

# Improving Results

March 2009

Volume 6 Issue 3

*By Facing Our Challenges, We Discover Our Potential*

STRATEGIC SOLUTIONS 510-432-7596

## *Keep Your Customers Happy*

**D**uring difficult economic times, a mastery of *Customer Loyalty* can mean the difference between success and failure. People and businesses are spending less and doing with less. But one thing is clear, where they are spending is with those who are offering the best service for their investment. If a customer is dissatisfied, they will not come back today or in the future. Cost of customer retention is low compared to acquiring new customers.

The trend of raising Customer Loyalty is an art form, treating service as a product that needs to be learned inside and out, and marketing service to customers as vigorously as if it were a direct revenue producer.



Unfortunately, in many companies, the customer has become a low priority. When people are not treated according to their expectations, they take their business elsewhere. What's more, they usually relate their bad experiences to as many as ten other people. On the other hand, the rewards for exceeding customer expectations are plentiful. Loyal customers keep coming back because they appreciate the fact that they have been treated with respect.

The question then becomes not whether to improve your company's service standard, but how. If business is slow, now is not the time to risk losing your most valuable asset- your loyal customer. Excellence in Customer Loyalty pays off on the bottom line by dramatically influencing customer behavior through a dynamic, results-oriented process.

If you want to learn how you can improve your customer loyalty, contact *Strategic Solutions* at 510-432-7596 or e-mail [hsullivan@stratsolutions.net](mailto:hsullivan@stratsolutions.net).

## *We're Working on the Wrong End of the Problem!*

*"The illiterate of the 21<sup>st</sup> century will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn and relearn."* – Alvin Toffler, *Futurist*

**T**oday, like never before... you must be open to change to be successful. You and your organization must constantly change and evolve to survive.

You've heard it... we face more change in a year than our



grandparents faced in a lifetime. For us that means Technology, Customers, Markets and Competitors.

**HOWEVER;** most people (even entrepreneurs) choose death over change.

In *Change or Die*, Alan Deutschman asks, "What if you were given that choice? We're talking actual life and death now. Your own life and death. What if a well-informed, trusted authority figure said you had to make difficult and enduring changes in the way you think, feel and act? If you didn't, your time would end soon – a lot sooner than it had to. Could you change when change mattered most?"

**THE BAD NEWS:** Although we all have the ability to change our behavior, we rarely do. Research shows odds of nine to one...when faced with the dire need to change, we won't. How many of you made, and stuck to, a New Year's resolution? We are 30 days into the New Year...how's it going? Will you make it through the month? The odds are not in your favor.

**Insanity** – doing the same thing and expecting different results. We KNOW we should change, but habits, attitudes and behaviors make us regular practitioners of insanity.

*Continued on page two – Problem*



# ONE MINUTE IDEAS

## It's Tax Time

The IRS has an excellent web site resource to help in preparing your 2008 income tax. There is a [Tax Info For Businesses](#) section that provides forms and publications along with all the tax info you need for your business. In addition, there is a [Frequently Asked Questions](#) section and an [e-file section](#) for free Federal on-line filing to those who qualify.

Check it out at [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov)



Internal Revenue Service  
United States Department of the Treasury

*The toughest thing about success is that you've got to keep on being a success. Talent is only a starting point in business. You've got to keep working that talent.*

- Irving Berlin



Hank Sullivan is President of Strategic Solutions in Hayward, CA and a Nationally Certified Business Coach. He provides processes to assist individuals and businesses in improving results. He concentrates on leadership development/coaching in areas such as Management, Sales, Customer Service, and Strategic Thinking and Business Planning. In addition, he offers a program for youth leadership called America's Rising Stars.

Strategic Solutions  
25985 Clausen Ct.  
Hayward, CA 94541  
(510) 432-7596  
[hsullivan@stratsolutions.net](mailto:hsullivan@stratsolutions.net)

*Continued from page one – Problem*

What is the answer for businesses, entrepreneurs and professionals, wanting to create and maintain a competitive edge? John Kotter, a recognized leadership expert, says, "*The central issue is never strategy, structure, culture, or systems. The core of the matter is always about changing the behavior of people.*"



There you have it. To change your results, you must change your own and others' actions.

**THE GOOD NEWS:** Change is possible and the formula includes common ingredients. So what's the secret to significant, sustainable change? It's not tough to do, just tough to maintain.

Deutschman's Relationship, Repeat and Reframe model includes: Building relationships with someone or a group that believes in you and that you trust. Utilizing the new relationship(s) to learn, practice and master new success habits and skills. And, through the new relationships and repetition, begin to look at things in ways that would have been foreign to you before.

**To HAVE you must first BECOME.** Rarely do people consider what they have to change about themselves to meet their goals. To have a six-figure income – become a person with skills and capabilities worth someone paying you that amount. For a great relationship with spouse and children – become someone they see as worthy of the relationship. To have a single digit golf handicap – become a golfer with the skills, discipline, and attitude required for that level of play.

If, when faced with death, only 10% of people will make sustainable change, how can organizations hope to make change stick? Too many people look for a fast fix. Change is a process, not an event. The best thing you can do is become someone who learns, unlearns and relearns...faster than your competition.

*Reprint permission granted by author Allison Darling, President and Founder of Management Concepts, Inc. 913-649-4833 or [allison@mgmtconcepts.biz](mailto:allison@mgmtconcepts.biz).*

## Keeping on Track

Every month or so you should step out of the day to day of doing business and evaluate the course of your organization's actions.

**Ask yourself these questions:**

- ✓ *Are we working towards our most important goals?*
- ✓ *Are we getting closer to or further away from our vision?*
- ✓ *What should we be doing?*
- ✓ *What is our next step?*
- ✓ *What should we not be doing?*



*Source: Sorrell Associates copyright 2009*

