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I LOVE MY COMPETITION

How my competition makes me successful

Am I at war with my competitors?

Lets be honest, a world without competition would be boring. In fact, competition is good for us and our entire economy.

Just imagine, you need to buy new shoes. But you can buy them only in one store. That's it. No price or style comparison. You have no options - like or dislike it. The though about quality or color are out of the question. You buy what's available and are thankful for being able to get it at all. The rudeness of the sales person is overlooked and customer service is a foreign word.

This is not fiction. This market existed in the Soviet Union and China not long ago. I don't think you would want to live a place like that. The strongest world economies are countries with a high competition. Competition forces prices down, it increases quality, it improves customer service for the customer benefit.

If, as we see, competition is a necessity and it's part of our life we should not fight it, we should love it. Let me explain, when you shop for services or goods, you would like to have an

opportunity to compare. How else would you be able to determine if the particular service provider or the merchandise is good for you? If you have nothing to compare, you can't differentiate good from bad, worse from better.

“Comparison,” is the magic word. This is the common denominator! You use it non stop, all the time, consciously and subconsciously. You compare yourself to others, your house to your friend's house, your car, your job, your income, pretty much everything.

When you interact with people, or people interact with you, they always compare themselves to somebody they know. An automatic evaluation is happening almost instantly. It can be in a positive or in a negative way. Prejudice, narrow-mindedness, discrimination, intolerance - are some words we use to describe this human behavior in a negative way. This evaluation can be made in the opposite direction as well, in a positive way, and you can be tagged with expression like: Enhanced, intelligent, creative, superior, improved or just—better.

Don't we all want to be in a better place, enjoy a better service and leave with a good feeling that will want to bring you back?

You and your business are getting tagged. This is your customer's automatic reaction and you can't prevent it. This happens naturally with everybody.

Obviously your customers are comparing not only you but your business to a similar business and to your competition. So, if you know that this behavior is normal and human nature, present yourself in the way that the comparison will be in your favor, Bingo, you win!

Don't hate your competitor, study him. Everybody has weaknesses. When David had to fight Goliath, at that time, the strongest and biggest warrior, it was obvious who would win. But as we know, David killed this monster. How could it happen? David knew that to fight him with direct muscle power is ridiculous. So, David found a weak point and the rest is history.

When you look at a competitor that seems to be the biggest and strongest and there is no way for you to win, think of David. Don't hate you competitor, it is a waste of your energy and time. Spend it better in studying and analyzing him. He has weak points. Make a list of services and prizes that you can't or won't change and a list of items that you can do much better. It can be a lot of items or just a few, doesn't matter, and just find some.

Let me give you some examples.

First Class, Five Star

Based on my observation, all large companies are advertising low prices. Naturally, the big companies do a much larger volume and as a result have much stronger buying power. All the manufactures are standing in line hoping for a chance to become a supplier. Can you beat that? I don't think so. You will not be able to offer the same low price structure, because your volume is not as large. But you have other advantages.

Offer a "First Class" Service!

Jeffrey Gitomer, a real mentor and in my opinion a sales genius, described the "First Class" thinking concept as follows:

"First class is not just a seat on an airplane."

- When I say "first class," what words are coming to your mind?
- Upgrade?
- Travel?
- Hotel?
- Service?
- To me, first class has always been a person, or a reputation
- When you travel a lot, you tend to want things better and more comfortable. Better food, better accommodations, better modes of travel, and, of course, better service
- To meet these customer demands, on any budget level, there's every type of class of service. And over the years, nomenclature has changed to give people a different impression of where they are."

In Europe, to travel by train you can choose "first class" or "second class."

But the class doesn't just define the cabin; it defines the passenger, and the level of service that you will receive. American marketers have wised up and they call the second class seating the "coach cabin" or even the "main cabin" to differentiate between those people traveling first class and those people that are not allowed to use the bathroom in the first-class cabin.

Hotels take it even further. Their worst, lowest-level room is called superior or deluxe. (Hotel terms for crappy and small.) Then they move up in class to executive, which means crappy and small on a higher floor. And in all full-service hotels, you can pick up the phone and order \$5 worth of food for \$50, plus tip.

That's the price you pay for accommodation and that's the price you pay if you want the better service or just a better feeling. It's the price you pay to satisfy your ego.

Be first class. Can you do that? Yes you can!

Is the refraction at your office more accurate than the Eye Doctor's working at the other place? No. It's probably the same. Are your frames much better? I don't think so. Today, all the manufacturers have pretty much the same level of quality. So what is different? The answer is simple. It is YOU! It's the personal attention, your customer service, sincerity, attitude, professionalism, punctuality, honesty, genuineness. This is what your competition is missing but you have it. USE IT!

Show your customer the difference!

Treat every person you come in contact with as the most important person in the world. Make it a habit. This person will give you his loyalty, respect and business. The price will not be an issue, people will come to you, because they will feel important. First class.

"Change everyday. Don't be the same tomorrow"

- Study the competition and change for the better. Measure your results and adjust.
- Listen to yourself. You feel everything. You know your own strength and weaknesses. Work on them. Make a positive adjustment everyday. "A big river comes from a drop."
- A chef mixes the ingredients to make a wonderful dish. He makes it with the same tomatoes, paper, salt and water as everybody else. He tastes it and makes adjustments to his personal taste. It's up to him and his skills to make a wonderful meal. A lot of time, practice and devotion is invested by the chef to create a meal that customers will love. He is charging more, but his customers are willing to pay, come again and stay in line for a seat.
 - Don't you want to be that chef?
 - You have all the ingredients. Make it happen!

- Practice everyday. Improve your skills on a daily basis. Like an athlete has to practice everyday to be ready for that particular moment, you too have to get your self ready. In the Olympics, a gold medalist wins by a fraction of a second. Be a little bit better!! Competition is the adrenalin of business.
- Attend seminars. Listen and learn from other professionals. Attend seminars related to other professions as well.
- Build up your knowledge like a body builder builds up his muscles.
- Talk to your colleagues. Learn what they do and try to improve upon it.

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