

# Foundations—a Pedestal Group Publication

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FOUNDATIONS

## The Pedestal Group

### Keeping the Focus on Your Customer

#### Special points of interest:

- *Mobile communications*
- *Negotiation*
- *Ways to get content*
- *AND MORE!*

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In a recent article, Glenn Bill, a certified Gitomer Speaker, posed the question, “where is your focus?”. This question really asks is the sale about YOU or about your CUSTOMER.

Over the last several years there has been a major change in the sales world. In the past, the sale could be about the sales rep. What were the rep’s goals, keep your eye on the prize, etc. But today, customers expect the sales person to be thinking of them and their needs.

For example, Bill asks, “do I like my customers?”. Such a simple question but the reality of it makes all the difference.

For example, if you like your customer, you can’t have an “us vs. them” mentality. No matter what you say, you actually would be happiest if you both won. On the other hand, if you don’t like your customer, when you hang up the

phone it is easy to feel like you “scored one” or you “got back at them”.

So what happens if you don’t like your customers? The first thing to do is determine why. Clearly you started working with them for a good reason. Has that reason gone away or changed? Or did the relationship not go the way you had hoped? Bill asks next, “Do I feel like my customers don’t understand or appreciate me?” and “Do I feel undervalued?” Clearly each of these questions get at why you don’t like your customer. If you customer isn’t valuing the service you are providing, you certainly aren’t going to go the extra mile for them. In fact, it is difficult to provide the base level of service if you feel undervalued. This kind of situation continues to spiral downward until the customer stops calling altogether.

Taking the time to stop and determine how you feel about each customer gives



Glenn Bill’s article is available at: <http://us2.campaign-archive2.com/?u=5167beaf83e83a6dc363c28c>

you the first step to replacing your focus on them. If you used to have meaningful conversations but that has stopped, invite them for coffee or give them a call and let them know you are interested in just seeing how they are doing. Often a person outside the company who is involved to some degree but doesn’t have an emotional stake in the situations can be a wonderful sounding board so your customer might really need to talk. Be sure to change up how you normally talk to them, though. If you always converse via

## Keeping the Focus on Your Customer

email, give them a call. If you can get together face to face, do so. Change in venue can also change attitudes.

Once you contact them, it is time to put the focus back where it



Putting your focus on the customer is key to keeping them

should be. Stop thinking about yourself—how you are feeling, what you are thinking—and focus on your customer. Tell them you feel like the two of you have become disconnected and you want to get back on track. Or, tell them you want to make sure you are providing as much value as possible and have a list of questions to discuss. These questions should be ALL ABOUT THEM and not about how your business works

with them.

For every top tier client you have, set a goal in the next six months to determine what keeps them up at night. Knowing that means you can help or at least keep your eyes and ears open for them. If you find information that can help, you can send it over.

Nothing says you are paying attention then helping to solve a major business problem!

## Make Your Communication Mobile Ready

**NO FLASH OR AUTOMATIC VIDEOS ON YOUR SITE, MAKE SURE LINKS AND PHONE NUMBERS ARE EASY TO SELECT**

comScore, a leading analytics firm, recently released their latest findings on mobile social media audiences. With over 42.3 million users, it is a good chance

your communications and website are being read on a mobile device. Are you considering that when you write?

According to Brainshark, the iPhone screen is about 10% the size of a typical notebook PC and the Blackberry screen is half as large as the iPhone. In addition, according to Ipsos, the average U.S. adult spends over 10 hours a day consuming content. Sometimes they are using “information snacking” where users view information during times that in the past were “wasted” or “time shifting” where they are taking in content at times they hadn’t in the past.

Reading email accounts for roughly

two out of every five minutes spent on mobile phones which, according to Nielsen, makes it the most popular activity on mobile devices. When at their desks, email ranks as the third most common usage. So getting a customer or prospect’s attention on their phone is more likely.

So how do you “mobilize” your communication? Start with short, action-oriented subjects. Think about the way a user sees his or her email on the phone and make sure your message will stand out. Next, keep things short and to the point. It is often better to send a couple emails than one with several paragraphs. Most users will not sit and read a long email on their phone and will save it for when they get back to the office. If your messages are short and easy to read, the person will more likely act on it right away.

Another area that should be mobile-friendly is your website. A user trying to get to your website needs to be able to find the information they need right away. Stay away from Flash as iPhone users can’t see it. Also, video that

automatically launches will cause a mobile user to have to wait and they may not be able to do so.

Be sure your phone number is large and easy to find so they can call if they need to do so. Also, review the graphics you have on your site to make sure they don’t cause undo slowness or take up too much real estate. You can also make links to other places a little larger and easy to select so users can quickly click on your links.

If you have clients that come to your office, be sure your address is on your site with the address, city, state and zip code. Many people will get on your site to plug your address into their GPS devices and without a clear and easy to find address, they will be frustrated.

The key to being mobile friendly in your technology usage is to watch how people deal with you. Find those that you appreciate and emulate them. Your clients, prospects and vendors will thank you!

## Effective Negotiations

Most people don't enjoy negotiating. The back and forth, not knowing what is the best outcome is difficult for many people. Here are some tips on how to be more successful.

**Stop Talking**—Here at TPG our favorite tip is to state your case and then be quiet. The first person to say something after you've made your case "buys" so by remaining quiet, you get the other person to start buying what you have said. This can certainly be tricky, but it really pays off!

**Know what you want.** This is really critical to being successful. If you really don't know, think about how you would feel if they offered something on the high end and something on the low end. Evaluate your emotions until you achieve a range you can live within. Knowing what you can and can't take goes a long way.

**Don't share your range.** There's no reason the other party needs to know what the range is. In the biography movie of Thomas Edison, he sells an early invention for \$20,000 and is quite pleased. One of the investors laughs at him and says they were willing to go to \$40,000. Edison gets the last laugh when he informs them he would have gone for \$2,000.

If you do have to make a concession, get something in return. For example, if the customer won't pay the full price, be sure you are not providing the full service.

**Have a partner**—It is great to have a backup whether it is reality or not. If you are the final decision maker, it can often be a good idea to have a little space before you have to make a decision. Getting cornered or pressured makes decision making more difficult so have someone else you need to consult before making your decision. Even if it is just to confirm your already-formed conclusions.

**Time.** Be sure to give yourself enough time. There is nothing worse than negotiating under pressure knowing if you don't get this done the service or product won't be available and it could hurt your business. On your calendar, put all of your negotiations 3-6 months before they are due. Having the time will also help you and the other party get creative in solutions to problems instead of things being more black and white.

**Leave a door open.** Never back the other person into a corner—always leave them a way out of the discussion. People who "win" or "lose" negotiations are clearly not in a part-

ner situation with their vendors and clients and will never have a fully realized agreement.

If you back the other person into a corner, they will react with negative emotions and while you may get what you want now, in the future you will always have that bad feeling between you.

**Be on the same team.** You've chosen to work with this person, be it a vendor or a client, for a reason. The negotiation shouldn't be about "winning" or "losing" because that implies you aren't on the same team. Negotiating so everyone wins will be much more satisfying. Agreements formed under "everybody wins" negotiations are often the ones that receive extra attention, special offers and are labeled "clients we want to keep". You never want to be in the list of clients that if the negotiation doesn't work out, no one will mind.

Negotiations can be tricky but with a little planning, anyone can come out with the deal they want and products and services they need. If you aren't happy with a vendor and can't resolve it, ask for another sales rep or send out an RFP.



## Great Ideas for Content

We've all been there—you need to send a message to prospects / clients, write a blog article, or generally find something to write about. What do you do? Here are a list of ideas to help you get your creativity flowing!

1. Write a cartoon—had something happen in your business that was funny? Draw it up and send it out!
2. Write a how-to article. How to work with people in your industry, how to manage your product / service, etc.
3. Share a list of things to avoid. Then the next time you can do a list of things that work!
4. Compare your industry to your favorite movie. Pick something people don't expect but that
5. Find an article that is trending well in your industry and take the opposite view. One we read recently was about how social media has "killed" marketing. It was all about how social media requires people to be more authentic and actually do something—

many people know like Star Wars, Princess Bride, etc.

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**The Pedestal Group**

The Pedestal Group was founded to answer a need we saw in small businesses to have a source for help. That could be how to find and integrate the right technology, how to better hire and manage people, how to set goals and create a strategic plan, or really attack and own your marketplace.

Our team has worked in a variety of industries including staffing, recruiting and executive search, retail, technology, healthcare software / IT, higher education and franchising and the consistent theme we have found it is very hard to see the forest for the trees. In small business, that is compounded by the number of resources available.

Our approach is unique in that we don't just say it is all about the customer, it really is. The Pedestal Group puts our customers on a pedestal – right where they belong. That isn't to say the customer is always right because that is an adversarial relationship – in our case, we always come to agreement. We are always in a partnership with our clients but also remember who's the most important – YOU.

The Pedestal Group - Putting our clients where they belong.

## Great Ideas for Content (con't)

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| <p>obviously satirical.</p> <p>6. Review a recent conference for people who weren't there. Include the take-aways you got that made it worth attending (or reasons you won't be going back next year).</p> <p>7. Use a free survey tool like Survey Monkey to send out a survey to customers, vendors or industry experts and report on the results.</p> <p>8. Do a case study of one of your customers. Helps them market as well!</p> <p>9. Create a list of trends to watch</p> | <p>in your industry.</p> <p>10. Gather a list of tips from industry experts.</p> <p>11. Compile a list of headlines from the last week / month in your industry and send them out with small summaries. Save people time!</p> <p>12. Offer a list of benefits when people do certain things (like scheduling content writing!).</p> <p>13. Find tips given in another industry and relate them to your own. For instance, fire fighters have specific things they do to handle forest fires. How can those steps</p> | <p>relate to your industry?</p> <p>14. Go back to some beginning-of-the-year predictions and see how they panned out.</p> <p>15. Do a product review on something that isn't carried by your company. For instance if you are in a service organization, offer tips on selecting a new smart phone. (Choose something unrelated to your business but applicable to your clients.)</p> <p>Content can definitely be daunting to create but try these suggestions and also watch what others do. Follow bloggers who blog often and you will see what types of posts appeal to you!</p> |
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