



Article Two – Do you really know your customers?

You sit through a long meeting with the potential client. You ask questions they answer, you take time to show everything you do and they watch. Then the meeting is over and then you go your separate ways. A day goes by, then another. Finally after a week you call this person to see what happened and they tell you a decision was made to go with another company. What?!? How did this happen?

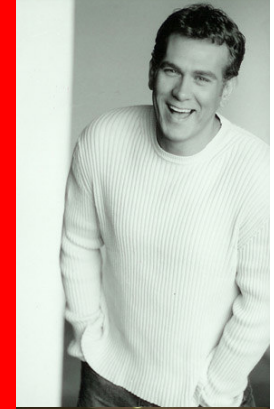
Getting to know your customers is tricky business because it means that you must put away unnecessary assumptions and ego so you can get to the heart of what matters most, their vision. When you take responsibility for the “getting to know” part of the relationship things will change for you. For example, you could ask a bride to be the usual questions when she calls. “When is your event?” “How many guests will you have?” Blah Blah Blah. These questions are not really driving you to success because they are not painting a picture of the client vision. Your clients and prospective clients need you to get them. They are looking for the one DJ who fully understands that their vision as they see it. Many DJs are out selling services. They rush from appointment to appointment with DVD samples in hand hoping to grasp some small part of the massive available market share. In order to truly connect with your customers and to deliver their vision you must connect to complete understanding.

What is understanding? We can often hear: “I don’t think we have understanding here.” or “I think I understand.” A good working definition for understanding is “Seeing it the way they see it”. Seeing includes the feeling aspect there’s an empathic side to seeing; not only seeing it but feeling it the way they do.

When I have coached all over North America for both businesses and DJs I see this time and time again. Individuals and businesses miss this critical piece to great customer relationships and loyalty.

For example, not too long ago Coke decided to come out with a new product they were sure would be a hit. Coca Cola was getting info that Pepsi was beating them on blind taste tests; therefore Coca Cola made a decision to develop New Coke. The result was a complete public backlash; therefore Coca Cola got more info from market but took the info and processed it in such a way that they got to “understanding” They quickly understood that the taste was not the real issue; people were loyal to the concept of Coke; they were buying the brand not the taste; they missed understanding from their customers. Because they did not dig out this critical info, they ended up misinterpreting the data that was being offered at the surface level; as a result, they took a fairly disastrous action, an action they were only able to recover from by revealing the essence of the situation; they leveraged this understanding by creating Coca Cola Classic and results were great. You can always make decisions and get results but you have the opportunity to make best decisions and get best/maximum results!

Understanding is “seeing it the way they see it” and if you make understanding your goal, it actually drives many of the skills you need to be successful. First make understanding your goal then....



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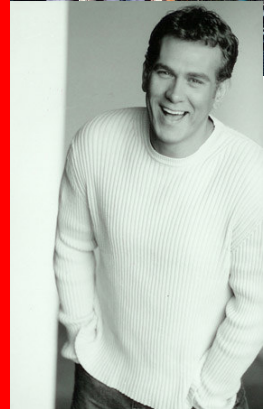
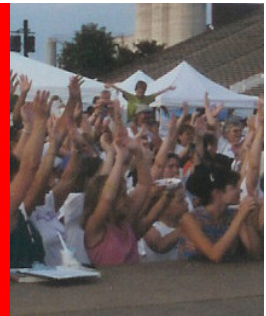


- **Be proactive** - It's your responsibility to ensure understanding occurs. DO not wait for the client to help you understand. Go and get it.
- **Plan the process** – Really create you own sales call process that includes things on this list that drive you to completely understanding your clients.
- **Start with the big picture** – This is the client's overall central pillar or central vision for their event.
- **Establish context** – Who are the guests, and what are they expecting? Also, get the client to tell you about events they have attended in the past. You need to know what they have liked and disliked about these events.
- **Adopt a common language** – Listen to their key word and repeat them in your statements. “We would really love to have the guests excited!” Your response, “I will make sure to have you guests completely excited at every turn. You will love it.”
- **Encourage** – “I think your ideas are great and we will help you make it work.”
- **Ask clarifying questions** – Make a list of questions that build you to understanding. “What do you hope people will say about your event? How would you describe your overall vision in one sentence?”
- **Do an understanding check by asking if this is what you want make sure you walk away and make decisions and take action based on crystal clear understanding that has happened quickly.**

These critical steps will help you. Now I will let a legend in customer satisfaction finish this article off.

There is only one boss. The customer. And he can fire everybody in the company from the chairman on down, simply by spending his money somewhere else.

Sam Walton



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