

# WHAT YOU DID NOT DO DURING GOOD TIMES IS BITING YOU NOW!



We are all scrambling mightily in this down economy, awaiting a return to the halcyon days of yesteryear, when we were booming - development, conversions, expansion, I need another wagon to carry my money to the bank, diversify that portfolio, I cannot decide between the Prada and the Gucci, go Patriots and Red Sox! Little did we know!

The smart ones always see things differently. They even do strategic Planning, look at innovative ways to perform, transform their organizational thinking and invest in their talented personnel. Most of us just blissfully ride along the gravy train, not understanding that it can curdle and become lumpy, eventually useless.

A wise gentleman recently reviewed my Web Site and gave me a startling diagnosis. The presentation was crisp, clean and very professional looking. He liked it - during normal times.

However, he noted, good ideas and practices are timeless, indicating that you do not have to do it now. For example, he noted my audience may not recognize some of the answers I may bring them or the value of it - the micro specifics - particularly, the implication during tough times. He suggested a rephrase of the headers and copy around the concept of "what you just have to know about your guest/visitor/patron in tough times". **Scare** the heck out of them (the operators, not the Guest), he recommended.

I am not sure we should ascribe to a scare tactic with our business, but you must get one's attention and always answer "at this time, what's in it for me (guest/visitor/patron/employee)?" Some of us figure that common sense will prevail, while others look to the old two-by-four approach. Probably now, most of us resemble that old beverage ad, "Uh duh, you could have had a V-8" (meaning, if we had taken the time and given thought to our business, we would have made a reasonable, cogent decisions, rather than scrambling now). Time constraints are not valid; you have all the time in the world.

So, have we missed the boat? Not entirely, but many feel like Sisyphus, rolling that boulder up the mountain, knowing that it will reach a point, where he cannot proceed, and the rock tumbles down, again. Let's take a look at what we must do this year to fortify our business for years to come.

1. Understand that the Experience is all that counts - new mantra. This is what our Consumer wants - their expectations fulfilled. If you do not meet these expectations, they will not return and will let others know of their dissatisfaction.

2. Learn what your Consumer wants and deliver. This is the era of technology and data. The more you know about that Consumer Profile on the front end, the better you can meet and satisfy the Expectations. Throughout the process and certainly on the back end, you need a mechanism to evaluate your efforts and performance delivery - Feedback. Mantra addendum - retain that current Customer, now truer than ever before.

3. Continually evaluate that business blend of facility, product and service. This is a daily exercise, for if one facet is faulty or weak, the business model crashes. If the Experience is paramount,

service is the memorable Differentiator.

4. Become organizationally dynamic. Retain your talent and invest in their future. We all are “rightsizing”. This is the time to redesign the organization and place the right people in the right slots for the future. Be bold!
5. Practice your communication skills. People do not talk anymore. We stay in our offices, e-mail everyone about everything, and avert our eyes as we walk about. Change that context.
6. Sense of and involvement in your Business Community provides the synergy of all parties to represent and promote the collective benefit. Take a leadership role or active participation.
7. Significant change requires some humility. We have been beset with arrogance, greed and hubris on many fronts this decade, as well as ennui. That page must change. Become energized and engaged.

All of the above relate to the elevation and achievement of the Experience. Just think if Sisyphus had a V-8. History (at least myth) would have been rewritten.

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