

**May 2012 Newsletter**



Constant Contact is a great way to get monthly news and event information. Featured articles in the May Issue:  
**“Marketing during a recession: A breath of fresh air” - “SCORE Interns graduate and reflect on their experiences”**  
**“Converting leads into buyers”**  
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**Improving Local Business** Executive Summary by Daniel Kehrer

Many local businesses are content if their customers seem “generally satisfied” overall. Others aspire to something more -- they seek the kind of passionate customer satisfaction that inspires glowing thank you letters and backyard fence comments like “My plumber (or dry cleaner, pet groomer, dentist, insurance agent, hair salon, etc.) is really great! I highly recommend them.”

If you suspect customers aren’t quite feeling that kind of love for your business, you’ve probably got some work to do. In a sense, customers who aren’t wholeheartedly with you might as well be against you. Customers who lack the love factor can actually be more damaging to your business than those who do business with your competitors.

That’s because people who aren’t yet customers of yours might at least try you out in the future. But those who are blasé about your business have already tried out your product or service and found you lacking in some respect. That’s not good.

Earning *true* customer loyalty – the kind that translates into recommendations and referrals – takes commitment, innovative ideas, energy and a little old-fashioned elbow grease. You, as business owner, must clarify for everyone else just what it is you want to accomplish with customers. This includes partners, employees, vendors and others who support what your business does.

And lest we forget, customer “love” also translates into a better bottom line. A recent American Express survey found that 75% of small business customers are willing to spend more with businesses that provide great service – up from just 58% two years ago.

And here’s the kicker: A hefty 78% of consumers have bailed on a transaction or not made an intended purchase because of poor service.

Here are eight things that will help customers find the love:

1. **End the obstacle course.** Take the initiative to find out when customers need (or will soon need) service or help – before they have to ask. The magical customer service moment is when your call, email or postcard offering help arrives as the precise moment the customer needs it. Meanwhile, make it clear to each and every customer exactly how they can get service or help from your business when they need it – including a name and contact information.

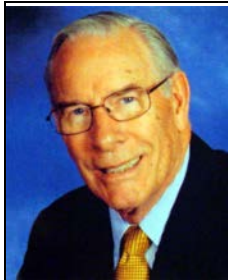
2. **Avoid customer hot potato.** Whenever possible, the person who speaks to a customer first should “own” that customer for the duration of their visit. Companies send signals of disrespect by passing off a customer to “someone who can better help you with your problem.” Yeah, right.
3. **Streamline your website.** Many small business websites seem cobbled together – a collection of different areas with different terminology and logic for getting around. Figure out one look and message you want to send, and stick with that.
4. **Fix (for real) the big issues bugging your customers.** Millions of businesses ask, ever so thoughtfully, “How can we improve?” That’s good. But how many really listen and act on what they hear? Customers read inaction as lack of caring and won’t bother to respond the next time you ask. A business that makes changes based on what it hears from customers earns more love.
5. **Invest in customer loyalty.** Customers have had it with loyalty programs that are just too much work or offer skimpy benefits. Try offering customers something without them having to ask or pay extra for it.
6. **Offer customers real choices.** Don’t bind customers into the fake choice of letting them “opt out” of something. Let them know up front that they can decide to get emails, offers or whatever from you and give them a choice.
7. **Make someone responsible.** Maybe it’s you. Or perhaps you make it part of someone else’s responsibilities. Either way, you call attention to your company’s passionate and persistent commitment to customer care. Be sure to reward employees publicly for exceptional customer care performance.
8. **Put your money where your mouth is.** Define specific customer care objectives that are right for your business, put some resources behind them, and figure out how you will measure the results.



Daniel Kehrer is Founder of BizBest ([www.bizbest.com](http://www.bizbest.com)), a free information service for small business, and editor of Marketing Matters ([www.dexbusiness.com](http://www.dexbusiness.com)) and ShopTalk: Social Media ([www.dexsocial.com](http://www.dexsocial.com)).  
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Source: <http://www.score.org/resources/8-ways-make-customers-love-local-business> - 49k

## Lifetime Achievement and Life Lessons



The Penn State School of Hospitality Management held its 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration and recognized a lifetime of achievement honoring Edward R. (Ned) Book on April 22<sup>nd</sup> at the Nittany Lion Inn. Ned is also SCORE Central PA long-time member. He has counseled and mentored hundreds of clients over the past ten years. Ned and his wife Inga, married for 59 years, shared the evening with their children and grandchildren and over 160 people.

Book, a graduate of Penn State in 1954 in hotel administration and the ROTC program, was stationed in the Army in Germany after graduation. During his junior year at Penn State he married his sweetheart Inga. They met during freshman orientation.

After military service, Ned began his career in the hospitality industry with Howard Johnson's Restaurant, not far from his hometown of Progress, Pennsylvania. After managing several other hotels and motor inns, Ned was hired as general manager of the Hotel Hershey in 1969. In 1974, he was elected president, chairman and CEO of the Hershey Estates, later renamed Hershey Entertainment and Resorts (HERCO).

In 1987, Ned left HERCO to serve as president and CEO of the Travel Industry of America (TIA), now known as the U.S. Travel Association. During his tenure at TIA Ned represented the \$397-billion travel industry. TIA's mission was to promote travel to and within the United States. International travel industry marketing grew and membership in TIA saw a 400 percent increase under Mr. Book's leadership.

Ned and Inga's relationship with Penn State continued through his career. In 1981, Ned received the Alumni Fellow Award. In 1984, he received the Penn State Hotel and Restaurant Society's Hospitality Executive of the Year Award and Penn State's Distinguished Alumni Award in 1986. In addition, Mr. Book was past president of the Penn State Alumni Association, the Penn State Hotel and Restaurant Society and a member of the Penn State Board of Trustees during the early 1980s.

During the evening Ned's son Edward, also a Penn State hospitality graduate spoke on behalf of his brother and sister and told the gathering about their parent's life lessons that they received. They were: 1) *Joy of serving others* 2) *Dining is an adventure* 3) *Your wife is always right* 4) *When you are leaving, don't make people mad* 5) *Don't go on to school (college) unless you really want to* 6) *Always do the right thing; you'll know when it's right* 7) *Always tell the truth* 8) *Work hard, play hard. Be the Best you can be* 9) *Commitment to house and family. Be together, make family time a priority* 10) *Give back to community: globally-spiritually-politically* 11) *Treat everyone with respect. Find value in people* 12) *Take the time to be a mentor to people* 13) *You can always have room for dessert. We have two stomachs, one is for dessert!* And finally, 14) *It's OK to have ice cream for breakfast.*

**Congratulations Ned! SCORE Central PA also thanks you for your dedicated service to our Chapter.**

## May 20-26, 2012 is **National Small Business Week**

### Centre County Council for Human Services - 40<sup>th</sup> Annual Rose Cologne Volunteer Recognition

John Vincenti is the 2012 recipient by SCORE Central PA Chapter. Vincenti has been a SCORE member nearly six years. He has held positions as a small business counselor/mentor, secretary/treasurer, vice-chair and is the current Chair. A Penn State retiree, John was coordinator of special projects in the College of Engineering, Mechanical and Nuclear Engineering Department. During his service he also served as the Department's Cooperative Education Coordinator and Mechanical Engineering's Hazardous Materials manager.

Vincenti's background in business came as the developer and director of the ACURI Association, Inc., a trade association created under a contract for services in the Nuclear Engineering Department. It was formed as a Pennsylvania corporation with a 15-member external board and represented licensees and permit-holders of radioactive materials. Initially within four states and eventually a national organization, the Association operated for 14 years. It represented hospitals, research institutions, laboratories and other users of radioactive materials, including nuclear power plants.

Prior to joining Penn State, Vincenti was a secondary school teacher in the State College Area School District. He served as a commissioner Pennsylvania Department of Education--Standards and Practices Commission. He was also a Ferguson Township Supervisor and past president of the State College Rotary Club. Vincenti's background in public affairs leadership development was formed during the early 70s as a W.K. Kellogg Fellow. John is currently a first responder with the Salvation Army of Centre County; Treasurer, Friendship Tutoring Program and member of the Torch Club.

### **Pennsylvania Business Central – Top 100 People**

In January 2012, SCORE Central PA's Chair John Vincenti was recognized as one of the top 100 people in the 20-county area that **Pennsylvania Business Central** covers. According to the January 27, 2012 edition, selection was based on: "people...(who) bucked economic trends and excelled in their chosen field."

### **Business Improvement Workshops Always FREE for SCORE Clients**

The workshops will be at the Nittany Bank, near the Nittany Mall in State College, PA, from 9:30am–Noon.

**Business Basics** – Tuesday, May 8, 2012, **Business Basics A to Z** For more information go to [SCORECPA.ORG](http://SCORECPA.ORG)

**Beyond the Basics** Tuesday, May 15, 2012, **Marketing & Advertising** led by Jan Hedquist – **Overview of Workshop**

- **Index** of all articles both in **Constant Contact** and **Chapter Newsletters**
- **SCORE CPA Business Directory** : **Accounting, Banking, Bookkeeping, Business Consulting, Energy, Franchising, Health-Fitness, Insurance, Investment, Media, Photography, Remodeling/Custom Builder** and other business services.
- **SCORE** is a resource partner with the **U.S. Small Business Administration**