

Service and Teach to Reach!

By Bob ‘Idea Man’ Hooley

If we are serious about offering value-added service, and meeting the needs of your customers, you need to explore some different avenues in helping them solve or resolve their problems.

Here are just a few areas that successful businesses have utilized in their efforts to assist them. See if some of these will lend themselves to enhancing your business.

◆ Showroom or in-store seminars

If your product or service lends itself to being more effectively used by the use of different applications, holding an in-house session is a great idea. How can you adapt or change your situation to be able to offer this service to your customers?

◆ In-house or client newsletter

Keeping in touch and sharing information on how to better use your products or services or what’s happening in your industry is a great way to serve. With some of the new software programs, this is increasingly easier to accomplish. I’d suggest doing these 2 to 4 times a year at first, so you don’t promise what you can’t deliver. Keep it simple and conversational. Keep the focus on “WIIFM” – what’s in it for me! Write it from their perspective, if you would truly serve them. It can even be done as an e-letter and sent via the Internet. When will you start? What will you call it?

◆ Send stories to local media

Become a source of information to your community by taking the risk of sending items of interest to their readers to the media. Keeping people informed about newsworthy developments is a customer service activity. How can you do this in your area?

◆ Write a booklet, workbook or book

If you have built a solid reputation or a depth of experience in your field, perhaps you can add value to your service or business by taking the time to write a few thoughts. It doesn’t have to be a work of art, just valuable and easily read.

◆ Mall shows or home shows

Another opportunity to provide a needed service to potential customers. It’s a bit of work, but it will pay off in the long run. Does your firm or product lend itself to this type of instruction and marketing? Check out opportunities in your area to better serve your customers, by sharing your knowledge and exhibiting what you provide to the market. Is there a mall show in your area that you can enter? How about a display at a local bank or other location?

◆ Continuing education or guest lecturer

This is how I started and eventually this outpouring of my training as a professional kitchen designer allowed me to teach my fellow designers and potential customers alike. Later, I had the opportunity to expand my areas of instruction into the areas of time management, creativity and problem solving and of course Customer Service outside that industry. What is it you know that would be teachable and of value to potential customers? What is stopping you from taking this step?

◆ Become a media source

Contact your local media and let them know you'd be willing to act as a source if something comes up within your area of expertise. Often, they are looking for local or national responses to breaking stories. If they know you and your expertise, you might be called on to respond or comment as an industry 'expert.' What can you be an 'expert' on? Make a commitment to let them know!

◆ Other ideas

I'm sure as you read this; other ideas have crossed your mind. Take a moment to jot them down here. I'd be glad to hear your ideas as well.

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*Bob 'Idea Man' Hooey, DTM, PRA, CKD-Emeritus, Accredited Speaker, 2011 Spirit of CAPS recipient is an inspirational leader, speaker, and a prolific author whose works include 'Legacy of Leadership, Strive for significance – lead on purpose!', 'Speaking for Success' and 'The Courage to Lead!' His articles have been featured in a multitude of North American trade and global consumer publications. He is a respected leader who has been honored by CAPS, NSA, Toastmasters, and the United Nations for his leadership contributions. His creative Ideas At Work have allowed him to travel the globe sharing insights, encouragement in 61 countries, so far. With Covid-19 he has been zooming around the globe to share his ideas. His **innovative Ideas At Work!** have been successfully applied by global leaders as well as Canada's 50 Best Managed Companies.*