

# BRIDGES OF MORRIS COUNTY...

MORRIS COUNTY  
**BUSINESS** Life



## Get Rid of Unsightly Marketing Bulge

By John L. Picard

The season is almost over and yet many are still painfully aware of the need to get out there and exercise. Taking one look in the mirror is usually sufficient to get us motivated.

In this era of customer empowerment, it's also the height "of the season" for your business. It's time to build some real stamina and get rid of the unsightly marketing bulge around your sales and customer retention.

**Everyone now, let's marketize those pounds away.** Giving full credit to Jack La Lanne, for those old enough to remember, let me put on some music and let's stretch that marketing program. Ready? Let's start: one, two . . . one, two . . . This two-step warm-up begins with revelation on the inhale and moves to passion on the exhale.

**Inhale.** Like a shaft of light from above, you can have an epiphany that illuminates your entire selling effort. Simply transform your message from a product pitch to a story defined by what the customer values. The key is to sell what they want to buy — not to try and get them to buy what you sell.

**Breathe out.** The second step is to be relentless in weaving that value into every stage of the customer sale and relationship. My wife and I received a squirrel-proof bird feeder recently. If you ever wanted a role model for single-mindedness of purpose, look no further. These squirrels have done everything four paws and a tail can accomplish to attain their goal of dinner tonight. Is your business doing less in driving new customer relationships and reaching its goal?

Now that we have warmed up, let's get the heart of your business really pumping!

Like a good exercise program, each part of your marketing must be strengthened to improve your overall sales health.

**Prospecting.** Every business must analyze and construct an ideal pathway between their prospect and their value message. As you move from initial awareness to real interest, the prominence of these value benefits become increasingly important.

**Sales.** The sales process is filled with hidden components that define this value for the customer. Timing, price, function, financing, service, education, style and trust must all be managed around each customer's priorities to gain competitive advantage. Any one of these can accelerate your sales cycle, improve conversions and increase future purchases.

**Purchase.** Now that they have said yes, will the prospect remain as happy? How many people do you know join a gym and three months later never return? To keep them coming back you need to take a lesson from the first page of a car owner's manual and congratulate the buyer. Thank them and make them a hero for making the right decision.

**Relationship management.** You have established trust with the customer. This is the time many of your competitors drop the ball and move on to the next opportunity. Instead, look to insure that the purchase continues to deliver the intended value. As they say in the lottery, "you need to be in it to win it." In this case, you should say, "You have to be with them to keep winning them."

**The Thigh Master® of marketing.** Although I am a strong believer in using the latest technology to build customer connections, one of my personal favorites when it comes to real relationship marketing is an actual call or dropping a quick note that says thank you and offers new ways to add value. You need to follow up like your thighs depended on it.

**No pain, No gain.** These are times that require going beyond the usual. You and your products need not be a commodity. If you put the sweat in, you can develop relationships that separate you from the crowd and put real muscle into your business growth.

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