “We promised to continue closely monitoring the situation. The 2006 mileage rates reflect that gas prices have dropped.”

The announcement will help organizations prepare their budgets for the upcoming year.

Web Site Of The Month!

HappyNews.com

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ONE MINUTE IDEAS

Digital Impressions

A recent study reported that 40% of Internet users in the US changed their opinions of brands due to information they gathered online. This data is reinforcement that it's more important than ever to make sure that the image you are portraying online, and especially in your e-mail marketing, is an accurate reflection of your brand.

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The Customer Is King



"The service we render others is the rent we pay for our room on earth."— Wilfred Grenfell

Last evening I saw a stand up comic go through his customer service routine. He was very funny and had the audience of about 200 people roaring with laughter. But I found myself thinking of his basic premise as being very different from my research and experience.

He said that, by definition, a customer needs something (I would add, or wants something). And that anyone who needs something is vulnerable. Therefore customers are vulnerable and you (the business or organization) need to treat them with care because of this vulnerability.

Yes, customers may need or want something; but in this day and age, that makes them anything but vulnerable. (Unless you are the only one selling water in the desert.) Customers are actually empowered: they have the power to give or take business from you; to give you a piece of their mind; to go somewhere else for what they want; to bargain for prices; to cost you business with a careless comment; and other forms of customer power.

So, as I see it, the element of customer service is more about surviving in business than it is about acting out of the goodness of your heart for the "vulnerable" customer. Although the paradox is that sincerity and genuine care are critical for the best customer service.

This boils down to identifying customer needs; providing solutions; keeping the focus on the customer; dealing with complaints and bad moods without taking things personally, and most of all – not taking yourself so seriously.

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