

By Bill Guertin

The 800-Pound Gorilla

HOW TO DEVELOP MORE BUSINESS: LEARN THE ANSWERS TO “WHY YOU?”

It's a pleasant Saturday night, and you're at a bar-B-Q at a neighbor's house. You casually meet someone for the first time, and you begin the usual small talk. You find out what they do, you tell them what you do, and sometimes people will be interested enough to ask something more.

“Wow, that's an interesting business you're in. What is it your customers like best about *your* company?”

Whoa. You weren't expecting *that*. An in-depth, thought-provoking question.

What would you answer?

If you're the business owner or manager, you probably have several great answers ready to go at a moment's notice. Why *do* people like to do business with you? Why do they choose *you*?

Could you answer intelligently?

Now here's the challenging part of the exercise. Imagine that at the same time, one of your employees or co-workers is at a bar-B-Q in their own neighborhood, and the same question comes up. What kind of answer would he or she give?

More importantly, how different would it be from *your* answer?

All of your co-workers have very different thoughts, opinions and knowledge about your company. If each of them understood all the reasons why they were the best one to buy from, chances are they'd tell more people the *right* story, and you'd make more sales.

Here's a great exercise for the next time you have a company-wide meeting: Have each team member write down the Top 11 Reasons why people buy from you. (I like 11 because it's one more than 10.) Give them 5 or 10 minutes to complete the assignment.

You will be astounded at the variety of answers you will receive.

Take all the answers, good and bad, and write them all down on a big easel or chalkboard, eliminating the duplicates. Then discuss which ones are the most critical, and let the group boil them down to the top 4 or 5 key reasons.

Then take the remaining time to discuss how your team could communicate those reasons to your best customers in new and different ways.

Many of your team members will learn things about your company that they never considered as “customer benefits”. They'll be better informed about what sets you apart from the competition. They'll be more likely to tell the same positive story to your customers. And then when they meet potential customers at the next party and are asked, “Why should I do business with you?” they'll immediately have the right answer.

The summer bar-B-Q season has begun. Is it time to prepare your staff for the conversations that will be coming up?

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