



A WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT

By Ernie Lewallen

Recently I received a call from one of my store managers. The call came because we had a customer who was complaining that when he rented a PS3 unit he input his credit card number so that he could download online games. The customer returned this unit to us and we quickly re-rented it to another customer unaware that the memory in the unit contained personal information. Apparently it didn't take long for the second customer to realize he was able to download online games using this credit card and he simply had a field day doing so. It was sort of like you checking into a hotel and clicking on the pay movie channels only to learn the movies were playing without you clicking on an "authorize button". When the credit card bill hit customer number one he hit the roof and called us. Clearly this is going to cost my company money as we feel compelled to reimburse this customer for his losses. This could have been far worse. Nobody needs to remind you that in today's litigious society the improper protection of personal information is a class action lawsuit waiting to happen. I hope that my message and some simple instructions can save your company from some future loss.

Remember it is important to restore and delete customer information from any product that has a hard drive before re-renting. This includes computers, PS3, cameras, etc. Below are instructions for restoring a PS3 to clean any personal data from the hard drive.

- * TURN SYSTEM ON
- * GO INTO HOME SCREEN
- * GO INTO SYSTEM SETTINGS
- * SELECT RESTORE PS3 SYSTEM
- * SELECT "YES"
- * SELECT QUICK OR FULL FORMAT
(QUICK FORMAT WILL CLEANSE THE SYSTEM & FULL WILL ENSURE DEEP CLEANING AND TAKES 3-4 HOURS)
FULL FORMAT IS RECOMMENDED

THIS MONTH'S TOP STORY: CUSTOMER LOYALTY & HOW TO EARN IT

There's a saying in the business world: Customer acquisition is an investment, but profitability is built on customer retention. And with the economy in its current state, it's more important than ever to keep the customers you have.

According to a recent survey of engineering, technical, manufacturing and industrial marketers at the beginning of this year, 13% indicated that customer retention is their primary marketing goal in 2009, up from just 5% last year. This increase can be attributed to the fact that companies cannot afford to lose customers now, and many realize it is easier and more cost effective to retain current customers than it is to find new ones.

So how do you retain your customers and earn their loyalty? It's like any successful relationship: If you want customers to be loyal to you, you must be loyal to them. For starters, you must have a product or service that delivers as advertised, but that's just the minimum requirement.

Follow these strategies to keep your customers loyal to your company.

Provide stellar customer service. Customer service is the key differentiator for companies that offer similar products and services. Customers have problems; they want them solved. Customers have questions; they want them answered. The winning company makes it easy for customers to speak with a service representative-a real person, not an interactive voice response system-who has the authority to resolve a customer's issue and make them happy.

The problem with some companies is that they see customer service only as a cost center, which leads to constantly trying to cut customer service costs. Rather, customer service should be considered a customer retention initiative, or in the best of cases a profit center if your customer service team is trained at cross-selling and up-selling appropriate products and services to customers. A change in perspective can equal a change in service.

Use E-mail to communicate with customers. It is hard to foster customer loyalty if your customers forget about you. A great way to stay in touch is through e-mail. Establish a regular customer-only e-newsletter and send customers information that is relevant and helpful to them. While there's nothing wrong with promoting new products to customers, your main objective in customer retention e-mail should be educational rather than promotional. If you help them do their job better, they're more likely to come back to you when they have a need for products or services.

Pick up the phone. Begin an organized effort in your company to call customers at regular intervals, simply to see how they are doing or if they need anything. *continued on next page*

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Tupelo Furniture Market

August 14-16

Tupelo, Mississippi

APRO/Brand Source Convention

August 30-September 2

Paris Hotel, Las Vegas

Las Vegas Furniture Market, Fall 2009

September 14-17

Las Vegas

TRIB Group Meeting of the Minds

October 7-8

Atlanta, Georgia

High Point Furniture Market

October 17-22

High Point, NC

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CUSTOMER LOYALTY

Continued from front page

A courtesy call can go a long way towards establishing customer loyalty. Sales representatives for each account are ideal, but it doesn't have to work that way in order to be successful. The caller should know how to route a call to the appropriate person in your organization if a customer needs help.

Establish customer-friendly policies. Have you ever been a customer of a company that retired a product without continuing to support it? Have you ever faced strict return or exchange policies? Poor warranty support? This is a good way to send customers fleeing to competitors. An organization focused on customer retention and loyalty will always realize the consequences of any policies that are not customer friendly.

To foster a healthy long-term relationship with customers, you must do much more than provide a good product or service. You must pay attention to your customer needs and meet them. There are always competitors ready to lure your customer away. And there are always customers who will switch given any slight, perceived or real. Following these steps above will help minimize the chances of this happening.

KARL'S KORNER *By Karl Wicker*

There is something to be said of democracy. Whether you agree or disagree with our current government, it is clear what we celebrate this coming 4th of July beats the alternatives. We can only look to the current headlines; the coup in Honduras, the turmoil in Iran or the lunacy of North Korea to know democracy in our current form trumps all others. We learned early the importance of participating in choosing our leaders. In school we elected class representatives, homecoming courts and the like. As adults we (hopefully) have continued making our choice in local, state and federal elections.

This past March our membership elected their peers to serve on TRIB Group's Board of Directors. This board, made up of our members, will meet this week to guide this buying group through this year and into the next. It is important, that our members and our approved vendors communicate with our board members and become involved. Better yet, ask what you can do as a member to help the board govern TRIB Group's direction.

Our group is blessed with nine talented members whose sacrifice of time and

energy keeps TRIB RTO's strongest and most reliable buying group. If

you feel the need to be involved, or just to say "thanks", drop an e-mail to our board members: **Ernie Le-**

wallen, president - elew@isoc.net;

Lyn Leach, vice president/chair of the electronics committee - lynleach@aol.com;

Kathy Windsor, treasurer/chair of the furniture committee - kwindsor@nationaltvrental.com;

Marty Auble, secretary/chair of the specialty committee - martya@rentall-inc.com;

Chris Bolin, chair of the appliance committee - bolinrto@cdeightband.net;

Shannon Strunk, chair of the software & financial services committee - shannon@babers.com;

Ron Rose, member of the electronics committee - ronrose@rtobestway.com;

Todd Homberger, member of the specialty, software & financial services committees - toddhomberger@aol.com;

Mike Tissot, member of the furniture, software & financial services committees - mtissot@r2o.com. They will appreciate hearing from you.



TRIB Group
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Dennis Shields, Executive Director

Rebecca Hinton, PR & Admin Coordinator

Karl Wicker, Member Services Coordinator

866-800-TRIB

CURRENT MEMBERSHIP

MEMBERS:

159

STORES:

2,820



Tax Services for the RTO Industry

Celebrating over 20 years of service

Example of Projected Income Profit
(Based on 10 Locations and # of Total Returns Processed)

# of Participating Locations	10
Total Returns Processed	1,000
Average Revenue Per Return	\$150
Tax Preparation Income	\$150,000

TRIB Rebates while adding as much as \$30K per location in additional revenue in as little as 6 weeks!

PREPARE NOW!

Contact John Blair for details:

Cell: 770-262-5609 johnb4623@aol.com



DID YOU KNOW?

That Ashley Furniture has been in existence since 1945, but the

Ashley we know came about when Ron Wanck merged his Arcadia Furniture Corp. with Ashley Furniture in 1976.

Today, Ashley Furniture operates a fleet of 800 trucks and 2,000 trailers servicing Ashley dealers.

APRO Convention Registration NOW OPEN!

TRIB Group encourages your attendance. Go to www.brandsourceconvention.com to register. Register before July 15th and receive a \$100 early bird discount!

VENDOR SPOTLIGHT:

Welton USA
Steve Sherman
Coppell, Texas



Welton USA's Steve Sherman is well respected and endeared within the TRIB Group family. Sherman, who has 20 years at Welton as president and general manager of the furniture & Sony distributor, has been a member of TRIB Group for 19 of Welton's 25 years in business.

Anyone who knows or has done business with Sherman knows his personal commitment to customer service, which is a product of Welton's "passionate focus on customer service." Sherman tells that "everyone in the company is empowered to do whatever is needed to satisfy our customers and our dealer's customers."

Like many in his position, it is the sheer pleasure of working with and associating with the dealers that he so enjoys. "The rental industry, and in particular TRIB Group, has become a business family and the relationships that have been created make doing business fun," Steve adds.

To stand out from its like competitors, Welton "offers a highly differentiated and superior product to help our dealers realize a better ROI on the products they rent in their stores," Steve shares. "It's not just price that is important—it's how much our dealers can make over the life of the product on rent."

Looking ahead, Welton is planning an introduction of sofas, loveseats, chairs, sectional and motion furniture.

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Easy access



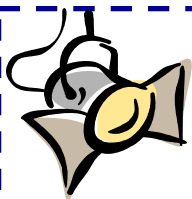
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GFSS2KEXSS

French-door refrigerators are designed with total convenience in mind. Full-width access allows party trays and larger items to fit easily. Fresh foods and frequently used items are always within quick reach, without having to bend or kneel. And the wide-opening doors and smooth exterior add a great look to any kitchen.



Contact your Rental Sales Manager for product information:

Paula Allison 800 782 8093 Paul Eichberger 800 782 8097 Fax 866 238 6595



MEMBER SPOTLIGHT:
Hometown Brand Center
Anna Cross
Russellville, Kansas

Hometown Brand Center was started in 1992 by Richard Cross after Sears had closed his catalog store. Cross needed a business that could survive in a small town, so he began to set roots in RTO. Currently, Hometown Brand Center operates five stores in Kansas and Nebraska. Hometown has now been in RTO for 17 years and has been a TRIB Group valued member for only two years. Anna, who enjoys remodeling old homes, working in the yard and taking cruises, wishes they would have joined TRIB sooner.

Hometown is doing their part in offering their customers a "wide variety of choices in product. We carry the best and make sure it will last when it gets into their home. We treat our customers like our best friend, which they are. We offer unmatched service to our customers. We go the extra mile to make sure they are pleased with their product," says Anna.

Anna reports that the biggest challenge of RTO's future is getting a law passed in Washington recognizing RTO as "a business that helps people and is a viable part of our communities by giving people choices."

As for Anna's favorite part of her job, she says "it's the opportunity for people to have nice things in their home, meeting people, giving good service and having customers tell you how pleased they are with the services."



MEMBER SPOTLIGHT:
FAN Sales & Leasing, LLC.
Geron Vail
Fayetteville, Arkansas

FAN Sales and Leasing, formerly known as Pearson-Vail, was started in 1996 and has been a long-time TRIB member, with over 9 years with the Group. Geron Vail and his former partner began the company with one store in Trumann, Arkansas and consistently expanded to 16 total stores—15 in Arkansas and one in Oklahoma.

Geron has been in the RTO industry for over 13 years and previously served as a TRIB Group Board of Director from June, 2001 to May, 2004 serving as the Group's Secretary for the 03-04 term.

To set it apart from competitors, FAN has "expanded the showrooms to provide a wider selection of product and to be more retail-like in merchandising," Geron says. Also, regular training sessions are designed to inform and help our employees therefore creating a long-lasting customer relationship."

Geron is fairly optimistic about RTO's future and sees it as a "fun crystal ball." He believes that the current credit crisis is allowing his company to serve more first-time renters and is eager to watch more companies develop an online presence or expand their existing online services.

Geron truly enjoys the marketing and advertising aspects of his job and in his personal life enjoys gardening, riding motorcycles with his wife and being a certified pilot."

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