

2005 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

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| January 21-22 | 27th AIIIGMA National Seminar Chennai, India Web: www.aiigma.org |
| January 25-27 | WeldMex 2005 Mexico City, Mexico Web: www.weldmex.com |
| February 27- March 5 | Pittcon 2005 Orlando, Florida Web: www.pittcon.org |
| March 6-8 | Compressed Gas Association (CGA) Annual Meeting Saddlebrook, Wesley Chapel, FL Web: www.cganet.com |
| March 29-April 1 | National Hydrogen Association (NHA) Conference Washington, D.C. Web: www.hydrogenconference.org |
| April 12-15 | AchemAmerica 2005 Mexico City, Mexico Web: www.achemamerica.de |
| April 24-26 | GAWDA Spring Management Conference Dallas, Texas Web: www.gawda.org |
| April 26-28 | AWS 2005 Welding Show Dallas, Texas Web: www.aws.org |
| July 11-15 | SEMICON West Moscone Center, San Francisco, CA Web: www.semi.org |
| September 12-17 | International Essen Welding Fair Essen, Germany Web: www.messe-essen.de |
| September 20-24 | GAWDA 61st Annual Convention Grand Wailea Spa & Hotel - Maui, HI Web: www.gawda.org |
| October 18-20 | Medtrade 2005 Atlanta, Georgia Web: www.medtrade.com |
| October 22-26 | International Oxygen Manufacturers Association (IOMA) Hong Kong, Peoples Republic of China Web: www.iomaweb.org |
| November 13-16 | AWS — FABTECH McCormick Place, Chicago Web: www.aws.org |

Art of Selling...

by Art Waskey

Turning Customers into Advocates

When was the last time you were on the “emotional sales roller coaster?” You picked up a great new account; only to hear you just lost one of your “top ten” accounts! That’s “the emotional sales roller coaster!”



The **bad news**...an account your company has serviced for 20 years called and told you to “come pick up your cylinders.” The decision-maker said he doesn’t know you any more and there have been too many billing errors.

The **good news**...you were recently invited to tour a competitive account and recognized a major technological improvement opportunity. The customer agreed to use you as supplier when you provided his company substantial SAVINGS!

What do you make of these “emotional highs and lows”? How do you grow when you are constantly wracked by such turmoil? In their recent book, **First, Break All the Rules**; authors’ Marcus Buckingham and Curt Coffman tell us 4 reasons why people choose to favor us with agreement *{orders}*. These expectations show companies what they must do to turn “prospects into advocates.”

- At the lowest level, customers expect **accuracy**. The customer in my first illustration “fired” us because we continued to make {billing/order} errors. It doesn’t matter how friendly your employees are; if a company consistently fails the accuracy test, then customers defect.

- The 2nd level is **availability**. With high technology communications systems, “cell phones, e-mails, Internet, etc.”, we are expected to be available not only to our friends but also our business associates. During my recent vacation in Ocean City, Maryland, a “top ten” customer call me. “Hey, Art, I know you are on vacation, but...” I had left a message on my office phone that if it was “important and urgent,” call my cell phone.

- At the 3rd level customers expect **partnership**. They want you to listen to them, to be responsive to them, to make them feel you are on their side of the fence. Partnering may mean finding them better raw material suppliers, introducing them to new customers, understanding their competitors’ businesses, etc.

- The 4th and most advanced level of customer expectation is **advice**. The new account I mentioned earlier came to us because we demonstrated a technical improvement. Customers feel the closest bond to organizations that have helped them learn.

Let’s put an end to the “emotional sales roller-coaster.” The next time, maybe later today, when you see an opportunity for selling your point of view, stop and strategize how these four expectations impact your customer. I guarantee you will not only retain your existing customers, but also grow your customer base, by turning “customers into advocates!” ■

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