

Mark Your Calendars!

**October 19-21, 2011
61st Annual Convention**
WRA will be holding its Annual Convention in conjunction with the 2011 Specialty Printing & Imaging Technology SGIA EXPO in New Orleans.

Wednesday, October 19th
WRA Business Program – Ernest N. Morial Conv. Center

Welcome - John Richards, WRA President

Opening Presentation – Part 1 – “What’s New and Exciting” at SGIA 2011, Speaker from SGIA
Part 2 – What’s New, WRA Vendors

WRA Welcome to New Orleans Cocktail Party – WRA Hosted Hotel

Thursday, October 20th
WRA Business Program – Ernest N. Morial Convention Center

“The Future” Round Table Discussion - Moderated by WRA President, John Richardson

WRA Closing Cocktail Party – WRA Hosted Hotel

More details and WRA Hosted Hotel information to follow

Staff Observations

As my career draws to its ultimate conclusion...retirement, I just wanted to share with you some issues or trends that I have seen over the years which remain as true today as they were 30 years ago. While everyone acknowledges that the way we do business has changed we must recognize that the business of doing business really hasn't. The elements that make a firm successful have not changed only the method in achieving success.

For success to be achieved the ultimate focus of any firm needs to be directed towards satisfying the needs of the ultimate consumer. By ultimate, we mean that last one standing to either buy or use the product or service. Your client may not be the ultimate customer, however, if you can make your client look great to their customer the term loyalty becomes a factor again.

Understanding what that goal is becomes the key to any firm's success. Remember you are not just putting toner or ink on paper. You are providing a medium by which a product, service, or message is being sold or delivered. Focusing on the ultimate goal provides a firm's sales force with direction, provides invaluable data when determining resource allocation, i.e., purchasing of new equipment or technology, and finally, provides the firm with a clear understanding of the skill set needed by all of their employees to be successful.

This is not anything new, but I see more firm's making equipment and technology decisions based on the latest and greatest without ever seeing if it is necessary to have in meeting or satisfying the needs of the client and ultimate customer. Buying something with the anticipation that the customers will come because of that purchase can be a dangerous way to operate.

Employee of the Future!

Simply stated, the employee of the future needs to be a mirror image of the buyer of the future. It is becoming more evident each day that for a firm to be successful there must be a connection between the firm's employees and those of your clients. Is this any different than it was in past? The answer is no. The successful salesperson was able to, on a personal level, connect with the buyer which reinforced relationships and at least gave one the leg up when in a very competitive situation. You were the buyer's LAST call.

The difference is in the approach. Less personal interaction and more digital interaction, seems to be the preferred method of communication with the majority of today's and certainly tomorrow's buyers. They are comfortable with the technology, it is how they have learned to communicate and quite frankly they are great at it. Another element to their M.O. is that they are also connected 24/7 and expect everyone else to be on the same page. In the good old days we used to say, “get a life.” Not anymore! Just think, it is the same as communicating with your kids today. If you can't text, you are out of the communications loop.

So where do you find these techno savvy employees, the creators, buyers and sellers of the future? I have often kidded that one needs to find the top scorer for Space Invaders shoot-em up game at the local video arcade and hire him or her on the spot. You do have the traditional sources, agencies, the internet, job postings at local colleges, word of mouth by current employees, etc. Another source to consider—have you ever gone into a store and found the person that helped you was exceptional in every way? Product knowledge, ability to communicate, personality, all of the skills that lead you to the observation or conclusion that that individual has the potential to be a huge success in the future. Ever think that just maybe he or she could have been a good fit for your company? Today, there is enough computer, software, cell phone (of course not naming any stores specifically) operations that have techno savvy employees who would probably jump at the chance to make more than \$10.00 an hour with a firm that wants them to do something meaningful. Just a thought!