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Persuasive Resolutions by Bob Manna & Matt Manna • 004D9326(R09)

“Be it resolved in 2012 and beyond that facts are not the same as convictions and that they are miles from the truth as it is understood by the mind and heart.”

It's hard to imagine someone saying to another, “You know I bought this product because of the extraordinary communication that preceded my purchase.” Yet, that is exactly why products are purchased.

Every purchase is motivated by the communication that precedes it. The communication comes first. The purchase comes second. And what is true for products is equally true for votes, verdicts, and volitions. Every human undertaking is primarily motivated by communication.

Before reading past this sentence take a moment and reread the first paragraph of this article.

Now consider this familiar proverb, “You never get a second chance to make a good first impression.” Can there be any doubt in your mind that the words “good first impression” denote communication? The practical upshot of this realization forms the basis of two important New Year's resolutions.

Be it resolved in 2012 that first impressions are the sole result of communication. Be it further resolved that facts do not correlate with positive first impressions.

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Suppose you have control of a new product that is, in every way, better than other products currently in existence. Your product is well tested. You have satisfied manufacturing and distribution requirements, and assembled a talented sales team. The only thing left to do is take the product to market. Which means what exactly?

You might be tempted to reply that the question is superfluous. Taking a product to market means making the product's facts known to prospective customers.

Good luck with that! Customers don't pay attention to facts. Customers (people) pay attention to convictions. Customers use their convictions to filter and cast aside communication that does not strengthen existing feelings. When it comes to impressions and feelings, convictions, not facts, are in charge.

The power of convictions can be quickly demonstrated via the used car salesman test. There is nothing a used car salesman can say that will make you think he is telling the truth. Why? Because you are incapable of *thinking* beyond what your convictions make you *feel* about a used car salesman.

A truly sad thing to recognize is that even if a used car salesman is telling the truth, you will not believe what he is saying. A used car salesman is a used car salesman. End of story!

The phenomenon of using convictions as the basis for forming impressions is technically known as perceptual and cognitive mechanics. What the phenomenon means is that people feel deeply, before thinking clearly. A customer will form a positive impression only if he or she is exposed to communication that parlays with his or her existing convictions.

Imagine that part of your "take to market" strategy is to send a blast Email to those who are likely to be interested in your product. Do you suppose there is any list of facts you can include in the Email that will create a positive first impression? The chances are many to one that the Email will never even be opened let alone evaluated.

Email, you see, is an electronic equivalent to a used car salesman. Their form speaks louder than their message.

It is most revealing when a client asks us why we chose a particular medium over another, or why we decided to create a message that did not extol a products technical merit. The question assumes we were in control of how such a communication would be received by those for whom it was intended.

Everyone who is seriously committed to achieving success must accept that product merit comes second to meritorious communications. If it were the other way round, every meritorious product would become successful.

The year 2012, and those that follow, will be better served when we resolve to understand that facts are not the same as convictions, and they are miles from truth as it is understood by the mind and heart.



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