

Happy May 1st

One third of 2008 has already moved into history. What do you plan to do with the remaining two thirds of the year?

Congratulations

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Two Interesting Questions**Question One**

If you knew a woman who was pregnant, who had 8 children already - three were deaf, two were blind, and one mentally retarded - and she had syphilis. Would you recommend that she have an abortion?

(Read the next question before looking at the response for this one on page three.)

Question Two

It is time to elect a new world leader, and only your vote counts. Here are the facts about the three candidates. Who would you vote for?

Candidate A

Associates with crooked politicians, and consults with astrologists. He's had two mistresses. He also chain smokes and drinks 8 to 10 martinis a day.

Candidate B

He has been kicked out of office twice, sleeps until noon, used opium in college and drinks a quart of whiskey every evening.

Candidate C

He is a decorated war hero. He's a vegetarian, doesn't smoke, drinks an occasional beer and has never cheated on his wife.

Which of these candidates would be your choice?

(Decide first no peeking on page three.)

Seminars in 2008**Executive Management Programs****Class 21 - CLOSED**

→ Week 1 – Jun. 23 – 27, 2008 ←

Class 22 - CLOSED

→ Week 1 – Aug. 11 – 15, 2008 ←

Class 23

→ Week 1 – Oct. 13 – 17, 2008 ←

Week 2 – Jan. 12 - 16, 2009

Week 3 – Apr. 27 - May 1, 2009

Week 4 – Jul. 20 – 24, 2009

Week 5 – Oct. 19 - 23, 2009

(There are eight openings left in Class 23)

Class 24

→ Week 1 – Dec. 1 – 5, 2008 ←

Week 2 – Mar. 2 - 6, 2009

Week 3 – Jun. 15 – 19, 2009

Week 4 – Sep. 14 - 18, 2009

Week 5 – Dec. 7 - 11, 2009

To enroll participants in Classes 23 or 24 please email Tom Stevens at - inmco@mindspring.com or call (865) 458-3429.

Professional Sales Program**Class 8**

→ Week 1 – Jun. 16 – 20, 2008 ←

Week 2 – Oct. 27 - 31, 2008

Week 3 – Feb. 16 – 20, 2009

Week 4 – Jul. 13 – 17, 2009

(Because this program draws on survey feedback from customers and/or distributors, participants must have established customer/distributor relationships.) To enroll participants please call John Barnes at (423) 504-5641 or email at john@jbarnesconsulting.com

US BUDGET TRIVIA - In the United State's first 182 years - (1789-1970) - where financial records were maintained, the US government spent \$2.8 trillion in aggregate. \$2.8 trillion was spent by the US government during fiscal year 2007. (Source: Office of Management and Budget).

THEY DON'T BUILD A THING - Approximately 5 out of every 6 jobs - (84%) - held by Americans are service-related, as opposed to construction or manufacturing jobs. (Source: Department of Labor.)

Common Sense

Bill Gates recently gave a speech at a high school about 11 things the students had not and would not learn in school. He talked about how “feel-good” and “politically correct” teaching was creating a generation of kids with no concept of reality and how this would set them up for failure when they entered the real world of work.

Rule 1: Life is not fair - get used to it!

Rule 2: The world won't care about your self-esteem. The world will expect you to accomplish something BEFORE you feel good about yourself.

Rule 3: You will NOT make \$60,000 a year right out of high school. You won't be a vice president with a car phone until you earn both.

Rule 4: If you think your teacher is tough, wait till you get a boss.

Rule 5: Flipping burgers is not beneath your dignity. Your grandparents had a different word for burger flipping - they called it opportunity.

Rule 6: If you mess up, it's not your parents' fault, so don't whine about your mistakes, learn from them.

Rule 7: Before you were born, your parents weren't as boring as they are now. They got that way from paying your bills, cleaning your clothes and listening to you talk about how cool you thought you were. So before you save the rain forest from the parasites of your parent's generation, try delousing the closet in your own room.

Rule 8: Your school may have done away with winners and losers, but life HAS NOT. In some schools, they have abolished failing grades and they'll give you as MANY TIMES as you want to get the right answer. This doesn't bear the slightest resemblance to ANYTHING in real life.

Rule 9: Life is not divided into semesters. You don't get summers off and very few employers are interested in helping you "FIND YOURSELF." Do that on your own time.

Rule 10: Television and video games are NOT real life. In real life people actually have to leave the coffee shop and go to jobs.

Rule 11: Be nice to nerds. Chances are you'll end up working for one!

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“Good intentions are useless in the absence of common sense.” JAMI

John's Jottings

The Most Important Question

According to Peter Drucker - "What is value to the customer?" (Emphasis added.)

His observation - this question is the one least often asked. Why? Managers are quite sure they know the answer. Value is what they, in their business, define as quality.

Drucker says this answer is almost always wrong. The customer never buys a product. The customer buys the satisfaction of a want. They buy according to their values. What a company's different customers consider value is so complicated that it can be answered only by the customers themselves. Drucker's conclusion - management should not even try to guess at the answers – it should always go to the customers in a systematic quest for the answers.

Did you catch that? We too often assume we know why customers buy - our answers form the basis for our sales and marketing programs. (Ever wonder why we sometimes have so much trouble coming up with a successful program?)

Our answers are also the basis for our pricing decisions, which all too frequently link “value” with the cost to produce and distribute.

We are lulled into this mindset because it is easier to base our efforts on what we think. After all, we know why we designed the product the way we did - we know why we make it the way we do and we are confident that our understanding should provide the reason why the customer will buy.

Not according to Drucker. We should make it a point to regularly and systematically to ask the customer what needs and wants our products satisfy and to catalog the answers. We should listen to what they say. Much good will come from doing so.

A study by the US Department of Commerce showed that 80% of new product innovations came from listening to customers describe what they wished they had - not from the R&D labs of our companies. The study also found that companies who listened and responded to their customers were able to charge higher prices and earned better margins.

Are you asking the questions? Are you listening?

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“There is only one boss. The Customer. They can fire everybody in the company, from the chairman on down, simply by spending their money somewhere else!” Sam Walton, founder, Wal-Mart

Readers ' Corner

Every Business Is a Growth Business: How Your Company Can Prosper Year after Year by Ram Charan and Noel M. Tichy - © 1998

Charan, who has been on the faculty of the Harvard Business School and Northwestern University, and Tichy, a professor at the University of Michigan's Business School, speak from experience. They've advised companies such as Royal Dutch/Shell and Mercedes Benz. One of their heroes is the late Roberto Goizueta of Coca-Cola. When Goizueta took over, the company was on cruise control. It dominated the U.S. soft-drink industry -- a market that many experts believed was mature with nowhere to grow. Under conventional thinking, Coca-Cola was maxed out - it would do well just to defend each tenth of a percent of market share against archrival PepsiCo. But in the 1980s, Goizueta framed the question of market share in a different way. Goizueta got his top executives to see that globally, Coca-Cola accounted for less than 2 ounces of the 64 ounces of fluid that each of the world's 4.4 billion people drank on average every day. In one simple stroke, he redefined the market and opened vast new areas of opportunity for his company. Coca-Cola became an immensely successful growth company under his leadership. Similar stories about Compaq, Citibank, and other companies abound. *Every Business is a Growth Business* is an inspiring and practical book for business leaders looking to grow their company. – (Dan Ring - Amazon.com.)

Cross Cultural Books

Gestures: The Do's and Taboos of Body Language Around the World by Roger Axtell

Do's and Taboos Around the World for Women in Business by Roger Axtell

The Do's and Taboos of Hosting International Visitors by Roger Axtell

Multicultural Manners: Essential Rules of Etiquette for the 21st Century by Norine Dresser

(Roger Axtell is the former Senior Vice President of Sales & Marketing for the Parker Pen Co., in Janesville, WI. He has traveled the world and his books are factual, interesting and easy to read. A **must read** for anyone engaging in global business – visiting other countries or bringing visitors to your location.)

“Curiosity is one of the permanent and certain characteristics of a vigorous intellect.” Samuel Johnson

Two Interesting Questions

Question One – If you opted for the abortion – Beethoven would not have been born.

Question Two – Candidate A – Franklin D. Roosevelt

Candidate B – Winston Churchill

Candidate C – Adolf Hitler

(Rather interesting isn't it? Makes a person think before judging someone.)

“For all right judgment of any person or thing it is useful, nay, essential, to see their good qualities before pronouncing on their bad.” Thomas Carlyle

“He that judges without informing himself to the utmost that he is capable, cannot acquit himself of judging amiss.” John Locke
