



Michael A. Brown's

## *Business To Business By Phone*<sup>®</sup>

Summer 2003 Bonus Edition

### WHERE ALL THE MONEY WENT

In *CRM* magazine, Morgan Stanley software industry analyst Chuck Phillips “estimates \$130 **billion** worth of enterprise technologies purchased in the past two years has not been implemented, and 40% of all enterprise software purchased is never installed.”

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### PROVIDE PARALLEL CAREER OPTIONS FOR YOUR SALES REPS

Your best sales rep has “topped out.” What are you going to do to help the rep advance? If your company is typical, you promote the person to sales team leader or sales supervisor. Sometimes, such promotions turn out great, but all too often they don't. Two main reasons: the skills and behaviors for team and sales leadership are vastly different from those of selling itself. Second, not all high-performing sales reps *want* to oversee others.

*Best advice:* Create a Senior Sales Rep position at earnings parity with team leader or sales supervisor. Make the management option *available* to high-performing sales reps, but do not *mandate* management to advance one's career. Rather, provide for parallel career paths. This strategy gives your reps flexibility and also helps develop both sales *and* management talent pools.

*Sidebar:* the model for parallel career paths is the US Army. Enlisted soldiers can either become specialists and advance in their military occupation without being in charge, or become sergeants and oversee others. Specialists and sergeants are at the same pay grades, but sergeants are in charge and specialists are not. It works very well.

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### DIAL BY NUMBERS OR WORDS?

Always choose phone numbers that are easy to dial by number. Avoid “clever” words that people have to translate into numbers as they dial. Some phones don't even have the key letters any more.

### MARKETERS HURTING MARKETING

In times past, the title “marketer” was benign. Nowadays, because of rampant marketing misbehavior, we are at great collective risk of being considered charlatans, criminals, or sociopathic agents of the dark side.

Charlatans because of the advertising and promotional silliness that continues even after the marketplace figures out the true story. Remember “user-friendly” and “plug and play?” Thought you were buying a “solution” but got buggy software?

Criminals because of come-on rebates that never happen, disclaimers in 6-point fonts that hide termination fees or nullify warranties, and outright fraud. Have you been hit up yet for your copier's serial number?

Agents of the dark side because of the frequent and cavalier selling of names and company information to spammers, purveyors of porn, operators of pyramid schemes, and other bad-guy denizens of business' under-belly. How did you think the x-rated merchants got your e-mail address?

In 2003, people believe us less than ever before, with disbelief metastasizing into contempt. B2B customers as well as consumers feel disrespected, deceived, and abused. They detest our all-too-common pomposity and self-congratulatory verbiage. They have come to expect disappointment because they have been stung by marketers' over-promises and under-deliveries.

Please note that I indict our profession with the collective “we,” because even if we individually are as pure as snow, that is not how the marketplace views us. The collective “we” are guilty by association: if many marketers lie, then we all must be liars.

To be sure, some of the bad behavior is because of the economy. Tough times bring about misguided, wrong marketing ... the long distance and cellular companies come to mind. But tough times



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are no excuse for the marketing garbage that we all have suffered and some have produced. Is there any way out of this? Yes!

*Best Advice:* be ready intellectually, emotionally, and financially to market only the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

- Intellectually: write, produce, and conduct your marketing for prospects' and customers' higher thought processes. Not necessarily high-brow, but with the expectation that your prospects and customers actually do think in context, with continuity and clarity. Do not obscure the realities. And yes, you can be funny along with smart, as the wonderful Heineken beer ads prove.
- Emotionally: make sure that your marketing *feels* right. Make it so decent that even though your mom may have no clue what business you are in, you could explain your strategy and show her your marketing materials with comfort and pride.
- Financially: stow away enough money so you could quit a job where you are asked to be a charlatan, a criminal, or an agent of the dark side. This is life, folks! Let's live it right and market honorably and well.

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### WHADDAYAWANTFORDINNER?

My summertime 2003 recommendations for good food and a pleasant experience:

*Jack Stack's Barbecue*, Overland Park, Kansas. Outstanding grilled meats ... try the lamb ... and perhaps the world's best bleu cheese salad dressing.

*Guero's*, Austin. One of the few TexMex places where it really is worth the wait. The famous and the funky all enjoy this venerable eatery. From out front, there's a great view up Congress Avenue to the Texas state capitol.

*Saltgrass Steak House*, Dallas. This western-

themed chain restaurant doesn't taste or feel like one. The food, drinks, and service are first-rate. The staff actually remembers patrons after their very first visit!

*Claddagh Irish Pub*, Columbus, Ohio. Justly famous for their fish 'n' chips. I went back a second night for more! Very friendly atmosphere, with live music some nights.

*San Chez*, A real find where you wouldn't expect it. Excellent tapas and other Spanish dishes in downtown Grand Rapids, Michigan.

*Crisfield's Seafood*, Silver Spring, Maryland. The crab cakes and coleslaw are as good today as I remember from my childhood visits to this DC-area institution fifty years ago.

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### THE EYEBROW THRESHOLD

Add this question to your phone marketing and sales repertoire: "Mr\|Ms Prospect, what's the dollar level at which company eyebrows will go up and make things uncomfortable for you?" Based on the answer, you can consider unbundling your product or service offering, phasing the delivery schedule, or getting people with big offices involved.

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### I RECOMMEND

If you market to Uncle Sam or want to consider doing so, Mark Amtower is the guy to talk with. Mark is Mr. Business to Government, knowledgeable about federal processes, lists, laws, traps, etc. [www.federaldirect.net](http://www.federaldirect.net) 301 924-0058.

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