

Monthly Musings



courtesy of Fletcher Consulting

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SMART SERVICE:

Wendy's Founder Dave Thomas

Wendy's founder, Dave Thomas, expressed his business philosophy best: **"Build brand equity."**

When my company was the ad agency for Wendy's franchisees and I attended corporate meetings, Dave and his key executives would drill two things into our brains:

- Build Brand Equity
- Offer a Consistently Positive Experience

Wendy's founder, Dave Thomas expressed his philosophy: Build Brand Equity

That sounds like corporate gibberish, but the simple statement was brilliant. Every company's brand is a living, breathing being. **Everything you do today drives your brand's reputation up or down. Brands never stay the same. Brands never sleep.**

When a customer is treated rudely at your restaurant or car dealership, your brand equity just took a dive.

When a customer experiences a hero moment because you or one of your team members save the day in a potentially damaging situation, your brand equity soars in the eyes of that customer, all the customers around, and definitely everyone that customer interacts with.

That WOW-experiencing customer becomes more than your advocate. That customer becomes your EVANGELIST!

That upset customer, by the way, will tell as many as SIX TIMES MORE people about their negative experience.

We've all heard of "second-hand smoke" that people encounter by breathing in the fumes of someone smoking in their presence. The even more important term is "second-hand customer service" – the image we create in our minds when a customer describes their experience.

Friends and clients often ask me how far to take a customer situation, particularly when the customer knows they are in the wrong. My simple answer: **"Determine how far you would go if pushed to the wall, and then go gladly and immediately."**

Why go so far quickly? If the customer has to complain and call

again and again and you finally relent, that customer is already angry and has told friends how bad you are. You are too late to "save the day."

I once shared with my late client, car dealer Allen Samuels at his Waco

Chevy dealership: The greatest thing that can happen to you is for a customer to drive off the lot in their brand new Suburban and have the transmission fall out of the vehicle on Valley Mills Drive.

"You're nuts," he told me. "That would be terrible!"

I explained: "Of course, we never want any customer to be injured or in an accident, but when that customer sees you immediately run out onto the street to save the day, and when you tell that customer to choose among the other 20 comparably equipped Suburbans you have – or you loan him YOUR Suburban – you have created the legendary 'Customer for Life.'"

Then, I added, "In that moment, you moved that customer to becoming an Allen Samuels advocate and evangelist. If the Suburban never had a technical issue, the customer would likely be loyal to Chevrolet, but not necessarily to you!"

Back to Dave Thomas for a moment. I had the honor of being his chauffeur when he made an appearance in Waco and spoke to a leadership conference 30 years ago. He was as kind and down-to-earth as you could ever hope for.

He was so committed to brand equity and consistency that he challenged his franchisees at an annual conference. "All that I want is to have a consistent Wendy's experience wherever I travel. It should be the same in Orlando, Florida, as it is in Denver, Colorado, or New York City. Right now, our burgers aren't tasting the same when I travel."

Then, Dave laid down the hammer: **"If you don't clean up your act nationwide, I won't be embarrassed by you any longer. I'll take myself off TV. And remember, I AM your brand!"**

Their quality issues were resolved within less than a month.

Build Brand Equity. Create a Consistent Quality Experience. And, like Dave Thomas, **LIVE YOUR BRAND!**



John Fletcher is a recognized authority on the subject of effective communications.

He is available for speech-crafting, public speaking engagements and consulting on a project basis.

SMART PLANNING:

Avoid WFH Fatigue

I thank Jason McCann, CEO at Vari, for sharing this insight. [Harvard Business Review](#) reports that we are experiencing a new condition – **Work From Home Burnout Syndrome**.

Yes, you and I may have caught WFHBS. The article’s authors, Laura Giurge and Vanessa Bohns, share three key points:



- 1. Maintain physical and social boundaries:** Dress for work even though you are working from your home. Wearing pajamas sends your mind a conflicting message about taking work seriously. Also, don’t nap and zone out on TV during your work time.
- 2. Maintain temporal boundaries as much as possible:** Trying to stick to a 9-to-5 routine may become unworkable. Coordinate your time with others in the household and create your new routine that you can fulfill. Call it your work-time budget.
- 3. Focus on your most important work.** It’s easy to become busy, yet not productive. You will maximize productivity by committing to top-priority issues. Now is NOT the time to alphabetize the spices in your pantry or straighten up your office. Now is the time to establish priorities and live with them.

SMART PRIORITY:

Running out of DP and TP

[Fast Company Magazine](#) reports that Dr Pepper fans may be facing the same type of shortage the pandemic caused with toilet paper, paper towels and hand cleansers this spring.

Yes, you could be running out of DP and TP.

The year 2020 was already challenging enough, but the lack of access to Dr Pepper - who some have even claimed would be the soft drink that God Himself would drink – is in short supply.



The beverage maker said that grocery shoppers made a run on the aluminum can variety of all flavors Pepper, causing quite a panic.

With the presidential election growing in intensity, the big question is which party will claim to solve the Dr Pepper shortage crisis and, therefore, our nation.

The shortage of aluminum cans – which is also impacting other brands - is leading to renewed focus on bottled soft drinks, which I feel taste better anyway.

At least, that’s what I recall. Due to a new food regimen, today marks my 179th day off Dr Pepper. **No wonder there’s a crisis!**

THE Tiebreaker

Compare to Recognizable Standards

My client, Ian MacLean, CEO of Highland Landscaping, was sharing ways that he describes his Southlake-based company. “We



have quite a high customer satisfaction score. **As a matter of fact, our rating is higher than the Ritz-Carlton in Dallas.”**

That sounded like an impressive statement, and further examination proved him to be correct. The Dallas Ritz-Carlton has a Google rating of 4.7, which is quite impressive. Even more remarkable is Highland Landscaping’s 4.9.

Do more than just make a statement about your high ratings from Google, Facebook, Tripadvisor or Yelp. **Develop a frame of reference that compares you favorably with an a highly respected brand:**

- My Google rating is higher than the local Mercedes-Benz dealer
- My Yelp rating is higher than most five-star restaurants
- My Facebook rating is equal to Apple/Nordstrom

