

# BRIDGES OF MORRIS COUNTY...

MORRIS COUNTY  
**BUSINESS** *Life*



## The Moments That Connect Us

By John L. Picard

*“A relationship, I think, is like a shark, you know? It has to constantly move forward or it dies. And I think what we got on our hands is a dead shark.” — Woody Allen*

Breaking bread, sharing a glass, telling a story. The model for marketing, when reduced to its essentials, is the story of relationships . . . building, nurturing and cherishing relationships. It doesn't take a giant leap to connect these relationships to opportunities for new business and growth.

The first step is to build an architecture of all of your customer touch points — sales, marketing, service, distribution and communications. Like the Tinker Toys® we played with as kids, this relationship architecture forms a matrix joined by central hubs of customer connections. When you open up the hubs, the flow of the relationship (transactions, sales, trust, customer value) increases. Which hubs offer the most leverage for your dollars and effort? Here's a “top ten” list of moments where you can open that spigot.

**Internal Alignment Point(s).** Did everyone get the memo? Get the marketing “word” out, throughout the company. From the top down, everyone needs to be coordinated and empowered to further the client relationship. Nothing else matters when the person at your end of the phone doesn't have the answer.

**The Personal Point.** All marketing shares a single moment in time, the point where the customer says “yes.” It is the moment you look each other in the eye and shake hands. Whether literal or virtual, this moment can be weaved back into all the future moments that become the relationship.

**The Sale Point.** Every sale is different and has a unique point where it all comes together for the prospect. Coordinate everything to converge at that individual spot in time and place.

**The Digital Connection Point.** The Web, virtual events and online presentations are all part of the digital side of sales. Manage these digital moments as connection points to the rest of your marketing and sales experience.

**The Environmental Point.** Use the news. Everything your customers hear or feel in their world changes their purchase equation. Turn that equation to your advantage by looking for the resulting pain or need coming from these stimuli.

**The Customer Nexus Point.** It is surprising how many people are involved in the decision to buy from you. Your relationship extends past the customer to a multitude of others. From the senior manager who holds the purse strings to the spouse at the door, there is always somebody invisible but with a bottom line impact. Touch these hidden purchasers and form a community that drives the sale.

**The Marketing Point.** Make all your marketing materials adaptable. Focus on the moment the materials are used or read as a personal customer experience point. Create tools that speak to that moment, as they are happening, even if you can't be there.

**The Pre-Web Promotional Point.** Drive people to your site at their point of interest. Advertise, buy keywords, use search engine optimization, and add or update your metatags (the words hidden behind each page). Make sure Google tells them where you are.

**The Customer Retention Point.** Once you have the customer, continually seek new moments to add value and deepen trust. Turn the relationship into partnership and also gain referrals.

Together, these nexus points form a series of relationship moments that are strung together like holiday lights. Any one of them, when broken, can force the whole string to fail to light. Shifting your budget to fix the bottlenecks will increase the flow of business across the whole relationship. This focus on business flow, instead of the marketing stuff alone, can give your growth and ROR (Return on Relationship) real traction.