



The Age of Commitment

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Has the time come to adjust the thought process behind your business plan?

According to the late great George Carlin, "We've learned how to make a living, but not a life. We've added years to life not life to years. We've been all the way to the moon and back, but have trouble crossing the street to meet a new neighbor. We conquered outer space but not inner space. We've done larger things, but not better things."

Sometimes it is useful to analyze history to understand the paths we have chosen. Through thoughtful evaluation, we can predict the future to a degree by extending that historical trail forward. Creatures of habit that we are, it is likely that we will continue traveling the same roads that we have in the past. If you are satisfied with your business or any other facets of your life, there is no need to alter anything you are doing. If, on the other hand, you sense the need for change, follow along with me while I study my own historical path.

Though I was unaware of it at the time, I grew up in the computer and information age. My first job out of college in 1973 was in the semiconductor industry. The company I worked for invented and manufactured the machines that sliced the silicon wafers upon which integrated circuits were printed. My next job was selling computer supplies door to door in New York City.

When I examine that time in my life now, I realize that it was pretty simple. We had no cell phones, we had no e-mail, and only substantial companies could afford computers. The only way to grow my client base was to organize my prospect list and knock on doors. In the 1970s, the way we sold was very personal; door to door, face to face.

Fast forward 30 years: after the PC revolution, the information age, supercharged by the birth of the Internet, has literally consumed us. We are inundated with thousands of e-mails every month, computers call us on the phone every day, there are hundreds of channels available on cable and satellite. Our garbage is delivered to us every day by the post office in the form of junk mail, which must be opened and shredded in order to protect ourselves from identity theft. Information is everywhere - it is in our cars, on our television sets, on our laptops, desktops, and PDAs. We have access to immediate live data about all areas of our life and business in an instant. Acquiring information is no longer an issue and, at the same time, it is no longer a major competitive edge to have access to that information. It took 30 years, but now it's safe to state that the communications infrastructure is built. The information age is over.

What does the future hold? What's next for business people? Where does the next competitive edge reside?

My claim is that the Age of Commitment is now here and, in a way, we have come full circle. To clarify, if you have all the information you need to run a business and the same is true for customers and prospects, the playing field is flat. You are looking into a future that looks like a clean, white, blank piece of paper. The only thing to do is work on building more meaningful, powerful, long term relationships, just like we use to do in the 40's, 50's, 60's, and 70's. The quality of the relationship you design with your prospects, clients, employees, and vendors is the most important piece of the business puzzle. This has always been true, but we have been sidetracked by the chaos of the computer revolution and getting accustomed to the information super highway.

As someone who has trained thousands of sales people and CSRs over the past 10 year period, my assessment is that while we have been consumed by the messiness of commerce and the overwhelming nature of the information age, we have become numb to the cost in our relationships.

What's the opportunity? How do we move forward? What's the next competitive edge?

We need to start by learning all we can about the nature of commitment, because there is nothing else. We live in networks of committed relationships made up of our families, friends, and personal vendors. Our work consists of committed relationships of employees, customers, vendors, and partners. If you agree with my assessment that there is a new level playing field, built on the ubiquitous communications and data infrastructures throughout the world, then the only thing left for business people to do is enter the age of commitment. Learn or re-learn all you can about growing relationships and building trust in all areas of your life, business and community because the age of commitment is here.

Molloy Business Development Group has developed a series of very unique and effective training programs designed to improve the sales and leadership competencies in client companies. If you wish to learn more about the Language Of Commitment™ training available from Molloy, please call (888) 310-5000.