

Monthly Musings



courtesy of Fletcher Consulting

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VOL. 8-9 • SEPTEMBER 2016

SMART CAREER:

Arnold Palmer, Golf's Icon

It's one thing to attain such success that you are mentioned among the elite competitors of your time.

Everyone would be impressed at someone that won seven of the game's most prestigious (major) titles and 92 overall professional tournaments.

However, you are treading hallowed ground when you are recognized not just as "The King"

– but also an icon. You possess such legendary status that people travel across the continent just to meet you or watch you play.

Such is the legacy of Arnold Daniel Palmer, owner of one of the most unorthodox yet most productive swings on the PGA tour during his career. He achieved greatness with four simple rules:

- Live large on a big stage, never forgetting where you came from
- Play with a flamboyant go-for-broke style
- Remember that concentration comes out of a combination of confidence and hunger
- Treat others as you would want to be treated yourself

Arnie passed away this past Sunday and left the world of golf crying golf ball-sized tears. In the 1960s, he lifted the game into national prominence with his charismatic smile and willingness to try any shot that had even the smallest glimmer of hope of forging another victory.

He was known for his large body of fans called "Arnie's Army," and the group's start was quite impressive. Arnie began the final round of the 1958 Master's Championship at Augusta National in the final group. Local soldiers from nearby Camp Gordon were offered free admission and were recruited to run the scoreboards.

With Arnie being a U.S. Coast Guard veteran, the soldiers were naturally

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drawn to him, particularly due to his swashbuckling, aggressive style of play. That Sunday morning, Arnie's Army was officially born, with soldiers as well as fans following him throughout the course.

My father saw Arnie play several times at the Colonial Invitational here in Fort Worth. Dad once saw that Arnie's golf ball had stopped on a cart path to the side of the third green.

There were no rules offering relief from such a poor lie and everyone anticipated him hitting a bad shot off the asphalt. Instead, he neatly clipped the ball up into the air and it landed close to the hole. Tragedy averted!

While I never met Arnold Palmer, I have enjoyed his signature drink, the Arnold Palmer (iced tea and lemonade), and I admire his rule about signing autographs for fans.

When he noticed many professional athletes in football and baseball, as well as golf, just scrawling their names for autographs, he took an extreme opposite position and convinced many other athletes to follow his example.

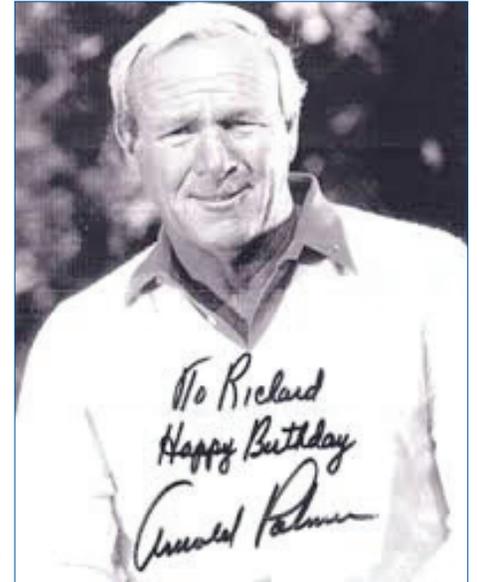
He asked, "What's the point of signing something if the person can't read it or later even remember who it was?" He always took the time to meticulously sign his name in a clearly legible fashion. Every single time.

Golfers are more accessible to their fans than star athletes in other sports and most of them, like Arnie, are more willing to take the time for signing autographs.

According to his website, Arnie signed well over a million autographs. He sketched his name on just about every decent place on the human body, and on such inanimate objects as the dashboard of a few new cars, the hood of a tractor that matched the one he made famous in television ads, an old airplane propeller and a small fortune of paper money.

Loving the game of golf and sharing it with his fans helped him earn his nickname: The King. And the leader of Arnie's Army.

What an amazing man. By the way, in honor of The King, I enjoyed an Arnold Palmer at lunch yesterday!



NOT-SO-SMART RELATIONSHIP:

Chick-fil-A: What have you done for me lately?

How did you feel when you went above and beyond expectations for a customer and delivered results far greater than what that customer had ever dreamed?

Welcome to the new world of The Richards Group, a legendary Dallas advertising agency. Their team conceived a brilliant advertising campaign in 1995 that moved its new client Chick-fil-A from stores located primarily in malls to become a sought-after franchise that everyone wanted to own.

The "Eat Mor Chikin" message allowed Chick-fil-A to stand out in cluttered media landscapes and cows became the mascot and messenger for advertising in print, broadcast, outdoor and digital venues. They even starred on the pages of their own calendars. Talk about calendar girls!

As Rick Press wrote in a recent *Star-Telegram* issue, the cows were as recognizable as Mr. Whipple; Clara Peller; Snap, Crackle & Pop; and the Taco Bell Chihuahua.

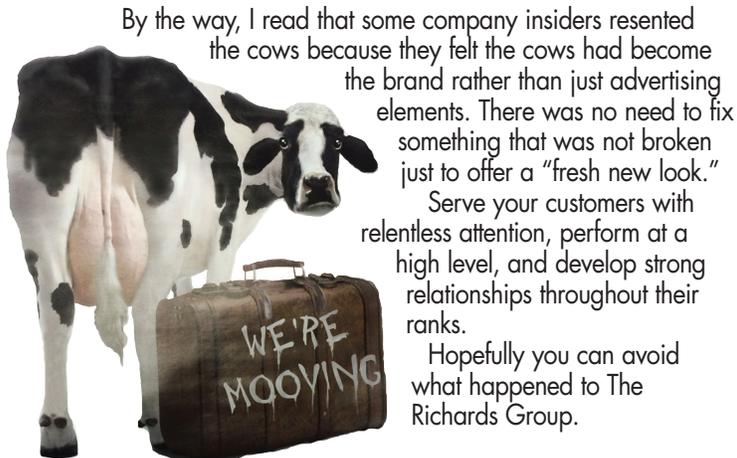
What brought about the change in ad agencies? A new chief marketing officer wanted to put his own fingerprints on the advertising campaign. He has brought in his own new ad agencies – which within the industry means people he has comfortably worked with in the past.

History is replete with marketers that failed when just wanting to bring about change for the sake of change.

For instance, Dodge literally owned the color red ten years ago, with every TV, print and online advertisement featuring red cars. They promoted red. They owned red. Dodge dealers drove only red cars and trucks in parades. Even when you saw a red Corvette or Mustang, you somehow wondered if it might be a Dodge.

A new marketer came in and placed his own fingerprints on the advertising and totally changed the concept. As a result, Dodge stopped owning the color red. Once he was gone shortly thereafter, so was the company's ownership of an entire color. How sad!

I hope the new marketing works well for Chick-fil-A because I love their products and their customer-friendly culture. Oh yes – and I love those cows!



By the way, I read that some company insiders resented the cows because they felt the cows had become the brand rather than just advertising elements. There was no need to fix something that was not broken just to offer a "fresh new look."

Serve your customers with relentless attention, perform at a high level, and develop strong relationships throughout their ranks.

Hopefully you can avoid what happened to The Richards Group.

NOT-SO-SMART PRODUCTIVITY:

$$60 \times P_{60} < 40 \times P_{40}$$

Yes, it IS just that simple – at least, according to [The Economics of Crunch Mode](#), provided by Stanford University. The theory is that there is a point of diminishing returns after 50 hours a week, as workers begin to lose their ability to focus and remain sharp and proficient on the job.

These "work martyrs" often give hundreds of hours per year in free labor to their employers, forgoing weekends, evenings and even vacations. Little do their employers know that the free labor might not be such a great value for the company.

Consider that over 40% of American workers never took a single day of vacation last year. They are overworked, exhausted, and making mistakes... er, mistakes... at an abysmal pace.



According to [the Stanford study](#), employee output falls sharply after a 50-hour work week and at 55 hours the drop-off is like falling off a cliff. Someone who puts in 70 hours produces very little if anything more than lots of mystrakse dew two tuping errors... correction: lots of mistakes due to typing errors.

I know of a print operation that re-checks all the work that their proofer has done after six hours per day because that responsibility is so demanding and so repetitive.

Companies must deal not only with these unanticipated mistakes, but also with the issues of absenteeism and employee turnover. Working late often causes employees to become exhausted or just call in sick. Untenable work environments also lead employees to seek new career opportunities.

If your company encourages and benefits from employees working 55 or more hours per week, you might want to check those final hours of each day for quality of their output.

So see: **$0 \times P_{60} < 40 \times P_{40}$ is a lot more accurate than you thought. Now you know why!**

THE Tiebreaker

One of my favorite aspects of Chick-fil-A, and several others have commented about this, is how they respond to your "Thank you."

Here are the standard answers when you or I say "Thank you" to most service providers: No problem... You bet... Sure...

At Chick-fil-A, employees respond to your "Thank you" with a smile and then they say, "My pleasure." That's a different enough response to catch anyone's attention!

