

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Who Moved My Cheese?

Recently I read this book as part of a sales training seminar I attended. I haven't written a book report in quite some time but I think it's valuable information to share.

"Who Moved My Cheese?" is a thought provoking parable about two mice and two little people and their continuous search for new cheese in a maze. the cheese represents what you want in life - new job, money, health, a loving relationship, possessions, etc. the maze represents where you look for what you want - the company you own/work for, your family, etc.

As a business owner you are constantly faced with change. Your family, employees, the government, the competition are all giving you new challenges each day. It's easy to fall into a routine and do the same things over and over again. You might get so caught up in the day to day activities of running your business that you don't realize the change that has gone on around you.

I challenge each of you to perform an experiment: pick up a copy of the book (you should read it, it only takes an hour) and when you've finished pass it on to your employees and family and let me know what happens next. One of our employees read the book and decided their cheese had moved so they found a new job.

Speaking of change, ARA-NJ would like to extend an open invitation to rental store employees to attend our meetings. Feel free to invite your manager, mechanic, counter person, bookkeeper, or any other employee you'd like to bring and we'll do our best to make them feel welcome.

I hope to see you at our next meeting at Modern Equipment on October 18th.

..... Brian Higgins

NOTE:

Vice President, Brian Kreger, formerly of Taylor Rental Center in Berkeley is no longer in the industry. The Board will appoint a replacement to fill his unexpired term until the next election.

The next meeting is in SOUTH JERSEY. Join us!

WET WEATHER DRIVING

Once again the wet weather is upon us and with it comes very hazardous driving conditions such as slick streets, flooded intersections, decreased visibility, and sharing the road with offensive drivers, those who drive too fast for conditions or operate vehicles that are unsafe. As defensive drivers we must adjust our driving for conditions and fine tune our driving skills for those who don't.

CHECK YOUR VEHICLE

After a long dry spell our window wiper blades don't get much use and may get dry and brittle - now is the time to check your wiper blades and replace them while the weather is good so your wipers will stay dry when you need them.

Check your tires - it is extremely important to have adequate tire tread since the tread is designed to channel off water that comes between the tire and the road. Without adequate tread, contact with the road is lost and the vehicle cannot be controlled.

Check all your lights to make sure they are operating properly. You should use your lights both day and night during bad weather (in New Jersey it's the law). You will be able to see better and others will be able to spot you.

Check your heater and defroster to be sure that they are operating properly - it's hard to drive when you are freezing and can't see out the foggy windows.

Make sure you have the proper emergency equipment in your vehicle such as spare tire and jack; snow chains; road markers (flares or reflective triangles); fire extinguisher; claim accident kit; insurance identification card; and a warm jacket in case you get stuck out in the cold).

ADJUST YOUR DRIVING!

The foolish offensive driver turns on his wipers but makes no other adjustments for the rain. The defensive driver adjust for conditions.

SLOW DOWN - wet surfaces are slick especially in the first few hours of a storm when all the oils from the road mix with water and make an ice rink out of the

streets. Your tire tread is designed to channel off water between the tire and the road but if you drive too fast the water can't be channeled off fast enough no matter how good your tires are - the result is called hydroplaning - your vehicle is cruising down the road on a layer of water with no contact with the road and no control.

USE YOUR LIGHTS

You will see better and others will see you better.

INCREASE YOUR FOLLOWING DISTANCE.

There are going to be more accidents and you won't be able to stop fast - stay back and watch ahead to avoid problems.

WATCH OUT FOR HAZARDS

Flooded pot holes, flooded streets, accidents and stalled vehicles are all out there -
LOOK OUT!

THE WORRY FACTOR

This morning I had a conversation with Chris Ruch of the Party Corner. As part of the conversation he yelled at me because, when he came to visit me on a Monday, I was out on the road taking down a tent while my warehouse manager was present at our store.

I tried to explain to Chris that I had spent most of the weekend worrying about this particular job and I would not be able to rest until I personally heard how the job went from a client. Chris understood completely. It's amazing how the words from a client, "Everything was fine," can put you at rest.

This incident got me thinking on this issue. Namely, how much do we charge a customer for us to worry on the success of their event? Is this a rental item we add onto a contract, or is it something we build into the price?

If I wouldn't have worried and tossed and turned all weekend, would this event have been successful? I think not! The question at hand is, "Is the amount we worry about a job in direct correlation to the success of that job?"

I say yes.

Many times the jobs we take for granted and think are simple "no brainers" are the ones that give us the most problems. Is this because we don't worry about them? OK, then,

whose job is it to worry? Is it the person who took the order, the person that installed or delivered the equipment, or the owner? Or is it all of the above?

Worrying takes years to develop and to do it properly requires many years of experience in this business. The first signs that you are becoming successful at this are the gray hairs that start to appear on your head (and beard, if appropriate). After a dozen or so major jobs we begin to develop a taste for worrying. Sleepless nights, lack of appetite or junk food attacks become more frequent. My wife says I even become unbearable to live with and suggests I just stay at work and not come home.

Now comes the key issue. Do you charge a customer for the amount you have to worry? I personally have never seen it as a line on a contract but it's there even if you don't see it. From the moment we first meet a client, we know right away how much we will have to worry on this job. From that point on, all pricing should take into effect, "THE WORRY FACTOR."

How long does one have to worry? Does it begin when the order is placed in April all the way through completion in September? Absolutely! Is the worrying over when the job is over or must it be prolonged until the check clears or payment is received?

What are some ways to deal with worrying? Can you delegate it? No, I'm afraid not. That would be like asking someone to go to the bathroom for you. Can you just block it out of your mind by getting involved with something else? If you could - it's only a temporary fix. The best solution is to call up a rental associate and share. This is sometimes called, "Rental Therapy." Matt Holt of Celebration Rentals, is licensed at this and he is very good. Chris Ruch, whom I previously mentioned, is also a pro and his prescription is usually a friendly lunch and a Martini.

One final thought on worrying; I truly believe those who worry will be successful because, along with worrying comes caring and caring is good business. Just ask your customers (but don't ask your doctor)

Steve Kohn

RENT A DESSERT

What is it about we Americans that makes us believe that anything that tastes good is bad for us? You mention a nice juicy steak and people start waving cholesterol flags and, for Heaven's sake, never mention Eggs Benedict in front of someone bent on seeing that you eat "sensibly." If you're eating out and you want Eggs Benedict for breakfast it's safer to pass a note to the waitress than to order out loud. Then, when the eggs are served and your wife raises an eyebrow, you say they made a mistake in the kitchen and you'll eat it so as not to cause a fuss (be sure act annoyed).

There are many foods that make a caregiver tremble (I thank my lucky stars that I like broccoli - sometimes it seems to be the only foodstuff one can eat without an argument. And it's the only item I know of that's approved by every branch of the U.S. Government, licensed dietitians and bad stepmothers). We eat it a lot at our house.

My idea of a perfect meal starts with a Caesar Salad sprinkled heavily with Parmesan followed closely by a thick French onion soup topped with melted cheese and a huge crouton. Then the entrée - a medium rare hunk of Prime Rib about 2" thick served au jus with potatoes, mashed or baked but, either way, slathered with butter.

But, of all food courses, dessert causes the most dissension at our house.

"Why don't you have an apple," my wife will ask as I reached for a donut.

"I don't want an apple, I'm having dessert," I say, trying not to snap. We've had this conversation before and I can sense when it's coming again. When a couple is married a long time, some conversations become echoes and bounce off the walls and repeat themselves over and over.

"Fruit is a good dessert, it's better for you than the pies, cakes and pastries you insist on eating after each meal." That's always her next line.

"You forgot cookies," I remind, and then add, "A lot of pies are full of fruit."

"You know very well what I mean, a fruit pie is not the same as eating a piece of fruit," she scolds for the zillionth time. Next I'll hear that Europeans eat fruit for dessert because they know enough to eat more sensibly than we Americans.

And sure enough, that's just what she says, "Europeans eat fruit for dessert because they know to eat more sensibly than we Americans."

Ha! Didn't I tell you?

"I can argue with that," I counter, "I've known some Europeans! You don't see Americans eating snails, eels, tripe and stuff to gag on like that. Do you know that in Europe there are pastry shops on every corner and that Europeans frequent them frequently?" Then, expounding further, I add, "They can't walk down one block without stopping for a cup of bad coffee and a gooey pastry. In Europe break-time lasts from early morning until they go home for dinner in the evening."

"You're making that up," she says.

"I'm not," I protest, "the coffee *is* bad. It tastes like the stuff you get at Starbucks. They had to open McDonald's franchises all over Europe so visiting Americans could get a decent cup of coffee."

It's a losing battle. Of all foods, desserts get the worse rap. There are those who will use your desire for dessert to put you on a guilt trip. Not like the one your mother put you on when she said, "Eat your vegetables, children are starving in Asia." It's a different kind of guilt trip - it's a health guilt trip. By the way, I'm pleased to announce that no Asian child ever starved because I didn't finish my apple pie

We have a friend who eats his dessert as his first course. He says if his meal is too filling he wants to be sure he's had his dessert. I can't help but admire him. You've probably guessed that he's not married.

When I was growing up we had the politically correct fruits and nuts after dinner, European style. But, unlike in Europe, the fruits and nuts were always followed by cannolis, cheesecake, tiramisu, and lots of other Italian pastries that I can't spell.

You see, my family emigrated from Europe. They came to this country to escape an oppressive tyranny - the tyranny of having to eat fruit for dessert everyday.

Honest, that's what Grandpa told me.

..... Carl Sparacio

Howard Heller's

JERSEY TALK

Condolences to Joan Boelhouwer on the loss of her father. Our thoughts are with her.

Ron Galen, Access Rentals, did get married to Tracy Nigro, Congratulations and best wishes!

MATRA (Middle Atlantic Tent Renters Assoc.) convention will be held at the cherry Hill Hilton, November 6, 7 & 8. Tents will go up Tuesday 11/7.

Don't forget to apply for an absentee ballot if you are going to be at the MATRA show in November - it does take place on Election Day.

Congratulations to the Roy Peragallos (RLM Agency) on their 43rd wedding anniversary! It is rumored that he was forced to cancel a card-game to take his wife out for a celebration dinner. Ouch!

Unirents is getting a new look - finishing touches are being completed as you read this. It looks terrific! John Futcher is available to consult for your future renovations!

Curly Boelhouwer is getting another Friendly Rental branch ready to open this fall in South Brunswick.

Hertz is going to open new rental stores in East Brunswick and Fairfield.

Tom Lade, All County Rentals, reports that he now has an empty nest - both daughters have gone off to new horizons.

ODDS & ENDS

Did we tell you that our October meeting will be taking place in the south ? - South Jersey, that is (Hightstown is south to us northerners). We hope to see all those members who normally find it difficult to travel north of Route 78 for a meeting.

The ARA-NJ Board of Directors is extending an open invitation to members to include their key personnel at our meetings. Everything covered at our meetings is as important to them as it is to rental store owners and their experience on the front line (so to speak) says they'll have a lot to contribute. Besides - it a way to let them know that they are a vital part of your organization.

Speaking of employees, start blowing their horn. We know you have fine group of folks working in your organization. Send us the name of an exceptional employee with a short note on why he/she is deserving and we'll show that person off in the Rental Rag. The Board will pick the best submission (who knows, maybe they'll even spring for a prize). Send mail to the return address on the mailing page of the Rental Rag.

We've noted elsewhere that we need volunteer rental stores or associates to host our meetings.

Meetings for this coming year will be held in January, March, October, and November. Sometime during the April/May period we'll hold our annual Nite at the Races and in July it's a toss up between repeating this year's baseball picnic (a great success we're happy to note) or going for a dinner cruise around Manhattan which was a hit in the past. Come to the October meeting and let us know you choice. If a broken leg keeps you from attending the meeting, call any one of your Board members and voice your opinion.

By the way - if you have something to say send it in to the Rental Rag - if it's not offensive, we'll

publish it (if there are no submissions we'll put poetry in this space) Editor

YOUR ARA-NJ CALENDAR

October 18, 2000

Regular meeting - at Modern Equipment in Hightstown. see below for details

November 15, 2000

Annual Round Table meeting - Location to be determined.

Some Thoughts Developed With Age:

I am in shape. Round is a shape

Have you noticed? Anybody going slower than you is an idiot, and anyone going faster than you is a maniac.

The reason most people play golf is so they can wear clothes they wouldn't be caught dead in otherwise.

I'm not working out. My philosophy: No pain, no pain.

Never raise your hand to kids - it leaves your groin unprotected.

The Next MEETING

Date: October 18, 2000

Meeting: 7:00 PM (for food) 8:PM for meeting

Location: Modern Equipment Rentals

909 Route 130 North

Hightstown, NJ

Telephone: 732-297-9333

PROGRAM: Forklift Safety and Certification.

Forklift certification will soon be a requirement for all forklift operators. Stay one step ahead of OSHA by being ready ASAP.

Mert Gardner, Training Director at Modern Equipment Group, will review how you can get your forklift operators trained for certification so that your company will be OSHA compliant.

If you use a forklift in your warehouse - this program is not to be missed. Feel free to include any of your employees who might benefit from this important program.

DIRECTIONS:

From Turnpike Exit 8 follow Route 33 West through Hightstown. Make left onto Route 130. Modern Equipment will be approximately 1/2 mile on left.