

VDTA NEWS

VACUUM DEALERS TRADE ASSOCIATION

The trade publication for the independent retailer

November 2017 | ISSUE 434 www.vdta.com

FLOORCARE
CENTRALVAC
Professional™

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What is the Key that Unlocks the Sale?, *Gitomer*, p22

COVER STORY: Robotic Vacuums to Play
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p46



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VACUUM DEALERS TRADE ASSOCIATION

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FLOORCARE CENTRALVAC Professional™

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your industry news by email. Stay
connected with your association!

Letter from the Editor

61 – The number of days left in 2017... which means the VDTA•SDTA Int'l Trade Show and Convention is approaching, March 24-26, 2018 in Charlotte, NC with special classes beginning March 22. That may seem like a long ways off, but now is the time to make travel arrangements, hotel reservations, and register for the convention with our office before prices increase!

As you plan, we want to warn you of the scams going around. **The VDTA is not working with any outside hospitality agency or organization that may try to give you a "discount" or have you book rooms through them.**

We are working directly with the host hotels who provide group codes or weblinks you can find online at www.vdta.com and in our magazine.

On a positive note, we'd like to invite you to VDTA's annual special events:

● **The Industry Cocktail Reception:** Friday evening, March 23, 2018 at the NASCAR Hall of Fame.

● **VDTA/Epstein Charity Fun Night:** Sunday, March 25, 2018. The evening is a fun charity event with a spinning wheel of prizes and a Vegas-themed game night. It's \$100 dollars to play, no cost to be a spectator, and all donations go to the VDTA / Epstein Scholarship Fund.

We are also looking for donations for this charity night - both prizes for the spinning wheel and sponsors for the game tables. It is \$1500 to sponsor a table AND 8 players, and \$700 to sponsor just a table. Call us at 800-367-5651 or email judy@vdta.com if you are interested in this sponsorship.

And don't forget to attend classes and seminars at the show! Some - like those from DIME and Floriani - require pre-registration, which you can do by calling the phone number listed by their class description in this magazine and online.

With all of this planning, it's still important to be present in the moment, especially this time of year when we are reminded to be thankful and generous. Let me finish this letter wishing you Happy Thanksgiving from all of us at VDTA!

Are you passionate about selling your products?

Blakeman Vacuum & Sewing LLC
is growing and needs qualified
sales professionals.

BLAKEMAN
vacuum & sewing

Looking for an experienced industry professional who wants to build their career in a growing retail business. Opportunities in primary sales, B2B sales, and management as well. Professional sales training daily, vendor product training guaranteed, guaranteed raises, commission based sales, and benefits.

Contact Chris directly at 970-690-2683 or email at christopherrayblakeman@gmail.com.

We Want to Write About You!



2017 Dealers of the Month

Help The Industry

by sharing your best practices, advice,
and what makes you successful.

Nominate YOUR OWN business or another dealer.

Fill out the form TODAY, see page 9 or www.vdta.com

Mail to 2724 2nd Avenue, Des Moines, IA • Fax to (515) 282-4483 • Email to mail@vdta.com

Classified Ads

To place a classified ad, contact VDTA at (800) 367-5651

HELP WANTED: High volume, multi-location, multi-line dealer seeking experienced sewing educator/ salesperson to join our team. Uncapped earning potential with a salary and commission structure, easily earn \$45K - \$50K+. Relocation assistance for the right candidate. Move to beautiful Oregon and see what it has to offer. Email resumé to sewingeducatorwanted@yahoo.com. (1-2)

HELP WANTED: Sales Manager Wanted. Immediate opening. Relocate to Florida-Miami-Tampa. Starting Salary: 55K. Qualified applicant must possess the following skills/take responsibility for the following:
•Effective management skills; •Ability to sell and fix-Miele sales experience required;
•Scheduling for multiple locations; •Inventory purchasing and control.
Tops Vacuum & Sewing. Contact Greg Bank, Owner: gregoryabank@gmail.com (0-0)

BUSINESS FOR SALE: We're retiring! 44 years established fabric/sewing machine businesses. Central Texas. Large inventory. \$279,000. 325-643-1132. Contact: jwittlif@hotmail.com (2-3)

BUSINESS FOR SALE: Turn-key Sewing Supplies Business FOR SALE. Owner retiring after 43 years. NYS industry leader. Patchogue, NY. Listed at \$199K. Call 1-631-288-6333. (0-0)

BUSINESS FOR SALE: Suncoast Vacuum in Port Charlotte, Florida. Forty-year business with loyal customer base. Ideal turn-key sale for 2800 sq ft building, lot & inventory together, but will negotiate leasing options. All points negotiable. Contact Paul at 941-629-2216, sales@suncoastvacuum.com to discuss pricing & options. (1-3)

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'Tis the season for making messes.

iRobot® helps make spirits bright with cleaner floors.

While preparing for the holidays can get messy, clean floors at the end of the day should still be expected. Roomba® from iRobot® vacuums up holiday messes so floors are always clean.

Become an iRobot® dealer today.
www.irobot.com/volumesales

iRobot®

Roomba®
Vacuuming Robot

Thank You



The following is a list of members who recently renewed their membership or joined VDTA•SDTA or SEA. This is only a partial list of members. For a complete list of members visit www.vdta.com.

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

American & Efird Gütermann Consumer Div	Mount Holly, NC	Sept 1999
Coats & Clark Inc	Charlotte, NC	Sept 1999
Famore Cutlery/ Specialty Product Sales	Gainesville, GA	Oct 2014
Groz-Beckert	Charlotte, NC	Nov 2015
Hoopsisters	Lima, OH	Sept 2017
Janome America	Mahwah, NJ	Oct 1992
Northpoint Commercial Finance	Alpharetta, GA	Sept 2017
Synchrony Financial	Atlanta, GA	Sept 2004
Transnational	Rosemont, IL	Aug 2016

INDEPENDENT DEALER MEMBERSHIPS

1-Stop Vacuum Centres	Regina, SK	Feb 1983
A-1 Vacuum Ctr Inc	Green Bay, WI	Sept 2017
A-1 Vacuum Sales & Svc	Louisville, KY	Nov 2010
A-1 Vacuum Solutions LLC	Boone, NC	Nov 2009
ASAP Vacuum Sales & Svc	Coon Rapids, MN	Sept 2017
Barber's Shoppe	Stevens Point, WI	Nov 2003
Blakeman Sew & Vac	Boulder, CO	Nov 2016
Budd Vacuum Company	Wyckoff, NJ	Apr 1987
Cap Vac	Richardson, TX	Oct 2006
Capital Quilts	Gaithersburg, MD	Nov 2015
CJ Miller Vacuum Ctr Inc	Harleysville, PA	Sept 1996
Cor-Kev Inc Central Vac	Freehold, NJ	Nov 2006
Dick's Vacuum	Sioux Falls, SD	Oct 2009
East Texas Vacuums M&R Enterprises	Longview, TX	Oct 2011
Edward's Sewing Ctr	Fort Wayne, IN	Oct 2011
Erv's Vac Shop	Goshen, IN	Nov 1996
Evergreen Vacuum	Evergreen, CO	Oct 2008
Fuller Vacuum & Sewing Ctr	Collinsville, VA	Oct 2007
Kansas Vacuum Ctr Inc	Wichita, KS	Aug 2015
Kirby Sales & Service	Tyler, TX	Nov 2014

MEMBER SINCE

Kirkwood's Sweeper Shop	Cincinnati, OH	Sept 2017
Long's Vacuum & Appliance	Austin, TX	Oct 1996
McDonald's Sewing & Vacuum	Arkansas City, KS	Dec 2014
North Shore Vacuum Cleaner Co	Lynn, MA	Jan 1991
Not Just Vacs (Advance Home System)	Forest Hill, MD	Dec 1994
Nuovac	Beloeil, QC	Sep 2017
Oreck of Texas	Houston, TX	Nov 2009
R B Fabrics Ltd	Chatham, ON	June 2015
Ristenbatt Vac Cleaner Svc	Manheim, PA	Nov 2013
Sew Easy Sewing	Roswell, NM	Oct 2014
Sew N Sew	Clute, TX	Sept 2017
Sew On - Sew Forth	Depew, NY	Oct 2002
Sewtown Inc	Fort Smith, AR	Nov 2006
Steve's Vacuums	Arlington Hts, IL	Sept 2017
Stitcher's Quest	Fort Walton Beach, FL	Nov 2015
Sweet Time Quilting LLC	Melbourne, FL	Sept 2012
The Sew'n Place Inc	Fayetteville, PA	Nov 2015
The Vac Shop North	Chicago, IL	Oct 1990
The Vacuum Depot	Houma, LA	Sept 2017
Thomas Sewing Ctr Inc	Mesquite, TX	Sept 1999
Timeless Quilts & Friends LLC	Missoula, MT	Nov 2009
Ultimate Sewing Ctr	Oshawa, ON	Sept 2017
Upland Vac & Sew	Upland, CA	Feb 1996
Vacuum Boutique (Beats All Solutions)	Largo, FL	Nov 2007
Viking Sewing Ctr	San Jose, CA	Sept 1999

S.E.A. MEMBERS

Ghee's	Shreveport, LA	Aug 2016
Sew Beary Special	Brooklyn, NY	June 2010

International Members

Allaway Oy	Jyvaskyla, Finland	Nov 2007
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Thanksgiving

By: Edgar Guest, 1881 - 1959

Gettin' together to smile an' rejoice,
An' eatin' an' laughin' with folks of your choice;
An' kissin' the girls an' declarin' that they
Are growin' more beautiful day after day;
Chattin' an' braggin' a bit with the men,
Buildin' the old family circle again;
Livin' the wholesome an' old-fashioned cheer,
Just for awhile at the end of the year.

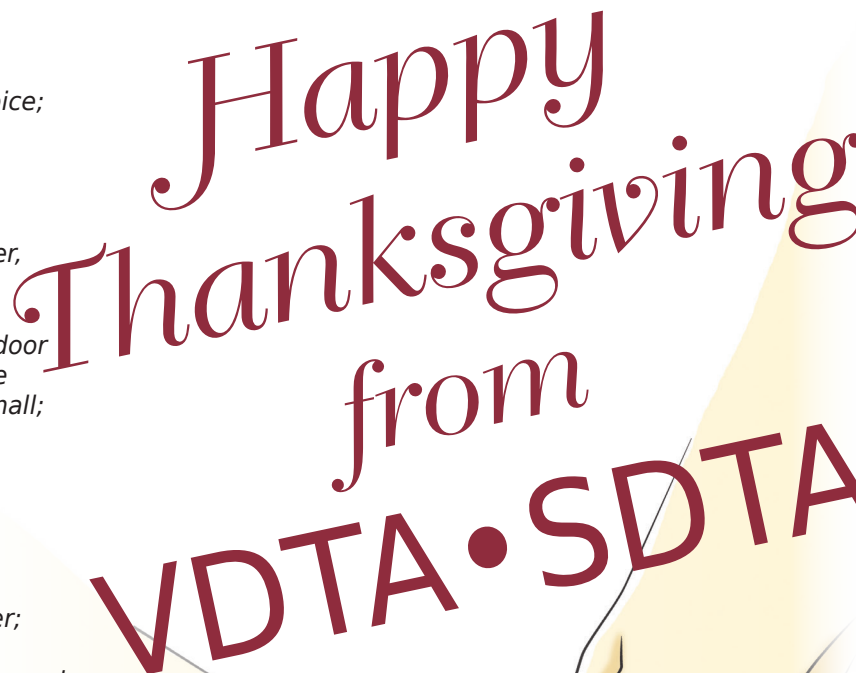
Greetings fly fast as we crowd through the door
And under the old roof we gather once more
Just as we did when the youngsters were small;
Mother's a little bit grayer, that's all.
Father's a little bit older, but still
Ready to romp an' to laugh with a will.
Here we are back at the table again
Tellin' our stories as women an' men.

Bowed are our heads for a moment in prayer;
Oh, but we're grateful an' glad to be there.
Home from the east land an' home from the west,
Home with the folks that are dearest an' best.
Out of the [clamor] of the cities afar
We've come for a time to be just what we are.
Here we can talk of ourselves an' be frank,
Forgettin' position an' station an' rank.

Give me the end of the year an' its fun
When most of the plannin' an' toilin' is done;
Bring all the wanderers home to the nest,
Let me sit down with the ones I love best,
Hear the old voices still ringin' with song,
See the old faces unblemished by wrong,
See the old table with all of its chairs
An' I'll put soul in my Thanksgivin' prayers.

This poem is in the public domain; Source: Poets.org.

Happy
Thanksgiving
from
VDTA • SDTA



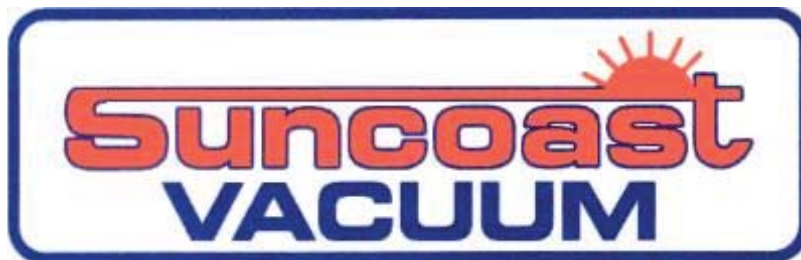
Booming Business in Port Charlotte with Suncoast Vacuum

Suncoast Vacuum and Appliance in Port Charlotte, Florida has been soaking up the sunny rays and soaring profits for the past 40 years! Owned today by Paul Froeschle and operated with the help of three knowledgeable and friendly employees, Suncoast Vacuum first opened its doors in 1977 under the ownership of Charles and Susan Drexler.

Four decades later, Suncoast is looking ahead to the economic boom reaching the area while never losing sight of what really counts: quality customer service. Announced just this year, major economic developments are in the works for the Port Charlotte area including extensive hospitality and entertainment projects. Allegiant Air has announced plans to build a \$600 million resort complex in Port Charlotte with a hotel, marina and condominiums, plus other companies have plans to invest \$132 million in entertainment venues that involve a waterpark, golf course, conference center, skydiving facility, and more!

While Suncoast anticipates growth to the community, buyers in Port Charlotte already support their local, independent vacuum dealer because of their reputation for quality products and a genuine desire to help anyone who visits the store.

Suncoast values the excellence of their brands, being an authorized Miele dealer and authorized Sanitaire dealer. In addition, they carry lines from Royal, Oreck, complete numerous in-house refurbishments, work on just about any brand – and carry central vacuums! A best-seller in the store is the Miele Calima with turbo nozzle, and their best sales strategy is always to *listen*. Customers at Suncoast appreciate how all staff take the time to ask about their particular floorcare needs – what type of flooring; if carpet, how thick; how much square footage – and staff are always there to answer any question.



In fact, owner Paul Froeschle and Suncoast Vacuum have been awarded the 2017 “Readers Choice Award” by the *Port Charlotte Sun*, a division of the *Herald Tribune*, beating out other home stores like SEARS – and what’s more impressive is that Paul has received this award every year since 2003!

Paul’s words of wisdom for other independent retailers, especially in the vacuum industry are, “Sell your customers on quality (for them) rather than profit margin (for you) and you’ll make more in the long run.”

Paul and the staff at Suncoast Vacuum have built a booming business, one that will only grow. As Paul has decided to tackle new adventures in life, Suncoast Vacuum is for sale. See classified ad below:

BUSINESS FOR SALE:

Suncoast Vacuum in Port Charlotte, Florida. Forty-year business with loyal customer base. Ideal turn-key sale for 2800 sq ft building, lot & inventory together, but will negotiate leasing options.

All points negotiable.
Contact Paul at 941-629-2216,
sales@suncoastvacuum.com
to discuss pricing & options.

VDTA•SDTA Dealer of The Month

Company Name _____ Phone _____

Owner's Name _____ Web site _____

Address _____ E-mail address _____

City, State, Zip _____ Local Newspaper _____

1. What year was your store established? _____

2. How many stores do you operate? _____

3. How many employees do you have? _____

4. What product lines do you carry? _____

5. What services do you provide? _____

6. Is your business family run? How many generations? _____

7. What is your age group: ☐ 40 - under ☐ 41 - 50 ☐ 51 - 60 ☐ 61 plus

8. Check all equipment that your business carries:

☐ Vacuum ☐ Vacuum/Central Vacuum ☐ Vacuum & Sewing ☐ Janitorial

☐ Sewing Machines ☐ Quilt Shop with Sewing Machines ☐ Longarm machines

☐ Quilt Shop without Sewing Machines ☐ Other _____

9. Do you have and maintain e-mail lists of your customers? ☐ Yes ☐ No

10. Do you have and maintain direct mail lists of your customers? ☐ Yes ☐ No

11. Do you have a rental program for sewing machines? ☐ Yes ☐ No

12. Do you rent time on a longarm quilting machine to quilters to machine quilt? ☐ Yes ☐ No

13. Do you offer sewing /quilting classes in your store? ☐ Yes ☐ No

On a separate sheet of paper or email (to mail@vdt.com) please answer the following

14. How often do you offer classes and what age group do you target?

15. Community projects you participate in or support.

16. Marketing plans you have done that draw people to your store.

17. Any awards received from a manufacturer or from your community.

18. What tips of success or advice do you have for other independent retailers in the industry?

19. Share a paragraph about the history of your business and how it has grown?

20. How often do you attend the VDTA•SDTA Annual Convention? IE: Every year, every 2 yrs, etc:

21. What makes your shop stand out in your community.

23. Are you a member of the VDTA•SDTA? ☐ Yes ☐ No

24. What year did you join? _____

Fax to: 515-282-4483

Mail to: Dealer of the Month, VDTA•SDTA, 2724 2nd Ave, Des Moines, IA 50313.

E-mail to: mail@vdt.com.

You may also visit www.vdt.com, click on "Members," and fill out the form online and submit.
You must be a current member of VDTA•SDTA to be selected as the Dealer of the Month.

SBA Rolls Out New Lender Match Tool to Connect Small Businesses and Lenders

Administrator Linda McMahon, head of the U.S. Small Business Administration, announced the launch of Lender Match, the SBA's online referral tool connecting small business borrowers with participating SBA lenders. Lender Match is an upgrade to LINC (Leveraging Information and Networks to access Capital), introduced as a pilot in 2015.

"The SBA's mission to help small businesses grow, create jobs, and help our economy thrive is strengthened by the new Lender Match tool. It essentially serves as a matchmaker, making it easier for small businesses to find lenders," McMahon said. "I want to help get more capital in the hands of small business owners and entrepreneurs, and I encourage them to tap into the SBA's resources for start-up and growth solutions."

Lender Match brings together entrepreneurs and SBA lenders to help increase access to capital. It is an upgrade from LINC in its function, design, and user experience, making it easier for entrepreneurs to use and connect with potential lenders.

The free online tool allows small business owners to fill out a quick online form, without registration, and then connects them with lenders within 48 hours. There are now fewer, more relevant questions, and lenders are able to better filter the referral they are sent – resulting in more viable matches. Lenders can now optimize their search criteria to identify specific types of borrower referrals for particular lines of business or specialized financing.

Lender Match is a much more user-friendly and intuitive platform for entrepreneurs, and it provides better guidance on how to be prepared for the loan application process. It has been streamlined from start to finish providing better access to on-screen information.



After lenders have reviewed the information submitted to them by entrepreneurs, those who express interest in the loan will respond within two days. In addition, borrowers will also receive counseling information and resources from the SBA within their local area.

Lender Match is available to all SBA 7(a) and 504 lenders nationwide, including nonprofit lenders that offer free financial advice and specialize in micro-lending, loans in SBA's Community Advantage program, and the SBA's CDC/504 loan program. It is important to note that you must be an approved SBA lender in good standing to receive borrower referrals.

Lender Match follows the SBA's new digital media design with its clean and modern look, refreshed for easy use. It also contains a checklist of items for borrowers before talking to lenders that includes a business plan, credit history, collateral, and financial projections that help to better understand the lending process. Prospective borrowers can go to www.sba.gov/lendermatch to get matched with any number of institutions and increase their access to capital.

There are currently more than 800 lenders in the SBA's lending programs that participate in Lender Match throughout all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Guam. To date, the online tool has made more than two million lender referrals, and lenders have followed up with more than 70,000 referrals, connecting potential small business borrowers to capital.

About the Organization: The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) was created in 1953 and since January 13, 2012 has served as a Cabinet-level agency of the federal government to aid, counsel, assist, and protect the interests of small business concerns, to preserve free competitive enterprise, and to maintain and strengthen the overall economy of our nation. The SBA helps Americans start, build, and grow businesses. Through an extensive network of field offices and partnerships with public and private organizations, the SBA delivers its services to people throughout the United States, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Guam. For more information, visit www.sba.gov.

National Retail Federation Forecasts Holiday Sales to Increase Between 3.6 and 4 Percent

The National Retail Federation announced that it expects holiday retail sales in November and December – excluding automobiles, gasoline, and restaurants – to increase between 3.6% and 4% for a total of \$678.75 billion to \$682 billion, up from \$655.8 billion last year.

“Our forecast reflects the very realistic steady momentum of the economy and overall strength of the industry,” NRF President and CEO Matthew Shay said. “Although this year hasn’t been perfect, especially with the recent devastating hurricanes, we believe that a longer shopping season and strong consumer confidence will deliver retailers a strong holiday season.”

Christmas falls 32 days after Thanksgiving this year, one day more than last year, and is on a Monday instead of Sunday, giving consumers an extra weekend day to complete their shopping.

This year’s forecast would meet or exceed last year’s growth of 3.6% and the five-year average of 3.5%. While recent hurricanes are not expected to have a significant long-term effect on the economy, NRF is issuing this year’s forecast as a range rather than the usual fixed percentage because the impact of the storms on economic indicators has made it difficult to make a more precise forecast.

“Consumers continue to do the heavy lifting in supporting our economy, and all the fundamentals are aligned for them to continue doing so during the holidays,” NRF Chief Economist Jack Kleinhenz said. “The combination of job creation, improved wages, tame inflation, and an increase in net worth all provide the capacity and the confidence to spend.”

NRF’s forecast is based on an economic model using several indicators including consumer credit, disposable personal income, and previous monthly retail sales. The overall number includes the non-store category (direct-to-consumer, kiosks, and online sales). For historic sales information, visit NRF’s Holiday Headquarters and the Retail Insight Center.



NRF Forecasts Seasonal Employment to Grow Between 500,000 and 550,000

The winter holidays are the busiest time of year for most retailers, with the industry traditionally hiring extra staff to meet the demand. As part of

its forecast, NRF expects retailers to hire between 500,000 and 550,000 temporary workers this holiday season, down from last year’s 575,000.

“Christmas falls 32 days after Thanksgiving this year, one day more than last year, and is on a Monday instead of Sunday, giving consumers an extra weekend day to complete their shopping.”

NRF to Modify Thanksgiving Weekend Reporting

To more accurately capture the entirety of spending on Thanksgiving weekend, NRF this year will release spending data on November 28, the day after Cyber Monday. Doing so will allow NRF to provide a more accurate picture of consumer activity over the entire weekend and incorporate Cyber Monday data into the results. As consumer behavior evolves, NRF will continue to focus its efforts on providing the most relevant, accurate, and insightful analysis of its impact on the retail industry.

About the Organization: NRF is the world’s largest retail trade association, representing discount and department stores, home goods and specialty stores, Main Street merchants, grocers, wholesalers, chain restaurants, and internet retailers from the United States and more than 45 countries. Retail is the nation’s largest private sector employer, supporting one in four U.S. jobs – 42 million working Americans. Contributing \$2.6 trillion to annual GDP, retail is a daily barometer for the nation’s economy.

One Bad Apple

We've all heard the saying "One bad apple spoils the bunch" as it applies to people... but where did the phrase come from? Does it actually happen to fruit?

"Yes. As they ripen, some fruits, like apples and pears, produce a gaseous hormone called ethylene, which is, among other things, a ripening agent. When you store fruits together, the ethylene each piece emits prods the others around it to ripen further, and vice versa.

The riper a piece of fruit is, the more ethylene it produces, and overripe fruit gives off even more ethylene, eventually leading to a concentration of the gas that's enough to overripen ALL the fruit. Given the right conditions and enough time, one apple can push all the fruit around it to ripen—and eventually rot.

Additionally, an apple that is infested with mold will contaminate other fruit it's stored with as the mold seeks additional food sources and spreads. In both cases, it actually does take just one single apple to start a domino chain that ruins the rest of the bunch."

As stated in the article by Matt Soniak of *MentalFloss*, one apple can spoil the whole bunch. It applies to apples, and it definitely applies to people also.

Over the years, I have had plenty of great fruit... and a few bad pieces. Looking for examples? How about the employee who told everyone she was quitting to go to a better job? Yes, she told everyone but her boss. She left the day I found out. Then there was the employee with a temper issue, and I came to see just how unpleasant that temper really was during a "discussion" about an employee complaint. He also left the same day. The list goes on...

More recently we had a department manager who was proficient at organization and office duties. The manager did a lot of things right but was not a people person, especially when it came to working with other staff. The staff working under this manager were concerned, but it took a while before they started complaining. Then we began hearing complaints from customers.

"Let the person in question know what the issue is, and if you don't see quick results – do what needs to be done. The longer the bad apple is part of your staff, the more damage they will do."



As it turns out, the department manager was complaining to customers about store staff, including Cindy and myself. After giving the manager two chances to change, on the 3rd occasion they decided to quit. A few days later, one of our best employees told us the department manager had said they were leaving in 3 months anyway. This employee had been afraid to say anything while the manager was still there; she had been too intimidated.

While good employees are hard to find, if you make a bad hire or have an employee who starts causing issues, even over a period of time, don't be afraid to cut ties. It might hurt for a while, but the damage they do to a business can last a long time. Like the apple in the drawer, that employee emits a noxious attitude. Other staff notice it and customers notice it too.

Most of us work very hard to earn new customers and retain our present customer base. Having employees, especially frontline staff, who are not happy is one of the quickest ways to burn a customer. While customers deserve and expect good service, they will understand if something goes wrong. It's all in how it's handled. If that frontline person has a smile and is eager to help, the customer will in most cases understand.

If the employee has a negative attitude, things can go south rather quickly.

Customers walking into our store don't have to be there. They can purchase many of the products we sell or similar at a Big Box store or online. Customers come to us because we are the vacuum and sewing experts. They are looking for answers to their questions, recommendations for their needs, and in many cases the "people" interaction.

Rotten attitudes have a stench all their own. If a customer walks into a store where there is dissension or bickering among staff, they will smell it, even if you try to cover it up. The best way to eliminate the stench of bad attitude and make sure it's gone is to get rid of that bad apple. If you don't, the whole drawer will eventually spoil. Don't procrastinate for another month. Let the person in question know what the issue is, giving them a chance to explain, and if you don't see quick results – do what needs to be done. TODAY! The longer the bad apple is part of your staff, the more damage they will do.

Non-disclosure agreement: Over the years we have hired many people. In the vast majority of cases we were sad the day the staff relationship ended. But, in a few cases we were relieved to see certain people go. For years we've had staff sign nondisclosure agreements when they come to work at the store. In many cases, staff have access to information such as sales numbers, customer names, product costs, etc., and the last thing we want is for an employee to move on feeling free to quote numbers or names to people outside the store. While not being bulletproof, a nondisclosure agreement signed at the start of employment and a copy given to a disgruntled employee at resignation or termination is a deterrent to having store information being passed around or used at their next job.

GO FISH! We recently started a new staff contest that our people are having fun with. It's called "Go Fish." How it works is we have each machine sale count for points. A lower priced sale is a "small fry" and weighs 2 lbs. Mid-priced sales qualify as a "nice catch" and weigh 5 lbs. An upper level "whopper" sale counts as 10 lbs. We have a weigh-in at the end of each week with the winner getting a \$25 gift card. Since we sell both sewing machines and vacuum cleaners, we have a higher dollar amount for sewing machine sales but every machine sale, vacuum or sewing, at least counts as a "small fry." It seems to be working well to create a little "friendly" competition between sales staff. The \$25 weekly prize is very inexpensive if it creates a desire to be proactive on the sales floor.

Community Meal Project: Recently I received e-mails asking how our Community Meal Project is going. While we are not yet serving 7 days a week, I am pleased to say we have partnered up with another group who was already serving free meals in the community and have expanded their meal program to 3 days a week. We are projecting over 25,000 free meals will be served in 2017. Once we are serving 7 days a week, we are estimating 75,000 free meals will be served. There are several of us working together to make the free meal program expansion a reality. To go along with that, we are very shortly going to be starting a program to connect those in need with available resources and services that can help provide morale support and assistance.



E-mail your comments, ideas and suggestions to jimbarnhardt@msn.com

**Jim Barnhardt,
J & R Vacuum and Sewing
VDTA • SDTA Board Member**

Magnificent View in Niagara Falls and Overwhelming Hospitality from Canadian Dealers

Don't worry, this is not a *TripAdvisor* review of a tourist attraction, although the splendid landscape from Niagara Falls did leave those attending the VDTA Summer Trade Show with unforgettable memories.

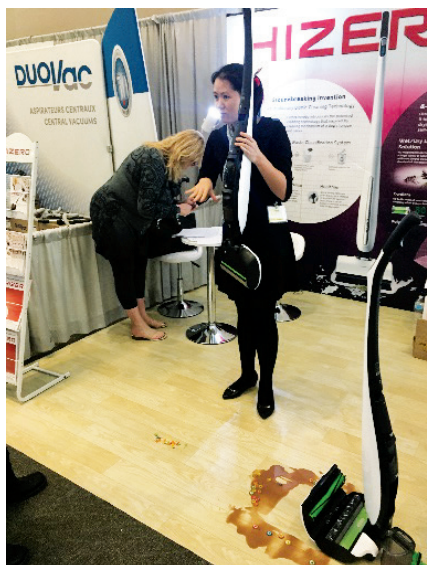
HIZERO once again brought cutting-edge bionic technology and the most innovative hard floor cleaning machine to dealers in North America. After half a year of expending distribution networks in the United States, the outcome is fruitful and HIZERO has received many inquiries and cooperation intentions from Canadian dealers.



Despite the assumption of unpopular hard flooring in Canada due to the climate, the extensive market coverage of wooden floor and bigger per capita living space demonstrated that HIZERO has huge business potential in Canada! Sample machines for display use were all sold out on site. Almost every dealer who watched the demo signed up for HIZERO's dealer cooperation program, and some registered dealers even brought their friends to HIZERO's booth at the Trade Show to witness the magic.

To those who are not familiar with HIZERO's product, HIZERO is the brand name of the World's First Bionic 4-in-1 Mop that can handle wet and dry substances at the same time. With the unique waste classification system which separates wet and dry garbage, and even hair and pet fur, into 3 different containers, the HIZERO Bionic 4-in-1 is the most family-friendly interior cleaning tool with easy maintenance. The self-cleaning function upgrades the industrial standard that others try to follow.

HIZERO™



To those who already joined the HIZERO family, HIZERO would like to present you the biggest marketing support ever in history as a thank you for your hard work in promoting the product. Place your order through Steel City and claim your marketing materials such as a hanging banner, poster, display cube, and LOGO custom designed and produced by HIZERO. Or you may also contact HIZERO at dealer@hizero.com if you are seeking an opportunity for win-win cooperation.

"VDTA is undoubtedly the perfect platform for us to get branding exposure and socialize with decision makers in the cleaning industry," say HIZERO staff members. "We will continue participating in VDTA exhibitions as a loyal exhibitor. See you in 2018 in Charlotte at VDTA's International Trade Show and Convention, March 24-26."



"Remember:
No matter
how good your
feedback is, you
always start over
with the next
customer"

~ Shep Hyken

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Don't Listen So You Can Talk, Listen So You Can Learn

Customer Service is *ALL* about listening. According to Bernard Ferrari, author of *Power Listening: Mastering the Most Critical Business Skill of All*, good listening is the key to developing fresh insights and ideas that fuel success.

Organizations choose front-line employees for their social poise, their outgoing personalities, and their ability to communicate well... meaning their ability to talk. And they train them in what they can and cannot say and what to do to help the customer. Their performance is evaluated by how proactively they manage and resolve problems or calls.

It isn't hard to understand that organizations are also missing an opportunity for customer relationship building if they fail to choose customer service employees for their ability to **listen** and **empathize**. An opportunity is also missed if training doesn't include an explanation of why listening is important, and what can be done to become a better listener.

"You learn when you listen. You earn when you listen—not just money, but respect."

~Harvey Mackay

In my book, *Feelings*, I asked the question, "Do you listen to your customers, and honestly try to help them?" For example, when I go into a crowded restaurant and give my name to the host/hostess at the head of a long line, I don't want them to simply take down my name. I want to know a realistic estimate of how long it will be before I'm seated. If I get a casual reply of, "It won't be too long," I know my request has not been heard. On the other hand, if I am told a realistic time frame for my wait, I can choose to leave or to occupy my time doing other things.



Good listeners...

- Are genuinely curious about what's going on for you.
- Are patient and don't interrupt in the middle of your pauses
- Give their full attention
- Let you know they follow what you are saying by nodding in agreement
- Don't judge or criticize
- Don't relate everything you say to their own personal experience

Empathy and active listening are the golden rules of customer service. In order to truly connect to your customer and give them a reason to come back, let them know you've heard and understood.

Nowhere else is the art of listening more evident than at the Mayo Clinic. There, listening is a religion and you can tell the minute you walk in for your appointment. Everyone from the janitor on up is educated in looking for opportunities and chances to make your visit/appointment a good experience. For example,

- Everyone in this very large facility will help you with directions
- Everyone is super nice.
- You see large directional signs.
- Staff use flexibility in scheduling and testing
- Staff give you their full attention
- Staff treat each patient as special with special needs
- Contact with everyone on your team of experts

Mayo Clinic has once again been crowned the Best Hospital in the nation, according to *U.S. News and World Report*. Doctors, nurses, technicians, pharmacists, and other employees all are part of the communication process. They listen the minute you walk in the door. They are the “experts” at the art of listening, and you are embraced by a team that truly cares about you.

Things are good at Apple too: If you walk into an Apple store, you will be greeted by a sales staff member and you are NOT asked, “How can I help you?” Instead they ask, “What would you like to do today?” They go right to the heart of any technology user’s question, a question that’s always related to what the users want to do with the tech they’re interested in.

Once you explain your needs, they take care of it... on the spot in most cases. If you need more hand holding, they turn you over to the *Apple Geniuses*. By adhering to their basic principles of constantly offering great customer service and in-store experiences, Apple reported \$8.78 billion profit on \$45.4 billion revenue for 3Q 2017.

About the Author: John Tschohl is a professional speaker, trainer, and consultant. He is the President and founder of Service Quality Institute (the global leader in customer service) with operations in over 40 countries. John is a self-made millionaire traveling and speaking more than 50 times each year. He is considered to be one of the foremost authorities on service strategy, success, empowerment and customer service in the world. John’s monthly strategic newsletter is available online at no charge. He can also be reached on Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter.



“The best way to understand people is to listen to them. How would you rate your listening skills?”

~John Tschohl



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DVC Is Back At Essco!

Essco is proud to announce that we have renewed our partnership with DVC by Homecare, becoming their exclusive Master distributor supporting all channels of distribution in the United States. Rob Glockner, President and CEO of Essco, commented, "Renewing our partnership with a quality organization like DVC aligns with our overarching goal of continually enhancing the value we deliver to our dealers."

Known for high-quality and value, DVC bags and filters are made to fit nearly every brand of vacuum cleaner sold. DVC manufactures all replacement vacuum bags and filters to strict OEM standards, and is the only American-owned vacuum bag and filter manufacturer with manufacturing facilities right here in the United States, bringing back the pride with "Made in the USA."

DVC paper bags are available in standard filtration, micro-lined micron filtration, and Hepa-type allergen filtration. The attractive color-coded paper bag and filter packaging allows dealers to organize their paper bag and filter wall simply by matching like colors. Retail consumers appreciate the simplicity of being directed to look for a particular color to choose their specific

brand and style of paper bag or filter. Dealers have also found the color coding system useful for add-on sales. Dealers can show customers the filter that goes along with the paper bags for a customer's vacuum and suggest the customer should change the filter as well.

Essco and DVC have dedicated their efforts over the years to supporting the independent dealer channel. This collaboration will bring together the strengths of each company, providing quality products and exceptional customer service, elevating the dealer experience. Renee Hunt, Director of DVC, expounded, "Our ultimate goal is to fulfill our customers' needs and exceed their product, service, and delivery expectations. Therefore we have joined hands with Essco who provides the highest level of service through their expansive distribution network and experienced sales staff."

We recognize when it comes to selecting a brand of aftermarket bags and filters, dealers are looking for confidence in a brand that provides a wide selection of the most popular bags and filters, delivering the highest quality and best value. We are confident that you will find everything you need and more in the DVC brand of products. Rob Glockner concluded, "This will be a great opportunity for our dealer base to provide a comprehensive, high quality product assortment to their customers."

Now Exclusively At Essco!



DVC is the oldest manufacturer of aftermarket vacuum bags and filters in the United States, manufactured to strict OEM standards. With manufacturing facilities right here in the United States, DVC is bringing back the pride with "Made in the USA" on select products.



essco

***If you would like access to the DVC brand, contact your
Essco sales representative, or give us a call at
1-800-321-2664, Monday - Friday 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM EST.
Or contact us at www.essco.net.***

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Remove the Obstructions

By: Billy Stoll Jr.

If you are familiar with the vacuum industry, you know that small objects are sometimes very capable of starting a problem – a problem that if left unchecked, can and usually will turn into a major issue. It's often started by simple little things like hair pins, paper clips, sucker sticks, and sometimes even a stiff piece of plastic wrapper getting stuck in the vacuum.

The loss of suction is usually not noticed right away, but with time it is. The more you use the machine, the more lint, fuzz, and trash gets hung up on the blockage. This continues to build up until eventually there is no suction at all. What is the remedy? Simple. Remove the obstruction and... "Ta-Da," you've got suction again. After the clog has been removed, everything functions properly and the vacuum does what it was intended to do.

We can learn a lesson from this. Business life, personal life, we can apply this to either one. Business to business or just a friend to a friend, here is a reminder: remove the obstruction! Many things happen in life and sometimes they may seem small and unimportant, but they matter. They matter a lot because they have the potential of clogging the system to the point of "shut down."



Sometimes we are tempted to think they don't matter, that they are irrelevant. At times we may even recognize the issue it really is but then convince ourselves that ignoring the problem will make it go away. Out of sight, out of mind? Not likely. Life is much the same as an obstructed vacuum hose; rather than going away on its own, it will only get worse.

What are these "things" or obstructions to which I'm referring? I put together a short list to get us started, but remember it's not all inclusive and it won't apply to everyone. Neither is there a "one size fits all" solution because every situation different.

These obstructions usually involve people, and that is the very thing that makes it so difficult: every person is unique.

Bad Attitudes.

Employer or employee, it doesn't matter. Grumpy. Upset. Ungrateful. Flying off the handle. Thinking "I'm never wrong." Bad attitudes are all of these things. They get you nowhere and are hard on your business. Remove this obstruction.

Unsatisfied Customers.

True, you may not always be aware of an unsatisfied customer, but those cases that you do know of, deal with. An unsatisfied customer can be the ruination of your business. Especially with all the social media available at everyone's fingertips. Remove this obstruction.

*"Business life, personal life,
we can apply this to either one:
Remove the obstruction!"*

Not Being Able to Listen.

Being a good listener is imperative to your business. Don't run over your customers. Listen. They came to you seeking help or advice. How can you help them without knowing their needs? How can you advise without knowing the situation? Remove this obstruction and listen.

Gossiping.

Gossip is awful. It doesn't matter if it's to a customer about another customer or to a coworker about another coworker. It will clog the system. Not to mention, it's not nice. Remove the obstruction.

I'm sure there are many others we could have discussed, but you know your situation better than I do. Hopefully these few thoughts can be of help to get you started thinking and recognize what may be blocking your success or keeping you from your goals. Find the blockages in your life, remove them, and you will then realize your full potential.

We are all unique, but we all have a few things in common too. We like to be treated honestly, fairly, and with respect. To sum it up, my advice would be: always be observant. Keep your eyes and ears open. At the first sign of blockage, remove the obstruction before it causes damage that can't be repaired.

Collecting Dust

The 1957 Lewyt Model 107: The World's FIRST Canister with a Power Nozzle

The year was 1957, the Lewyt Corporation of New York launched the world's first Canister Vacuum Cleaner with an electric power nozzle. The model 107 "Big Wheel" came with a brand new attachment – never before seen: the automatic Motorized Beater Sweeper. Today, we call it a Power Nozzle.

As the first of its kind, the whole thing was very unrefined. The cord from the power nozzle motor ran all the way to the vacuum and used a standard plug. There was no mounting on the wand or hose to hold the cord – it was just "in the way" as you cleaned.

The brush roller bristles were soft, and the very narrow opening made for good cleaning only on wool area rugs. It certainly would have had a hard time with the "new" wall-to-wall rugs that were becoming so popular. The reason for the nozzle was to assist the removal of lint and threads that straight suction rug tools just couldn't easily get.

Interestingly, the machine also came with a straight suction rug tool. Together with Lewyt's famous "Power Dial" (which allowed the user to dial the suction level) and the large Lewyt Speed-Sak disposable bag, the Lewyt was an awesome suction-only canister as well. Rolling easily from room to room on Big Wheels, the Lewyt was very modern in shape and the new Hammertone Blue color was extremely popular.

It would be two years before Lewyt developed the electric hose with internal wiring for the power nozzle. However, this example is an extremely rare machine. One reason is the use of gears to get the power from the motor to the brush roll – not belts – which meant a caught throw rug would destroy the transmitting gear and a repair shop would have been needed. They didn't survive long in real-world use.

This machine came to the Vacuum Cleaner Museum through a friend in North Carolina. It was a 14 hour trip (each way), but I gladly made the drive so the Museum could have this 'one of a kind' example of very primitive yet exciting Canister Vacuum Cleaner technology. Everything has to start somewhere...



TOM GASKO
Tacony Vacuum Museum Curator



What is the Key that Unlocks the Sale?

Is there a one word answer to making more sales happen? YES!

Probing? Listening? Presenting? Talking?
Assessing? Objections? Closing? Manipulating?

The key to selling is not probing, listening, presenting, talking, assessing, objecting, and especially not manipulating. The key that unlocks sales is *harmonizing*. But you'd never know that from most salespeople's actions.

RULE OF SALES: No two sales are alike. They must be adapted to uncover the motives and objectives; understand the opportunities and barriers; meet the needs and desires; harmonize with the person and their personality; and satisfy or fit within the financial parameters of the buyer.

All my sales life I've been exposed to "systems of selling." And all my sales life I've fought them as being hokey, outdated, bogus, non-realistic, manipulative processes that salespeople learn but never really feel comfortable using.

Not that systems are "totally wrong" - more that they don't always "fit" the situation. And with systems, the salesperson focuses on the execution of the system to make the sale, rather than focusing on and harmonizing with the prospect to make the sale. No one system will work all the time - BUT

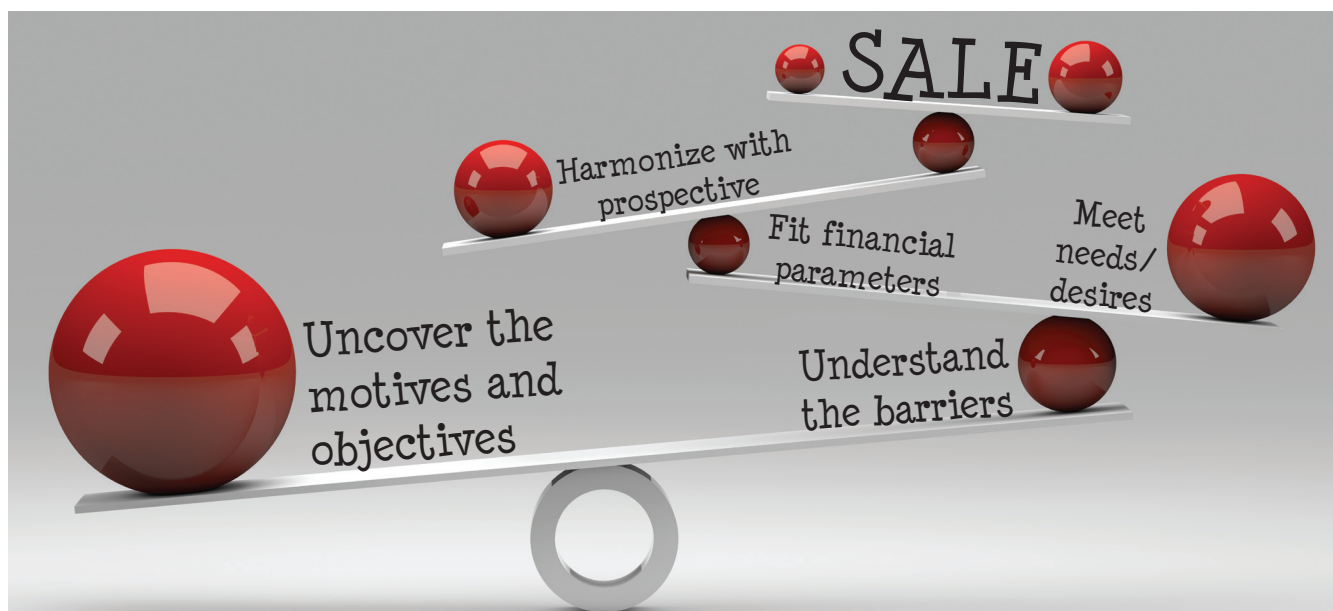
specific elements of any system may be applicable. I am saying ***be yourself in the sale, not the system.***

RULE OF SALES: Prospects don't always want to buy the way you have been taught to sell.

RULES OF "THE MORE THE MORE":

- The more you believe in your company, your product, and yourself, the more you will sell.
- The more value you provide to others, the more people will come to know you, respect you, and buy from you.
- The more you follow up and follow through, the more sales you will make.
- The more you study sales, the more you will know how to react to any sales situation.
- The more you harmonize with the customer's situation and offer answers or solutions they can apply, answers they perceive as valuable, the **MORE SALES** you will make.

You are a SALESperson, and the prospect or customer is expecting you to ask for the sale. Don't disappoint them. But don't fail to win the sale by earning it.



As a sales master, your job is to take the characteristics and needs of the prospect and blend them with your skills and understanding to determine the reasons the prospect is buying. Their motive. This will motivate and inspire the prospect to act. Note that the root word of motivate is "motive."

Harmony is understanding, not manipulating. It's sensing the tone of the situation and comfort level of the prospect. Harmony gives the prospect enough confidence to buy.

Even though I don't believe in or subscribe to a "system of selling," I am still searching for "the best way" to make the sale. What I have discovered along the way are *elements*, mostly personal (non-manipulative), that when mastered will create an atmosphere where people (your customers and prospects) will be compelled to buy.

About the Author: Jeffrey Gitomer is the author of twelve best-selling books including *The Sales Bible*, *The Little Red Book of Selling*, and *The Little Gold Book of Yes! Attitude*. His real-world ideas and content are available as online courses at www.GitomerLearningAcademy.com. For info about training & seminars visit www.Gitomer.com or www.GitomerCertifiedAdvisors.com, or email Jeffrey at salesman@gitomer.com.



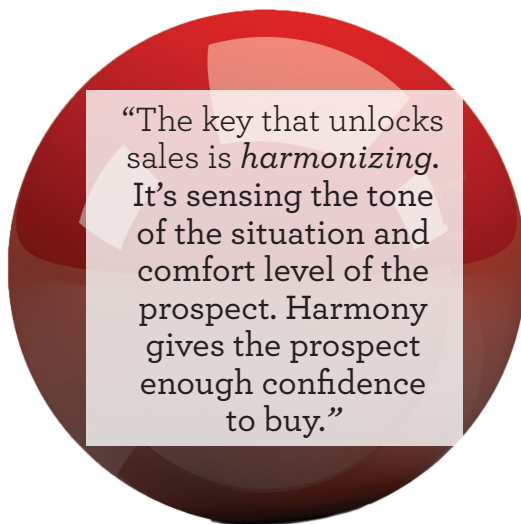
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Here are three of them in an acronym – AHA! The three elements to master are *Attitude, Humor, and Action*. These elements, when mastered, are the surest (and shortest) sales formula to long-term success. They have nothing to do with systems, manipulation, or sales pressure. These words, elements, and characteristics create *harmony*.

Every salesperson I have ever come in contact with wants to build better customer relationships, and the best way to do that is never manipulate them. Manipulation makes people defensive, reluctant, and distrustful. Harmonize baby.

Mastering these elements will make prospects attracted to you, like you, trust you, believe you, have confidence in you – and then – buy from you.

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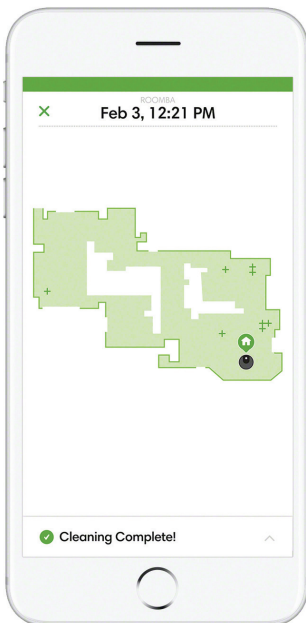
Robotic Vacuums to Play Central Role in the Future Smart Home

By Dr. Chris Jones, VP of Technology, iRobot

In the near future, homes will contain hundreds of connected devices – from lights and doorbells to thermostats and appliances. IHS Markit research found that 80M smart home devices were delivered globally in 2016, with projections even higher for 2017. And Gartner predicts that by 2022, the typical family home will contain more than 500 smart devices.

These staggering numbers demonstrate that the connected home is not a fad or a lifestyle sought only by technophiles; it's a desired way of living that hundreds of thousands of consumers are seeking out.

The smart home that most consumers envision is one that orchestrates a seamless experience, from opening the curtains and turning on the news in the morning, to dynamically adjusting the lighting in a home as an occupant moves from room to room. However, with so many devices, sensors and systems acting independently, consumers are bound to encounter usability challenges that make it impossible to enjoy a truly integrated smart home.



The looming usability challenges boil down to the fact that consumers do not want to individually manage a large number of connected devices. Most consumers are not computer programmers and are not early adopters. They want their devices to be simple to use and easy to configure.





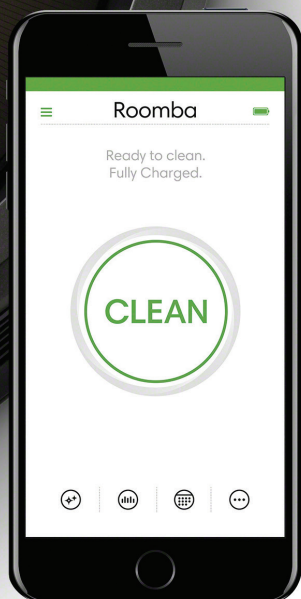
“Free roaming home robots (like the Roomba) uniquely provide a physical presence and spatial understanding of the home that, until now, has been a critical and missing piece of information to deal with smart home usability concerns.”

In order to achieve a seamless smart home experience in which the home – and smart devices within it – seamlessly and autonomously responds to our daily needs, two things need to happen. First, the burden of programming devices needs to be removed from the consumer. And second, the home needs to understand itself – i.e. what is the layout of the home, where is each room, where are the various smart devices located within the home.

Home robots, like the Roomba vacuum cleaner, are ideally suited for this technology challenge. iRobot's Roomba 900 Series vacuums, for example, use Visual Simultaneous Localization and Mapping (vSLAM) technology to navigate an entire level of a home. As the Roomba goes about vacuuming the home, it builds a map of its environment as it cleans.

The map's importance is significant, as it provides the foundational information to enable home automation. While today's Roomba is creating maps to more effectively clean a home, future generations of Roomba vacuums could combine these maps with additional sensors and supportive cloud services to manage the myriad smart devices within a home.

Free roaming home robots uniquely provide a physical presence and spatial understanding of the home that, until now, has been a critical and missing piece of information to deal with smart home usability concerns. Today, these robots help with chores to maintain a home both inside and out. In the near future, home robots, like the Roomba, will help deliver true smart home automation.



Insight from the Work Bench



NORM HIMEBAUGH

Himebaugh's Vacuum & Sewing Center

The following is a story of one of my earliest sales experiences that I wrote for my book. A few more stories and pictures and it will finally be done. I hope this story reminds you of your forgotten customer experiences!

It was 1978, and I had a whole year of learning under my belt. I consider myself somewhat of a fast learner (or at least I was when I was younger!) but with only a year of experience at any business, you really only know the basics. I still recall the new feeling of excitement combined with fear when someone would walk into the store and I got to wait on them. Remember the butterflies?

So I am at the workbench or putting away stock and the door chime alerts me to a new customer. I eagerly rush out to the front of the store and find an older woman gazing at the new vacuum cleaners. My excitement grows. I introduce myself and ask if I can be of assistance, and when she tells me that she wants to purchase a new canister, I'm elated!

All the hard work is done! I start feeling at ease, so I ask about her flooring and what type of cleaning she was going to be doing with the new canister. She then tells me that just about her whole house is carpeted. Now I'm really happy because I get to share with her my newfound knowledge, that she needs a canister with a motorized head or an upright to do a better cleaning job than just a straight suction canister.

She turns to me with a stern look, the kind a grandmother gives her grandchild, and says, "I want a canister," pointing her finger at one of our canister vacuums... without a power nozzle.

I learned rule #1 of sales from my early training which says, If someone says 'I want that,' you sell them that! Of course you try to educate them, but if they insist and they have money, you sell them what they want. Isn't time a great teacher? Almost 40 years later now, I know all the caveats of that rule. So with a few more questions of her desires, we settle on a new canister to grace her home. She pays for it and I carry it to her car with total satisfaction.

The next day, in she walks with her new canister in its box, flaps open, and my mother and I happen to be behind the pay counter. I make eye contact with my customer, concern on my face, and simply ask, "Was there something wrong with your new vacuum?"

She replies, "Son, my house is mostly carpeted and you sold me a canister, I should have an upright, not a canister."

Not believing what I'm hearing, I reply, "Mam, we covered those very topics yesterday, I told you about the differences, remember?" (I'm shortening my real response for page space concerns!) She reaches across the counter, pats me on the shoulder and says, "Don't worry, you're young, you'll learn."

Being almost 17 years old and not very well tempered, my reaction was brewing, but before it bubbled over, my mother grabbed me by the shoulders and spun me around - thank goodness. She looked at me and as she was pushing me towards the back room, said, "Don't worry Norm, I'll take care of this." No one knows you as well as your mom! There is no telling what she saved that woman from.

For years that saying defined our store and customer service. There actually came a time that we could (I could) laugh at it. Anytime something happened beyond our control and was even too hard to believe, whoever it was happening to would simply look at everyone near and say, "I'm young, I'll learn!"

Since we all knew the story and how it related to the customer and the situation, it immediately caused a break in tension and relieved the pressure for the person involved. We would then all laugh and move on to the next encounter!



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Best Business Practices:

Business Tune-Up: Merchandising 101

By Dave Schenk
H-P Products Inc.

Flashback Feature November 2012

In the retail industry, there are many competitors trying to sell to your target customers. Many stores sell the exact same or similar products and differentiating yourself can become a challenge. How you present your business can be the one factor that sets you apart from the others. Putting in the extra effort with your displays and merchandising can not only increase sales, but can also help you create an identity for your store.

John from Pennsylvania has owned his business for a few years. Displays and merchandising have never really been a top priority at his store. He writes, "My main focus has always been sales and customer service. Merchandising was always thought of as an unneeded expense. Now I'm realizing it could actually work together with sales and should have been part of my business plan from day one. What are some best practices for displays and merchandising?"

The ultimate goal of merchandising is to increase sales. Think of your showroom as well-trained salespeople. They should be attractive, clean, up-to-date and well-spoken. Your store should carry these same traits. It should be inviting, well-kept, have new products, and contain easy-to-understand signage.

"Think of your showroom as well-trained salespeople. Your store should carry these same traits."

It should NOT have light bulbs out, vacuum hoses cluttered around on the floor, products no one uses anymore, and signage that catches no one's attention – or even worse, uses loud, obnoxious graphics.

A merchandising plan can help you create an ideal showroom, but there are a few things you need to consider before you begin. The basics include: the customer, visual balance, lighting, and use of space.

The Customer

A clean store with organized product groupings not only attracts customers but it also encourages them to return. On the other hand, a cluttered store can come off as a "bargain" store and therefore, customers will expect bargain prices. Your store should be designed around

who you want your target customer to be. What is their age? How much money are they willing to spend? What's their style? What interests them? Customers are much more attracted to products they can picture using in their everyday life. Show the product in use or in a way that relates to the customer.

Visual Balance

Once you've figured out who your customers are, you need to think about the visual aspect of your displays. A loud and obnoxious display is just as bad as a boring and dreary display.

You should be somewhere in the middle with the focal point at eye level. Make sure your visuals attract, rather than repel, customers.

“Putting in the extra effort with your displays and merchandising can not only increase sales, but can also help you create an identity for your store.”

Displays should have visual balance. Larger, darker items should be placed near the bottom of the display and lighter items should be at the top. Too many products in one area can make your display look unbalanced.

Lighting

Lighting helps lead customers into a store, makes products look more appealing, and encourages customers to stop and look. It is among the keys to a store's image and can affect sales. Here are a few options to consider:

General Lighting – This kind of lighting is often used in mass merchandising or discount type stores, think Target or Lowe's. If you have a larger store general lighting may be used but it wouldn't make sense in a small shop.

Accent Lighting – If you want to add depth and create a focal point for merchandise, accent lighting is a good option. It establishes the importance of certain objects through the use of contrast and should be used in high traffic areas of the store.

Ambient Lighting – You can use ambient lighting as overhead lighting. It lights the entire store, so it should be bright enough for customers to see what they're looking at, but not so bright that they have to squint.

Use of Space

Product and display positioning are important factors when it comes to using space. An effective floor plan encourages customers to shop the whole store. The easiest way to get customers through the entire showroom is by putting clearance and sale items in the back. This makes customers look, or at least pass, new merchandise along the way.

Putting the most popular items toward the back of your showroom is another effective way to get customers to shop the store. You may notice grocery stores do this by putting eggs and milk far away from the entrance. If customers really want something, they'll hunt for it.

The front of the store should be reserved for brand new merchandise. Placing it here will give it the best chance possible to succeed.

If you think of your store as the ideal salesperson, you'll automatically improve the look and feel of your store. Thanks for your question, John, and good luck with your merchandising initiatives.

Ask Dave was a popular monthly column authored by Dave Schenk, OEM Products Manager for H-P Products and a 35+ year veteran of the vacuum industry.



Dave Schenk

What's Your Emergency Plan?

Having an emergency business plan will save you time and money. It's preparation for unexpected things that could freeze your operations.

While most agree that having an emergency plan is a good thing, creating or updating one often gets postponed due to busy days. This leaves your productivity very vulnerable, which could dramatically hurt your business.

Consider these issues and decide whether your business is really prepared for an emergency:

Find a Temporary Office

Sometimes an emergency is something big like a natural disaster, a fire, or a health and safety issue like widespread mold contamination. It makes you unable to get into your office.

Is there a place where you could set up temporary offices? Whether it's a rental situation or free space from another business, do you know where you'd go? You should consider setting up reciprocal arrangements with other businesses before a crisis. Having a "rough idea" of what you'd do is not a plan.

Equipment Needs

Can your phones be easily transferred to other numbers? Do one or more people know how to do this process or is it something that has never been attempted? In a crisis, you want people who know what to do. Learning how to do something in a crisis rarely results in a smooth outcome.

If you have backup equipment that's portable like laptops and cell phones, how quickly can those items be ready to use? Will they need to be charged? If you haven't used electronic items for a long time, they may need software updates, which can delay availability.

In today's online world, it may be best to have employees work from home during your emergency. You may need to have them interact through conference calls. Do you have a provider for this service and do multiple people know how to use the system? Also, you may need to expand your current plan to support more users.

"Learning how to do something in a crisis rarely results in a smooth outcome."

People Power

Sometimes an emergency takes a valuable employee off the job for an extended period of time. Smart organizations believe in cross training employees, so work is completed during the absence and not piling up on a desk.

This kind of training is like an insurance policy. You may never need it, but it protects you from a massive loss of productivity.

People Hate Uncertainty

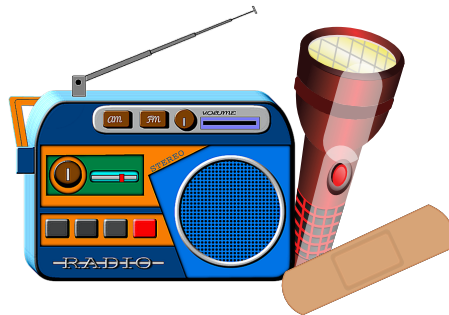
An emergency plan provides a level of confidence and security for your team. They won't panic when the unexpected arrives.

A big part of this process is making sure people understand the plan or at least know that one exists. Your emergency plan can't be a dusty document that's never discussed.

Behind the Scenes

I wrote this article shortly after Hurricane Harvey, not knowing I'd need the advice after Hurricane Irma. I never thought I'd need to spend three nights in a hurricane shelter, but I knew I had prepared my business for the unexpected.

About the Author: Ken Okel speaks to smart leaders and associations who want to unleash employee production, performance, and profitability. He introduces them to lessons learned from his time in TV News, Disaster Relief, and running a Professional Ballet Company. He wrote the book, *Stuck on Yellow* and is the host of the 2 Minute Takeaway Podcast. Ken's weekly productivity tips can be found at: www.KenOkel.com.



BROCHURES



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Qty.

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Shipping: \$ _____

Total: \$ _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____

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☐ MasterCard☐ VISA☐ New Member - 250 Free

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Credit Card Billing Address:

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POSTCARDS

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MACHINE LABELS

500 @ \$80
1000 @ \$95

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1000 @ \$20
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REPAIR TAGS

500 @ \$75

SHIPPING COSTS

POSTCARDS

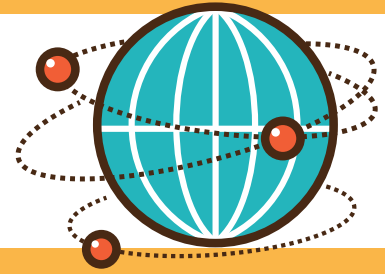
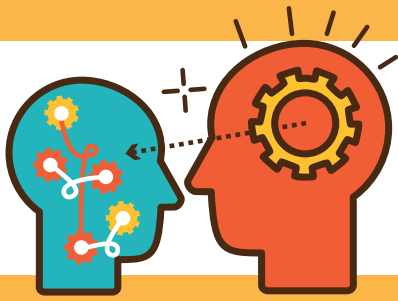
Up to 300 @ \$9
400-1000 @ \$11

BROCHURES

1000 @ \$11
2000 @ \$14

REPAIR TAGS

1000 @ \$10



What would YOU like to LEARN?

**VDTA • SDTA is planning the education for the
2018 Trade Show & Convention in Charlotte, NC.**

What topics are most relevant?

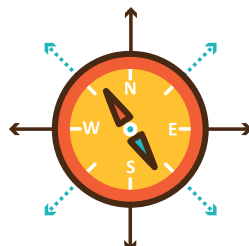
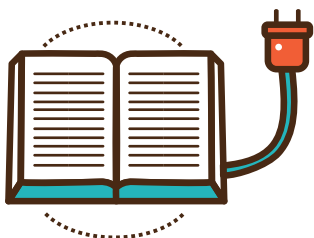
What format – panel, seminar, etc – is most effective?

What types of technologies are best used?

Who do you recommend as an instructor?

WITH YOUR INPUT, WE CAN PLAN AN EXCEPTIONALLY-
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2724 2nd Ave.; Des Moines, IA 50313**



Use This Move to Fuel Greater Resilience

By Michael J. Russ

How many times have you wished you could be more resilient when faced with adverse events? Are you the type of person who harbors residual negative feelings and emotions well after such events have passed?

Your time, energy, health, emotional capital, and day-to-day successes are highly impacted by your capacity to let go of adversity. In fact, if you do not let go, the residual emotional toxicity will contaminate everything around you. The good news is: letting go is something you control.

Resilience is the capacity to recover quickly from difficulties; toughness.

In my books and training, I outline nine different moves you can apply to help you quickly let go of unfortunate, misfortunate, and challenging events and circumstances. As a 33-year sales professional, here is the first move I make when encountering a crisis or challenge.

Focus on what you can control

When faced with a challenge or crisis, the natural tendency is to invest time, energy, and emotional capital into aspects of the event which are beyond your control – other people's thoughts, words, and actions; how and why things happened; etc. Unfortunately, this path is an unfulfilling dead end. You know you are on this path when you experience negative feelings and emotions, such as frustration, anger, and hopelessness.

Your path to greater resilience lies in your ability to assess what you cannot control as soon as possible, and then shift focus and resources towards what you CAN control – your thoughts, words, and actions. A move you can sharpen with practice.

Remember this quote when you think about resilience: **It's not what happens, but how you respond to what happens that determines the degree of your resilience.** This statement takes on its greatest meaning when what's happening is happening directly to you.

As we were remodeling the house from top to bottom and adding a few hundred square feet, I anticipated things would not always go as planned. Each time there was an issue (and there were many), instead of responding with an emotional outburst and placing blame, I boosted my resilience by asking one simple question: **What must happen to solve this issue and move forward?**

Whatever was required to expedite the solution – going to the hardware store or paint retailer, making a call, ordering a part, or getting the contractor to address the problem – I handled the issue, let it go, and moved on without residual emotional baggage.

Regardless of the event, immediately shifting your attention towards what you can control puts you on the fast track to recovery.

About the Author:

Michael J. Russ is the international bestselling author of *Zero Adversity*, an inspiring keynote speaker & the founder Zero Adversity Training. He can be reached at mruss@michaeljruss.com.



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Company Information

Name: _____ Title: _____
Company Name: _____
Address: _____
City: _____ State/Province: _____ Zip/Postal Code: _____
Phone: _____ Fax: _____
E-mail: _____
Website: _____
Number of stores? _____ Years in business: _____ Submit Copies of Business and Tax Certificate

Membership Category

☐ **Independent dealer Initial enrollment: \$130.**

Identified as any dealer whose principal business is the sale of merchandise and services directly to the consumer (end user). Yearly renewal \$110.

☐ **Associate member: \$625 each year.**

Identified as a wholesale manufacturer/distributor/supplier. Businesses located in the U.S. or International.

☐ **International member: \$150 each year.**

Identified as a dealer not located in the U.S. or Canada.

☐ **Miscellaneous Membership: \$150 each year.**

Includes: Manufacturer representatives, independent consulting firms, and advertising agencies.

FLOOR CARE

- ☐ Hand/Stick Vacuums
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- ☐ Water-based Vacs
- ☐ Steam Cleaners
- ☐ Janitorial Products
- ☐ Stain Removers
- ☐ Vacuum Parts/Accessories
- ☐ Backpack Vacs
- ☐ Upright Vacuums
- ☐ Canister Vacuums
- ☐ Air Fresheners
- ☐ Air Purifiers
- ☐ Polishers & Buffers
- ☐ Other: _____

SEWING\QUILTING

- ☐ Sewing Machines
- ☐ Knitting Products
- ☐ Quilting Machines
- ☐ Longarm Machines
- ☐ Embroidery Machines
- ☐ Sewing Parts/Accessories
- ☐ Notions
- ☐ Fabrics-Fashion/Quilting
- ☐ Sergers
- ☐ Other: _____

Membership Dues:

Independent Dealer	\$130	1 store
Independent Dealer	\$150	Multiple stores
International Dealer Member	\$150	
Associate Member	\$625	
Miscellaneous Memberships	\$150	

- Do you attend VDTA•SDTA conventions? ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Do you have a repair department? ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Do you teach sewing or quilting lessons in your store? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Payment Information

All payments must be made in U.S. funds

☐ Check ☐ MasterCard ☐ Visa Amount: \$ _____

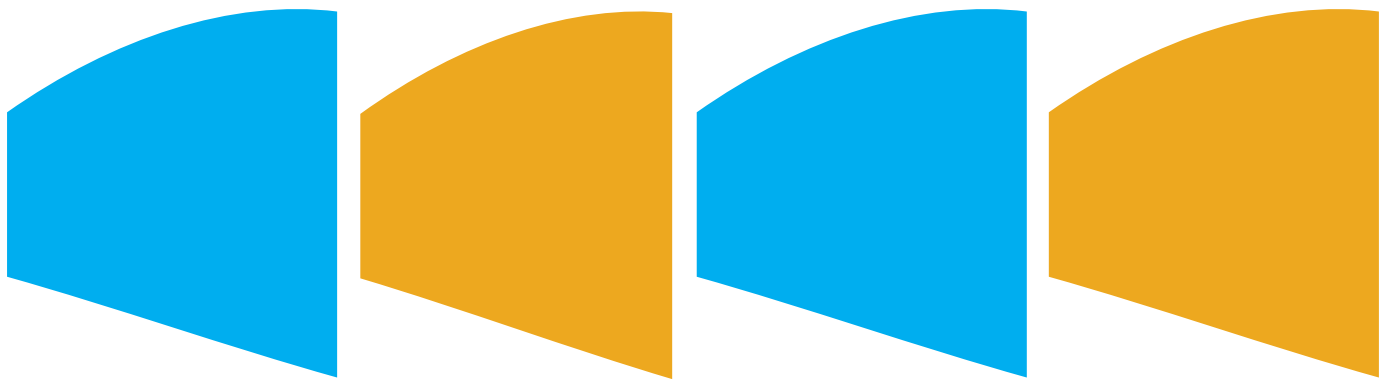
Cardholder Name (Print): _____

Card #: _____ (CCV# _____) Exp Date: _____

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Signature: _____

- Is this a one time membership payment? ☐ Autopay (next membership payment due in 12 months)
☐ This a one time payment, thank you.



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As a new member you'll receive:

- Monthly trade magazines with industry news, tips, and **new ideas**
SQE Professional™ and *Floorcare & Central Vac Professional™*
- **Reduced registration to the VDTA • SDTA International Trade Show**
- Promotional programs that bring customers through your doors
Sewing Month and *Spring Cleaning Month*
- Complimentary marketing postcards – 100 pieces of your choice
- VDTA/Bernie Epstein College Scholarship
Two annual recipients; up to \$10,000 each
- Opportunity to become *Dealer of the Year*
- Dealer locator on VDTA.com – make it easy for customers to find your store
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With your success comes our success!

Ideas for Small Business Saturday

By: Tonya Tienter

Three weeks and counting until it's your day to shine – and that day is Small Business Saturday.

Small Business Saturday (SBS) was launched in 2010 by American Express to promote independent, local retailers who offer unique products and superb customer service that can't be matched at Big Box or online. This year, Small Business Saturday is November 25 – one day after Black Friday and two days before Cyber Monday.

Smaller retailers may worry, being sandwiched between Big Box and the Internet on the busiest holiday shopping weekend of the year. Questions about *HOW* small biz can dissuade customers from buying that Friday door-buster and then forget about slashed prices and free shipping on Monday can haunt SBS marketing – but don't let anxieties dominate your approach.

Small Business Saturday has steadily gained popularity among consumers. In 2016, 112 million shoppers participated in Small Business Saturday, spending nearly \$15.4 billion nationwide. Referrals are strong as 81% of those who shopped SBS encouraged family and friends to do so as well.

To effectively prepare for Small Business Saturday, consider the following ideas:

Spiff up your website

Small Business Saturday aims, in large part, to bring shoppers into Brick-n-Mortar stores, and your website is vital in making that happen. According to *FiveStars*, 78% of consumers use the internet to do research specifically for holiday shopping, meaning they may “vet” your store before deciding to walk in. Add SBS promotions or sales to the homepage, and make sure that **your physical address is easily found on the homepage** as well.

FACTS



From: *Small Business Saturday Consumer Insights Survey, 2016.*
AmericanExpress.com.

Offer a special promotion

Speaking of promotions, decide what your unique, EASY TO IMPLEMENT and EASY TO DELIVER promotion will be. It may seem appealing to say: “Buy here on SBS and receive 10% off your next 10 purchases,” but logistically how are you going to keep track of that? Rather, you might offer: “An extra 10% off your purchase by signing up for our email list.” It’s easy to implement (put out a clipboard and pen) and easy to deliver (right at the register).

Double Down with an Event

Go beyond offering a promotion and give customers ANOTHER REASON to walk through your door. Book a local musician to play holiday music. Offer FREE hot chocolate and donuts between 11AM -1 PM. Host an ugly-sweater contest – with the winner getting a FREE product. As business guru Lisa Furgison says, “With a little planning, you can invite the community to an event, rather than a holiday sale.”

Team up with other small businesses

While this promotional point takes more time and effort than our other ideas, it has a bigger payout for the community as a whole. Talk to other small businesses on your street or in your area and collaborate on incentives you can offer TOGETHER!

FiveStars suggests creating a Shopping Map that highlights the local stores participating in SBS, along with the deals at each location; or a "Passport" in which customers who visit each participating business get a stamp or sticker, and those who visit a certain number get a reward.

Send a Save the Date

An invitation goes a long way in making customers feel valued. Gail Leino in "The Importance of Invitations" maintains:

"In today's casual, modern atmosphere, we often forget the importance of sending out formal invitations. Usually we prefer to save them for 'once in a lifetime' events such as a wedding or the birth of a child, but it's very practical to send out a formal [invite]."

Yes, it may be easier to make up a flyer and post it on the bulletin board...but this does not guarantee anyone will show up at your event and it does not guarantee that anyone you particularly care to know will show up.

*An invitation done properly shows up in the mailbox or occasionally the email of those persons you **want to have** at your [event]. The simple fact that you bothered to look up someone's address and pay the postage demonstrates that you really want these people to come... A personalized e-card invitation works just as well, plus it is cheaper."*

The VDTA has created a 4"x6" invitation you might send customers (via email or postal service), asking them to visit your store on Small Business Saturday. This is a members-only benefit, and if you'd like to receive the FREE digital file, please email tonya@vdta.com, subject line: SBS INVITE.

Re-train on Customer Service

Re-train your staff about customer service, as the holidays may present different service challenges than other peak times of the year. Rose Leadem of *Entrepreneur* reveals that, "According to a 2016 study, although people continue to shop online – nothing beats an in-store experience." She goes on to say that store owners should run through different scenarios encountered on a busy weekend of holiday shopping, giving their staff the necessary tools and words to be helpful problem solvers and salespeople.

Be Charitable

Charitable marketing looks like many things – from direct donations to a percentage of profit set aside and more.

Every Christmas as a child, my mom and I would pick out a toy for "Toys for Tots," an organization that collects holiday gifts for children less fortunate. I always looked forward to placing that gift under the mall's towering Giving Tree, seeing how much other people came together to help and care. When I turned 18 and left home, I continued the tradition.

Last year in early December, I was at Wal-Mart buying wrapping paper and decided to purchase and donate a toy while there. After making my purchase, I asked an employee where the donation box was – her answer made it clear she didn't know and likely didn't care. I asked another worker, to no avail. I took the gift home, then continued asking around about donation centers, even looking for information in the local ads and newspaper. I ended up donating the toy to Goodwill three months later in March...

My point is: People, especially during the holidays, want to be charitable. So make it easy for them! They'll feel good about shopping at a business that demonstrates generosity and compassion, and they'll remember that feeling when making future buying decisions.

Let the VDTA know how you are preparing for & celebrating Small Business Saturday!

SOURCES:

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"Small Business Saturday® Results: 112 Million Consumers Shop and Dine Small on Small Business Saturday – More Than Ever Before." *American Express*. American Express, 28 Nov. 2016. Web. 1 Oct. 2017. <www.americanexpress.com>



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March 24-26, 2018
Charlotte, NC

At the Charlotte Convention Center
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Now thru
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City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____

☐ **Yes, I want to become a member and pay a rate of \$130, which waives my convention registration fee.**

Badge Names

Is this your first convention?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Name: _____

Email: _____

Name: _____

Email: _____

Name: _____

Email: _____

Name: _____

Email: _____

THURSDAY, MARCH 22; PRE-SHOW CLASSES

☐ What's New in FTC-U with Trevor Conquergood & DJ Anderson
Open to FTC-U retailers. **To register, call 865-549-5115**

FRIDAY, MARCH 23; PRE-SHOW CLASSES

☐ My Floriani's Total Quilter with Kathi Quinn
Open to FTQ retailers. **To register call 865-549-5115**

☐ PowerHouse Roundtable by Dealers for Dealers

☐ Awards Presentation, location TBA

☐ Industry Cocktail Reception held Friday evening at the
NASCAR Hall of Fame. **Everyone welcome!**

SATURDAY, MARCH 24

☐ 7:30 AM - 8:30 AM, Rise & Shine with DIME
To pre-register call Wayne Walker - 918-207-7735

☐ 9 AM - 10 AM, KEYNOTE: Dave Ferguson, *The Leader's Coach*

☐ 10:15 AM - 11 AM, DIME Prime New Product Reveal
To pre-register call Wayne Walker - 918-456-1973

SUNDAY, MARCH 25

☐ VDTA / Epstein Charity Fun Night, Sunday evening
Fee \$100 to play (tax deductible) Spectators Watch FREE.

Class updates at www.vdta.com

CLASSIFICATION

- ☐ Independent Dealer
- ☐ Fabric or Quilt Shop
- ☐ Manufacturer
- ☐ Distributor
- ☐ Educator
- ☐ Manufacturer Rep.

MEMBER STATUS

- ☐ Independent Dealer
- ☐ Associate Member
- ☐ SEA Member
- ☐ Non-Member

PRODUCTS SOLD

- ☐ Vacuum - Domestic
- ☐ Vacuum - Commercial
- ☐ Central Vacuum
- ☐ Janitorial Supplies
- ☐ Air Purifiers
- ☐ Rental Equipment
- ☐ Small Appliances
- ☐ Sewing - Domestic
- ☐ Sewing - Commercial
- ☐ Sewing - Notions
- ☐ Quilting Equipment
- ☐ Fabric

TRADE SHOW

Charlotte Convention Center
Hall B & C
501 S. College Street
Charlotte, NC 28202

HOTEL INFORMATION

The Westin Charlotte
601 S. College Street
(1 block away!)
1-866-837-4148

Visit: http://www.vdta.com/2018_Charlotte_Hotel-Info.html

Cut-off date: Feb 15, 2018

COCKTAIL RECEPTION

Friday, March 23, 2018
NASCAR Hall of Fame
400 E M.L.K. Jr Blvd
(connected to Convention Ctr!)

CONVENTION FEES

All Fees in U.S. Dollars

*Fee for each additional person

EARLY BIRD RATES (Through Dec 23, 2017)

Independent Dealer

Member: \$15/*\$10

Non-Member: \$150/*\$30

Manufacturer/Distributor

Assoc. Member: \$700/*\$200

Non-Member: \$1000 each

*Rates will increase Dec. 24,
2017. See www.vdta.com
for rates and details.*

Convention fee \$ _____

Membership fee \$ _____

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Issued 10/4/17

2018 VDTA•SDTA Keynote Presentation

Dave Ferguson, The Leader's Coach



Being a leader today is not easy. It brings unprecedented challenges. Bridging the gap between your team and the goals of your organization requires that you give it everything you have...every single day. The competition is fierce, innovation is critical, and knowing how to lead a team through challenges are essential skills for every leader.

With decades of business leadership and world-wide executive coaching and speaking experience, Dave knows firsthand the challenges you face. If you are looking for someone who will challenge, motivate, and encourage you and your team to push through the obstacles and reach your goals, Dave is exactly what you need!

About Dave: Dave Ferguson is an internationally respected executive coach, speaker, and author in areas of leadership, sales, and personal development. His book, Boss or Leader, is a #1 International Best-Seller. Prior to launching his coaching business, Dave had 21 years of corporate leadership experience. During this time, he engaged his leadership approach to coach, mentor, and develop leaders at all levels.

2018 Powerhouse, It's Back!

**The Powerhouse Roundtable by Dealers for Dealers
will be returning, this time in Charlotte, NC for the 2018
VDTA•SDTA International Trade Show & Convention!**



With a panel of outstanding, driven dealers discussing how they overcome challenges and find success in the ever-changing independent market, you'll find the peer-to-peer knowledge you've been seeking.

**Stay tuned as sponsors
and panelists will be
announced soon!**

If you have a topic you'd like our panelists to discuss, please send ideas to tonya@vdt.com.

5 Signs Your Heating System is Failing

Southern Trust Home Services offers HVAC issue warning signs to watch for in preparation for the winter season.

As winter approaches, it is critical that homeowners inspect their heating unit and verify that it is operationally sound. Ted Puzio, owner of Roanoke's Southern Trust Home Services, wants homeowners to know that there are key signs to watch for that can warn of impending failure in their heating systems.

"Don't wait until winter to inspect your heating unit," said Puzio. "Heating units that are already on their way out will be more likely to fail once winter hits. Starting up a faulty unit during winter temperatures will put even more stress on the unit and expedite potential break-downs."

Southern Trust lists the following as important inspection points every homeowner needs to consider in preparation for winter:

Heating Unit is Noisy – If the heating unit is noisier than it used to be, it could be a sign that something is wrong with the blower wheel or motor. Listen for noticeably metallic, scraping sounds and take immediate action. If the blower wheel falls out of balance or disconnects from the shaft, it could do serious damage to the blower housing. The motor can also break away from its mount, resulting in similar but even more serious damage to the overall housing. In either one of these cases, the system needs to be shut off immediately for inspection.

Heating Unit Runs Constantly – When the heating unit is running constantly beyond the expected increase in run time to combat winter weather, there may be an issue with its efficiency. Typically, this can be resolved by routine service and cleaning. Other key contributors to unnatural run time may be a low refrigerant charge, issues with the compressor and/or compressor valves, or even equipment and ductwork that is undersized for your home.

Uneven Temperature Throughout Home — If the home is heating unevenly, there may be an issue or blockage with the ductwork. This, as well as undersized equipment, can be fixed or replaced by a professional HVAC technician. Two important possibilities to consider that can be fixed by the homeowner are dirty filters and blocked registers. If a piece of furniture was accidentally placed over a register, the issue can be resolved by simply rearranging.

Energy Bills Are Increasing — When energy bills begin to climb, efficiency is called to question. If the unit has been running more than usual but was ruled to be due to the change in weather, the next thing to consider will be the amount of the bill. If the heating unit is old, it may be time to replace it with a newer, more energy efficient HVAC.

Repairs Are Becoming More Frequent — Simply put, if the cost of repairs and maintenance are adding up year after year, it may finally be time for a full-unit replacement. Sometimes the best economic decision is to start over with a brand new, more energy efficient unit installed by a professional HVAC technician.

Southern Trust Home Services provides professional consultations, repairs, inspection and cleaning services, and installations that can help residents of southern Virginia be prepared for winter. For more information, please call 540-343-4348 or visit www.southerntrusthomeservices.com.



About the Company: Founded in 1995 as Southern State Electric, Southern Trust Home Services provides residential plumbing, electrical and HVAC services, including 24/7 emergency repairs, to homeowners in more than 60 cities throughout southern Virginia. Roanoke's first to offer a lifetime guarantee on all recommended repairs, Southern Trust Home Services staffs dedicated, certified, licensed and insured, drug and criminal background checked technicians who provide timely, same-day services for a variety of home repairs, installations and maintenance. A Better Business Bureau accredited company since 2006, Southern Trust Home Services has financing available including 0 percent for 18 months, and Lifetime Repair Guarantee on stated repairs. To find out more, call 540-343-4348 or visit www.southerntrusthomeservices.com.

Source: Southern Trust Home Services, on PRnewswire.com

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Dur-A-Flex Announces Leed V4 Compliant Products for its Major Flooring Systems

Provides up to 2 Leed Credits Due to Third Party Validation of Environmental and Health Product Declarations

Dur-A-Flex, Inc., a leading manufacturer of commercial, industrial and institutional resinous floor and wall systems, is now able to provide sustainability information for its products that complies with the requirements of LEED v4 Material and Resources credits.

Available for Dur-A-Flex's Poly-Crete®, Accelera®, Hybri-Flex® and Epoxy product lines, the EPDs were developed utilizing the results of the product life-cycle assessments (LCA) and validated by UL's Validation Services as Type III per ISO 14025. Information included in the EPD is the product's impact on global warming, ozone depletion, acidification of land and waste, water pollution, photochemical ozone creation, depletion of abiotic resources as well as the product's carbon footprint.

Designed to provide more transparency on how construction products impact human health and the environment, LEED v4's Material and Resource (MR) credits focus not only on the ingredients used to manufacture the product, but also the process by which they are sourced, manufactured, applied, used, maintained and disposed of throughout the product's life cycle. By utilizing third-party resources,

Dur-A-Flex's validated Health Product Declarations (HPDs) and Environmental Product Declarations (EPDs) provide clear and objective information that architects and designers can use when making product comparisons and decisions. Combined with the Low-Emitting Materials credit (EQ), Dur-A-Flex's flooring systems can earn up to three credit points toward certification.

"Architects and designers are increasingly seeking out environmental information on the products they are specifying" notes Pat Meade, VP, Sales. "By achieving these certifications Dur-A-Flex is able to provide useful and objective data to its customers in an industry-specified format" he adds.

About the Company: Dur-A-Flex, Inc. is a family-owned manufacturer of high-performance, resinous floor and wall systems. With over 50 years in business, Dur-A-Flex is recognized for its ability to continually deliver new and innovative products to the coatings industry. Its unmatched level of customer service is derived from an experienced team of technical service experts as well as stringent quality processes; providing customers with the confidence that they are installing the best product for the job. Named one of the "Best Places to Work in CT" five times by the Hartford Business Journal-sponsored awards program, Dur-A-Flex considers its people its most valuable asset. For more information on Dur-A-Flex floor and wall systems, please visit www.dur-a-flex.com.



“Give Your Mattress Handles”

A phrase for remembering to go the extra mile

I recently acquired furniture for my apartment's extra bedroom, including a mattress. Until now, that room had been the “catch all” for unfolded laundry, donations to Goodwill, and stuff for storage. I'd shut the door and try to put the disorganization out of mind.

Winter is approaching, and here in Iowa, the roads can get pretty bad with blowing snow and blizzard-like conditions. I have family and friends who live about 45 minutes away, yet they find themselves in my city of residence regularly – for bowling league, for work, for grocery shopping.

If I was 45 minutes away from home on a snowy winter's night with bad road conditions, I wouldn't want to drive home – and I certainly don't want my friends and family to either. So I made the decision to use my extra bedroom...as an extra bedroom. Which meant buying some things like a shelf, dresser, bedframe, and mattress.

Well, mission accomplished and I arrived at my apartment with a small U-haul and a neighbor ready to help me move it up two flights of stairs into my apartment. I'm under thirty years old, which means I've moved and helped friends move more times than I can count. The heavier items like tables and shelves are never any fun to carry, but most are manageable with a good grip. But always, always, always...I dread the mattress.

A mattress is not particularly heavy for two people, but it's just so BIG and AWKWARD. I'm a woman, 5'7", so my stature has been less-than-ideal for moving a large mattress. Honestly I just don't know how to hold it, schlepping it from the U-haul up my stairs, keeping it from dragging on the ground.

As my neighbor and I began to lift the mattress from the trailer, and as I looked for somewhere to grab a corner by the seams, we noticed that – lo and behold – this mattress has handles. Yes, cloth handles sewn into the top and bottom ends. What a godsend. It was tiring to lug it upstairs but not terrible, or awful, or frustrating.

Obviously you don't buy a mattress just because it has handles. You buy a mattress because it's comfortable. But I can't promise that from now on, I won't be shopping for mattresses that's both.



Since then, my friends and I have turned “mattress with a handle” into a *Hakuna Matata* of sorts – A cosmic phrase for life. When a task seems ridiculously hard, we say, “Just give your mattress handles” – meaning yes, it seems hard but you'll find a way to make what is challenging, easy! When someone says “no” to something we asked, we say, “Give you mattress handles” – meaning take a moment and make your spouse, your customer, your neighbor happy by doing just the smallest favor.

As a business owner in the floorcare industry, I doubt you sell mattresses, but are there ways that you can “give your mattress handles?” What things can you do – things that don't cost much extra time or money – to make life easier and more rewarding for your customers and employees?

Let the VDTA know what you are doing to “give your mattress handles!”

Email us at mail@vdt.com.

How Will You Merchandise for the Holidays?

Rather than our usual “A Peek At” poster, we’ve collected some of the best holiday merchandising ideas you might use in the next couple of months.

1. Use a Theme. While general “Christmas” store merchandising is festive and goes over well, consider a more specific theme: “Nutcrackers,” “Snowmen,” “At the North Pole,” “Christmas Candy,” etc. Use this specific theme to drive your store displays and decorations; it will set you apart from the other stores with general holiday themes.

2. Put Your Tree to Work. Do you put up a Christmas tree in your store? If so, make it work double-duty as a festive decoration and a way to display products. Besides putting ornaments and lights on the tree, place some of your popular products on the boughs and branches too. For a vacuum store, this might be vacuum attachments.

3. Display “Opened” Gifts. Under the tree or elsewhere in your store, display “opened” gifts with your products inside. Do this by wrapping the lid and box separately. Place the box in plain sight (opened but with wrapping paper still on the outside) with one of your products inside. This connects the dots for customers, forcing them to envision your product as a gift.

ArtofBusiness also recommends wrapping up a product in its entirety and placing that wrapped box next to the same, unwrapped product on the shelf. This also forces customers to see how great your product looks as a gift.

4. Show Off Stocking Stuffers. Hang Christmas stockings (about \$2 a piece at Wal-Mart) near the cash register with the products you’ve labeled “stocking stuffers” actually sticking out of the stockings.

5. Offer Holiday-themed Boxes or Envelopes for Gift Cards. When deciding if I should buy someone a gift card or just give cash, I always choose a gift card if a cutesy, themed box or envelope is available.



Display “Opened” Gifts

If the envelope or box is plain, I think: *I can design or decorate a box myself, so I'll just put cash inside.* To avoid this loss of easy money, have some envelopes or boxes done up with Christmas designs, and put them out for display!

6. Make Vignettes. When creating table displays, think about making a “vignette” or “scene.” *Rose Displays* recommends getting creative and having a *12 Days of Christmas* vignette, with a new product placed or added to that display all twelve days before Christmas.

Vignettes can also be designed around products that make a “bundle,” like a group of products you’d use for a spa day, baking in the kitchen, cleaning your car, etc.

7. Group with Price Points in Mind. Consider having a table with “Gifts \$20 and Under” or “Gifts \$50 and Under” to make shopping easy. Seeing how affordable each single item is, customers will likely buy more than one.

8. Highlight the Wants. Many professional merchandisers recommend highlighting products that are “wants” rather than “needs.” Customers will always seek out what they need to buy, even if it’s at the back... but they will not actively go hunting for something they simply “want.” Take the obstacle of hunting away and put that “want” where it’s easily seen; customers are more apt to buy it.

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