



Michael A. Brown's

Business To Business By Phone[®]

First Quarter 2006 Edition

E-HUBRIS, E-ARROGANCE EMERGE AGAIN

Beginning about 1998, almost everything to which marketers could attach the “e-“ prefix was so labeled. There were e-pharmacies, whose on-line dispatch of toothpaste was to render drug stores obsolete. It did not. There were e-furniture web sites that failed because intelligent people declined to buy an e-sofa. They wanted to sit on a real sofa first.

Most of all, there was way too much unbridled, unwarranted hubris and arrogance from e-marketing zealots. For example, we heard cavalier predications that all marketing would be e-marketing. We heard ridicule and repudiations of brick-and-mortar businesses. A Northwestern Univ. marketing “guru” wrote that in the e-world, business experience was a *liability*. We even heard marketing extremists proclaim the impending end of human-based business transactions. Then in 2000 it all crashed ... except for the hubris and arrogance, which merely went into hibernation.

Now, unfortunately, e-hubris and e-arrogance are back. At two recent conferences, a number of attendees seemed totally fixated on e-marketing, without due attention to fundamentals such as databases, RFM, and human communication. To these woefully misguided folk, I say, ***pay attention and learn from what has come before!*** To wit:

- Astute marketers know that the Internet and e-business are not the be-all and end-all of business-to-business marketing and sales. Especially for “considered decisions,” business people *insist* on some form of live human communication.
- The “e-“ attached to a marketing medium or campaign is neither here nor there. As always, the important component is the resulting deliverable: a response, a lead, or a sale.
- As soon as a marketer declares a prior medium or strategy “dead,” other marketers prove the proclamation wrong. Indeed, we still conduct

direct mail, phone, and in-person marketing and sales despite the proliferation of “e-.”

- Prospects and customers detested hubris and arrogance when those attributes flourished eight years ago. Marketers, “e-“ and otherwise, who behave similarly in 2006 are in for unkind words and bad results from the very people from whom they want and need favorable responses.

Best Advice: Think and act in terms of how e-marketing components augment rather than nullify or replace the traditional elements. Demonstrate humility and courtesy, not e-haughtiness, in all marketing and sales activities. Be nice!

WHO DO YOU WANT TO SOUND LIKE?

If your phone persona is that of a clerk, you will wind up marketing or selling mostly to clerks. If you speak like middle management, that’s the level to which you will be relegated most often. If your phone presence is of executive stature, you will be able to communicate at parity with executives.

So if we must call prospects and customers at various levels who speak differently from us, what can we do to narrow the communication gaps?

Best Advice: Arrange phone conversations with a few of your company’s present customers at different levels within their organizations. “The reason for my call, Mr\Ms Customer, is to listen and learn so that when I call you, and other people like you, I do it so well that you’ll want to talk with me.”

Ask them to describe a day in their business lives. Ask them about the conversations they have with their peers. Listen carefully to how they express themselves. Ask them about their experiences accepting and rejecting phone calls. Ask them what you should do and avoid so your calls will be accepted and considered more often. Then, practice and rehearse with audio recording and self-critique.



Michael A. Brown's

Business To Business By Phone[®]

First Quarter 2006 Edition

SUNSHINE STATE SEMINARS

Come experience what's new, important, and profitable at the *Direct Marketing to Business* conference, April 19-21 at Orlando.

Every year this event earns top reviews from attendees. One of the best aspects is that you can choose exactly what you want and need because each time slot features four different topical seminars. The general sessions always are provocative and valuable too. Plus, they serve good food! www.the-dma.org click "events." Call for VIP discount! **800 373-3966**.

ON THE RADIO BUT WATCHING TV

In marketing and selling by phone, *ears* ... our own and our contacts' ... are at the core of the process. That's why almost every caller wears a headset over one or both ears.

Of course, we hope and trust that the "central processing unit" between the ears is functioning at peak efficiency. That's because the combination of what we hear through our ears and process through our brains determines what comes out of our mouths and into the microphone. In a very real sense, we are on the radio.

However, almost 100% of us also have a computer monitor staring us in the face. So even though we are in radio, we do our jobs while watching a TV! And there's the rub.

Because sight is faster than sound, the video dominates. Psychologists tell us that for sighted people, 85% of daily information intake is visual. All the other senses ... hearing included ... account for only 15%. No wonder that listening and thinking are so hard while visual data dances across the screen. If we do not deliberately attend to the audio, the video captivates our attention, skewing our dialogue to the sequence of data fields and away from the flow of the verbal exchange.

Best Advice: For us, the audio must rule. Accentuate the audio. Diminish the video. Turn your video monitor 45° to 90° to your straight ahead line of sight while on the phone. Read the contact history before dialing, then refer to it only as absolutely necessary during the conversation. Pay close audio attention. Ask elaboration questions ("tell me more") rather than rushing to the next data field. Take "shorthand" notes on paper; do not keystroke while trying to listen, think, and speak persuasively.

LEAD GENERATION AND NURTURING: BETTER IN MARKETING OR SALES?

Several clients have moved their phone-based lead generation and development from marketing to sales, while other clients moved them from sales to marketing. Here's why:

- *Marketing to sales:* in firms where inside lead people are matched to particular field sales reps, the rationale has been continuity and coordination. Pluses: greater coverage in multi-contact accounts. Minuses: field sales often gives lead development scant attention. Also, the phone marketers may function more as AAs to the sales reps rather than as full partners.
- *Sales to marketing:* at companies where the field crew cannot or will not attend to opportunities that are not right-now "sales ready." Pluses: usually, marketers are more willing and able to develop the "not yet's" than sales. Minuses: sometimes yields "us v. them" attitudes rather than collegial, synchronized business behaviors.

Best Advice: Carefully analyze both the realities and the perceptions of your company's customer acquisition process. Try to set internal politics aside. Determine marketing's v. sales' ability and will to take the steps required to find and land new customers. Then get an independent third party's professional opinion and guidance. Inquire at michael@michaelabrown.net or call **800 373-3966**.