



The Credit Professional

Cat Food and the Man on the Moon: Five Success Ingredients

Fill Your Organization's Voids

Credit Application: Purpose and Use

Contract Interference

Creditors Want What?

Turning Down Job Offers

Creating an Interactive Web Site

Spring, 2002

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The Credit Professional is published twice yearly by Credit Education Resources Foundation, 525-B N. Laclade Station Road, St. Louis, MO 63119. Phone (314) 961-0031. Fax (314) 961-0040.
 Email creditpro@creditprofessionals.org

Printed in the U.S.A.

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The Credit Professional

Spring, 2002

Volume 10, Number 1

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Cat Food and The Man On The Moon

How to seize this day - and all the days that follow - with five success ingredients.

By Brett Krkosska



I stumbled upon a realization about success the other day. I was on my way to the grocery store when it hit me. My realization began with our cat, Maggie, who was a little put out. It seems the shiny bottom of her food dish kept showing her reflection. She hates that.

Maggie is not shy about letting us humans know what's important. She makes it clear that we are NOT a cat owner. She is a people owner. So I grabbed my jacket and jumped in the car for a cat food run.

You may wonder what going to the store for cat food has to do with success. The ingredients in cat food seem a little far removed from the ingredients for success. I agree. However, it's the process that intrigued me.

As I was driving along, it occurred to me that getting cat food was no different than any other endeavor that meets with success. I fully ex-

pected to successfully return with the cat food. And sure enough I did.

When I was 10 years old and wanted a set of drums, I fully expected to get them. One way or another. And I did.

When I decided to reach the position of Operations Manager with my old employer, I fully expected to get there. Despite sacrifice and setbacks, I did.

When the United States decided to put a man on the moon...

So you see, it doesn't matter if you're going for cat food or going to the moon, the ingredients to be successful in any endeavor are the same. The only difference is in the degree of execution.

1. Success is about active participation.

Success is not about work. I dislike the word work. "Active par-

ticipation" sounds much more pleasant, don't you think? Successful people actively participate in the journey. They love what they do, therefore it is not work. How much you do is irrelevant and how long it takes is irrelevant. There is no room for the traditional definition of "work" when you are immersed in the journey towards success.

Cat Note: It has become apparent that Maggie will not "actively participate" as an attack cat if burglars break in, but she will snare an errant bug once in a while. Therefore, just knowing a nutritious meal will keep her skills sharp is worthy of my participation in keeping her fed.

2. Success is about being smart.

Being immersed in your success gives you a "third eye" on opportunities, a smartness if you will, that makes the road to success shorter. I've always felt that the

key to succeeding in any endeavor is not really HOW MUCH you do, but HOW SMART you do it. By focusing on your eventual success, you discover smartness.

Being smart lets you cut to the chase. It's about seeing opportunities and opening doors that others miss. It's about using a safety pin when the key is not under the doormat. It's about taking risks. It's about not taking unnecessary risks. It's almost an intuitive sense of "knowing." Being immersed in the journey reveals shortcuts that might otherwise be missed.

Cat Note: I wasn't out to buy any ol' cat food. Maggie has certain likes and dislikes. She wants taste. I want savings. I took a coupon. Pretty smart, huh?



3. Desire overcomes obstacles to success.

Plain and simple. Desire makes molehills out of mountains. Desire initiates creativity and is a force that knows no boundaries or limitations. No matter what stands in the way, it is moveable.

Cat Note: You know how those lines can be at the checkout? I desire nothing more than to avoid

reading the tabloid headlines while waiting in line with my cat food. Solution: Bring your 10-year-old and have him hold a place in line while you get the cat food. Bribe him with candy. Obstacle overcome.

4. Passion energizes success.

Passion resides at the center of desire. Success is about having a desire fired by passion. Being truly passionate makes success more brilliant and inspired. The willingness to move forward without regret is a function of passion. To paraphrase Napoleon Hill from his book, "Think And Grow Rich," you must burn all your bridges. There is no turning back when passion is in the driver's seat.

Cat Note: Remember when I said these ingredients apply to any endeavor that meets with success? Even if the endeavor is getting cat food? Scratch that. Being passionate about cat food is ludicrous.

5. Believe in yourself.

Your success is not a question of IF, but rather WHEN. Never doubt that each step is the right step towards success. Any failures along the way are merely lessons for success at a higher rung on the success ladder.

So begin climbing the ladder without hesitation. Whatever happens along the way is exactly as it should be. Every step is the right

step, even if not readily apparent. Believe in yourself. Believe in your path.

In conclusion, it should be apparent that success is not biased. The principles that govern success do not care what you want to be successful in. Success freely visits all who call on her, no matter the size of the task. Think back to a time when you really wanted something and got it. Did you embody any of these success ingredients?

Now ask yourself what you want to accomplish and take that first step. Any step. If you want some practice, you can always run to the store for some cat food!

Brett Krkosska provides how-to advice on family and home-based work issues. Get start-up guidance, business ideas and inspiration at <http://HomeBizTools.com>. Become a subscriber for a fresh and original perspective on today's business issues: <mailto:enews@homebiztools.com>



Fill your organization's voids to reap career rewards

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Want to advance quickly in your career ... or at least gain some recognition? Learn to spot "corridors of indifference" in your organization and use them to your advantage.

Corridors of indifference are voids that exist in every organization, says H. Edward Wrapp, author of *Good Managers Don't Make Policy Decisions*. These voids are tasks that someone should or could be doing for the organization, but nobody is.

Career benefits

Suppose you work for a recording company that doesn't have a staff member who thoroughly knows copyright laws. Copyright questions are either dealt with—hit or miss—by any employee who has some free time to research answers or are shuffled to an outside law firm at considerable expense.

Even though the company would benefit from a knowledgeable person on staff who could answer questions, everyone is so used to the current procedure that they've become indifferent to it. The copyright area is this company's "corridor of indifference."

That's where you come in. Suppose you took the initiative to study copyright laws. Perhaps you buy some reference books

and read them on your own time or attend a night class at the local college. You would become the resident "expert" on copyrights. You could then field questions, answering those you know and passing on to the law firm only those questions you can't answer. You would save your organization money, and it would, in time, rely on you for your expertise. Your value as an employee would increase.

Here are a few more career benefits to finding and filling your organization's corridors of indifference:

1. You'll probably encounter little or no resistance to implementing your ideas. These "corridors" are usually recognized as necessary but often get pushed aside for one reason or another. Or they may be handled haphazardly or inefficiently. If you can pick up on one of these areas and improve it, your initiative will most likely be welcomed.

2. Your move to take over the area probably won't be viewed as a threat or competition. If you concentrate on an area where no one has direct responsibility, you won't create resentment. On the contrary, co-workers will probably be happy that someone will handle this area.

3. Your job will become more interesting.

Since you're sailing into uncharted waters, you'll be setting up your own rules and procedures. And since you've chosen the area, your interest level will be high. You might even find that your job has become exciting!

Identifying corridors of indifference

Look for areas that are necessary to your organization, but for which no one has direct responsibility. These areas may become apparent to you at meetings when your boss asks for volunteers to complete certain tasks.

You can also find them by examining your present job. Look for information or services that would help you do your job better or faster, but that are unavailable or available only from outside sources that charge for them. Other corridors of indifference may be disguised as projects that are always placed "on the back burner" because no one has time to tackle them.

A word of caution: You may want to ask permission to look into an area before you begin exploring it. And don't neglect your regular duties to do it. You may have to spend personal time on the project to launch it. But once you do and the project is well received, you'll reap the rewards!



Don't Let Manner Mistakes Cost You Money

By Marjorie Brody, MA, CSP, CMC

Misconceptions about the role of etiquette in the workplace abound. It's critical in today's fiercely competitive workplace that business professionals understand and practice basic good manners. People don't want to do business with people who treat them poorly.

While we often associate good manners with what our mothers told us about behaving in social situations, those rules don't always apply in modern business settings. For example, some women were taught to curtsy upon being introduced. And that is certainly not appropriate in today's work environment.

Proper manners are especially essential to succeed in today's diverse workplace. With more women and culturally diverse workers, there is a greater need to know and practice proper protocol.

Salespeople especially need to have a basic knowledge of etiquette so they don't make a bad impression, lose business, let an opportunity for a promotion or raise slip by, or even lose their jobs.

We are often unaware of what we are doing and how our actions affect those around us. Pay attention to your behaviors and

when in doubt get some feedback.

Here are 12 common faux pas to avoid:

1. **Inappropriate language** -- using demeaning salutations or diminutive names, employing tasteless or vulgar humor, spreading gossip, overuse of jargon and acronyms
2. **Disregard of others' time** -- keeping someone waiting, turning in an assignment late, barging into someone's office
3. **Inappropriate dress/poor grooming** -- Unshined shoes; too-short skirts; sloppy appearance
4. **Misuse of telephone** -- keeping people on "hold" too long, not returning calls, not giving messages, slamming down the phone, not identifying who is speaking, eating or chewing gum while speaking
5. **Failure to greet appropriately** -- no handshake, poor handshake or not introducing someone you are with
6. **Poor listening skills** -- cutting people off, interrupting, asking questions and not waiting for an answer

7. **Disregard of shared property and office space** -- not cleaning up shared spaces; leaving the copier without paper; using someone's office or equipment without permission

8. **Embarrassing others** -- put-downs or criticism that is not constructive or helpful; being rude or insensitive to others

9. **Poor or inappropriate table manners** -- talking with your mouth full; ordering messy foods; drinking alcohol at the wrong time

10. **Distracting mannerisms** -- scratching or picking; tugging, playing with or combing your hair publicly; picking teeth and yawning

11. **Poor use of technology** -- not returning voice mails promptly, forgetting to update away messages, sending long and rambling e-mails

12. **Disregarding rules of privacy** -- there's a good and bad time to hold conversations, and in the bathroom is most definitely the latter.

Meeting etiquette can be a problem area for salespeople. It doesn't matter if the meeting is last minute or has been planned for months, if participants don't

know the proper decorum, it can be disastrous. If salespeople don't know how to conduct themselves during such a gathering, they can lose the client, embarrass their own company and possibly lose their jobs.

Avoid the following meeting mistakes:

- arriving late, leaving early or intermittently
- exceeding time allotment when giving a presentation
- not coming prepared if called on
- slouching or sprawling in your seat
- doodling, drumming fingers or yawning
- being sarcastic, attacking people rather than ideas, being unfairly critical
- not participating or listening effectively
- going off on tangents
- engaging in side conversations
- reading, eating, smoking, burping
- falling asleep
- making a mess

Cross cultural mistakes can cost you or your company business. If you want your business to expand internationally or even locally, knowing the ins and outs of international etiquette is important. Learn the customs of your client or job prospect. Ignorance is no longer an excuse when your competition probably learned correct behavior.

Here are six reminders:

Beware when using humor; it doesn't always swim – what's funny in one culture may be offensive to another.

In a discussion, know how close you should stand to the other person – sometimes if you get too close, you can invade the other person's "space" and it's considered rude.

Passing out business cards is part of a Japanese ritual greeting. Never write on them; it's considered offensive to business professionals in many cultures.

The French rarely invite business guests into their homes.

Sometimes the wardrobe choice is critical, for example, wearing a white suit in Hong Kong symbolizes mourning.



While it may take time to learn the "rules of etiquette"-- it can save you time and, potentially, business. You won't have to spend the time soothing hurt feelings or making up for damaging mistakes.

Etiquette isn't all that complicated. Most of the guidelines are based on kindness, efficiency and logic. Applying appropriate business etiquette can both directly and indirectly enhance your

company's bottom line. What's more, only a small investment is needed for a large return.

Here's why: Customers and clients are more likely to do repeat business with a company that makes them feel comfortable and valued – two outcomes of appropriate business manners.

Business etiquette, of course, doesn't have an answer for every sticky situation. However, it can provide valuable guidelines that, combined with your knowledge of circumstances and the personalities involved, will get you through most situations.

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Marjorie has presented to more than 1,000 audiences, and is the author of 15 books, including Help! Was That a Career Limiting Move? and Speaking is an Audience-Centered Sport. She has appeared on CNBC, Fox-TV, Oxygen Network, and been quoted in The Wall Street Journal, Washington Post, USA Today, People, Glamour, BusinessWeek, Fortune and many other national publications.

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Contract Interference

By Michael King

QUESTION: It's okay for me to get my prospective customer to break his contract with my competitor, isn't it?

ANSWER: While competition is generally encouraged, intentional interference with someone's contract can get you in big trouble!

In 1985, Pennzoil obtained a judgment against Texaco for \$11.12 billion dollars because the jury found that Texaco had knowingly and intentionally interfered with an agreement between Getty Oil Company and Pennzoil. The main issues in the Texaco case were whether Getty had a contract with Pennzoil, whether Texaco had wrongfully interfered with that contract, and what were Pennzoil's damages. Clearly, you should be careful about interfering with someone's contract.

If you cause someone not to perform his or her contract with someone else, you may be liable to that someone else for the money lost because of the breach of contract. You cannot intentionally and improperly interfere with someone else's contract.

In deciding whether intentional interference with a contract is improper, courts consider:

1. The nature of your conduct in interfering with the contract;
2. Your motive in doing so;
3. The interests of the other party to the contract;
4. The interests you are seeking to advance by interfering with the contract;
5. The interests of society in protecting both your freedom and the contract rights of the other person;
6. How directly your conduct interfered with the contract; and
7. The relationship among all of the parties.

The decision as to whether your interference with the contract was improper is usually left to the jury. That means that even if your interference is determined not to have been improper, getting yourself out of the mess will be expensive.

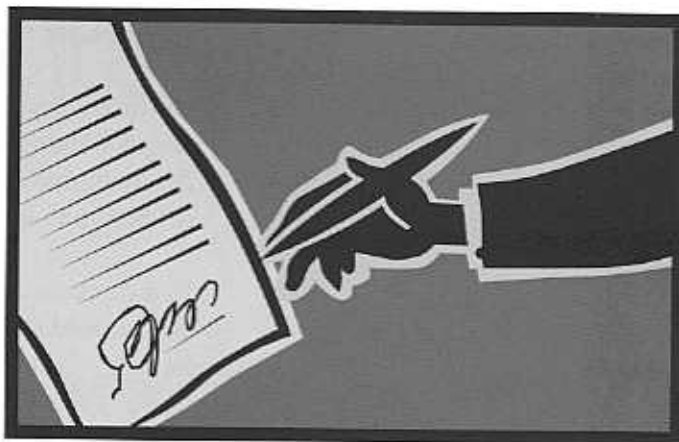
The fact that you are competing for business may or may not make the interference with someone else's contract proper. If you cause someone not to enter into a

prospective contract with your competitor, or you cause that person not to continue an existing contract with your competitor which is terminable at will, your interference may be okay, if:

1. The subject matter of the contractual relationship involves an area of genuine competition between you and your competitor;
2. You do not use wrongful means;
3. You do not create or continue an unlawful restraint of trade; and
4. At least part of your purpose is to really compete with your competitor.

If your competitor's contract is not terminable at will by the customer, then your interference with the contract may be improper even if you are competing for the business.

Keep in mind that, if you provide truthful information or honest advice within the scope of a request for that advice, and that information or advice causes someone not to perform or enter into a contract, you have not improperly interfered with the contractual relationship. If you merely give someone truthful



information, there is no liability for interference with a contract or a prospective contractual relationship. Also, if someone asks for your advice and you give honest advice within the scope of the request, you will be protected from a claim of improper interference with a contractual relationship. But don't go giving unasked-for advice unless you have some responsibility for the welfare of the person you are advising or some financial interest in his or her business.

As Texaco found out, interfering with other people's agreements entangles you in a complicated and potentially expensive area of the law. As your mom told you, "Be honest, be careful, and mind your own business, and you can probably stay out of trouble."

MICHAEL R. KING is a founding partner of Gammage & Burnham, P.L.C., a Phoenix law firm with diverse areas of emphasis. His practice primarily centers around bankruptcy and creditors' rights, commercial litigation, including uniform commercial code cases and real estate and business law. He is a former member of the Creditor/Debtor Rights Committee and is a current member of the Bankruptcy, Real Estate and Construction Law Sections of the State Bar of Arizona. Mr. King is the past Chair of the Board of Trustees of the Maricopa County Bar Foundation. He is an active alumnus of the University of Arizona, where he received his B.A. and J.D. degrees, with distinction and with high distinction. Mr. King is a member of Business Professionals Connect, the Phoenix association of Credit Professionals International.

I joined CPI.

Now my boss thinks I'm a genius.



When I got my CPI education manual this fall, I was able to tell him all about Credit Bureaus, Credit Reporting and the Evolution of Human Resources.

Then the Credit Connection came – I filled him in on the latest legislation and how to fight spam.

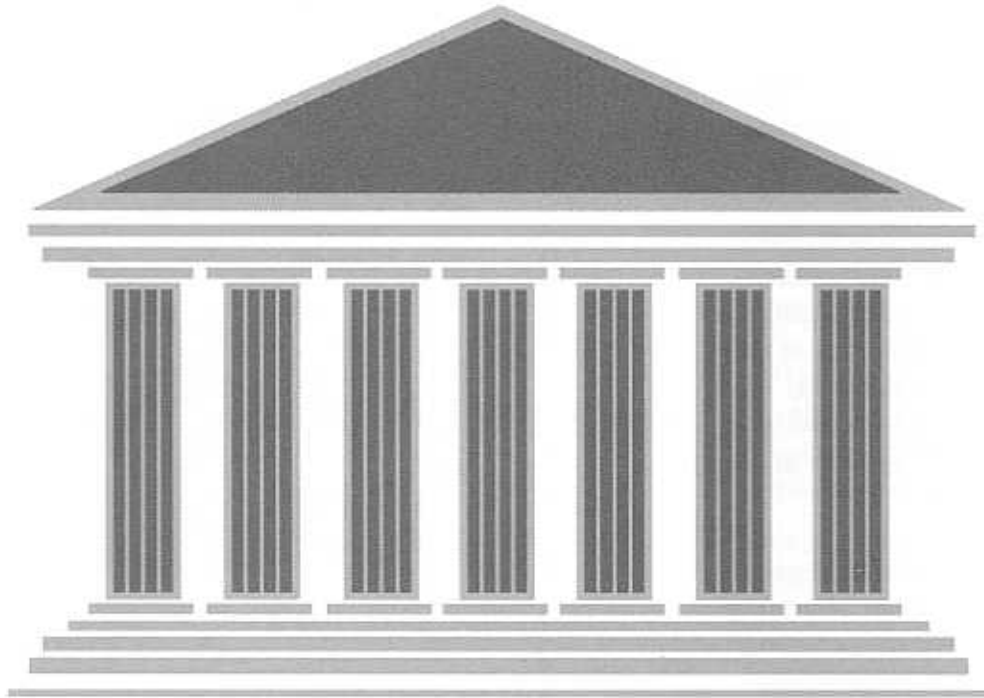
After our last few local association meetings, I was able to give him some tips on who to contact in local law enforcement when we get bad checks and how to find the best business bank accounts.

I just hope I get to the next issue of *The Credit Professional* before he does.

**He thinks I'm a genius.
Thanks, CPI.**

Credit Education Resources Foundation

Building A Strong Foundation



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Credit Application: Purpose and Use

By Abe WalkingBear Sanchez © Copyright 2001 Abe WalkingBear Sanchez www.armg-usa.com All Rights Reserved.

You invest time, money and energy to get to the point where a new customer wants to buy. At this stage a legitimate question is, "How would you like to pay? Cash, check, credit card or on account?" If the customer selects credit terms, you need to be ready to get some information.

By the way, don't assume that all new customers require or desire credit terms.

Purpose of a Credit Application

The two reasons for a Credit Application are:

1. Obtaining information on:
 - A. Who the customer is, i.e. name, address, time in business, type of business, business status, phone / fax / email numbers and address.
 - B. How the customer does business, i.e. PO system, authorized purchasers, partial ship policy, A/P cycle, ship to / bill to, proof of delivery, freight and so on. It is **very important** that this information be asked for going in. Fail to do so and you risk slow payment

and higher costs of doing business for both you and the customer.

C. Who the customer has done business with in the past on credit terms, i.e. trade references.

2. Getting an agreement on the Terms and Conditions of the sale.

- A. payment due dates and late charges
- B. discounts
- C. court costs and attorney's fees (in the event of default)
- D. personal guarantees (may not be binding if it is included in with other terms and conditions)
- E. return authorizations / changes
- F. special orders
- G. partial ships
- H. back orders / substitutions
- I. freight charges
- J. and on and on.

And this is where the problems begin.

Who is supposed to get the credit application filled out and signed? The sales guys? The credit guys? And then there are large customers who don't do credit applications;

if you're lucky you get PO # and a vendors list.

Some customers delay filling out credit applications and this leads to delayed sales and to customers taking their business elsewhere.

One Size May Not Fit All

A major problem with credit applications is that they are preprinted with standard terms and conditions of sale.

There are three key factors to consider in approving a credit sale.

1. the customer's profile (who and how)
2. the customer's past performance (have they ever paid anyone in the past? And if they haven't, what makes you think you're going to be the first?)
3. the value of the product / service to you (the seller) at the time of the sale.

Preprinted credit applications offer everyone the same terms and conditions even before you've had an opportunity to weigh / consider the customer's profile, to check out the customer's past performance,

and to take into consideration the "product value" to you.

With preprinted credit applications, profitable sales may be lost because it's easier to reject the customer, and the sale, than go back in and resell new terms and conditions like down payments, shorter terms, and warehousing arrangements and so on.

"Break-even is good . . . sales beyond break-even are gravy."

An Alternative

Instead of a preprinted credit application with standard terms and conditions of sale, consider use of a "New Customer Information Form" and companion "Account Confirmation."

When a new customer wants to buy on credit terms (open account), the person speaking with the customer should fill out, hopefully on-line, a "New Customer Information Form". Sometimes it may require a follow-up call to someone else at the customer's company to get the needed information, i.e. customer profile (who and how) and trade references. What, who and how? The same profile information you'd ask for on a credit application and information on how the customer does business.

At this point you have time to review the customer's profile, check them out and weigh the "product value" . . . prior to coming up with Terms and Conditions of Sale.

Account Confirmation

Once the decision has been made as to "how" to sell the customer, i.e. standard Terms and Conditions or special terms, put your understanding in a letter / agreement

and e-mail or fax it to the customer for review and acceptance.

What goes in the letter / agreement?

Below is a sample agreement.

Thank you for the opportunity to do business with you. Following is our understanding of the terms and conditions of our relationship. Please review at once and if you're in agreement, sign and date at the bottom and fax us a copy at your fax #. We will be sending out two copies of this confirmation by regular mail; one copy for you to keep and one to be signed and returned to us.

Please call me at your phone number if you have any questions.

Account Confirmation / Agreement

In consideration of credit being extended to Customer Name, I, the below signed hereby agree to the following Terms and Conditions of Sale.

Terms and Conditions

(add, modify or delete items as necessary for your business)

Term of Sale: Payment is due days from date of invoice.

Statements: Statements are sent at the end of each month and detail all of that month's account activity plus late charges (if applicable).

Late Charges: A 1&1/2 % per month (18% APR) late charge will be added to all invoices unpaid after days.

Minimum Credit Purchase: Due to the cost of processing charge orders, we must add a \$ service charge to all purchases under \$.

Returns: Returns must be approved in advance and may be subject to a 10% restocking charge.

Shipping Charges: Unless otherwise directed, all orders are shipped via UPS ground.

Authorized Signature

Date

Last Thoughts on Credit Applications

Don't get caught up in the details involved and lose sight of the big picture. You're extending credit in order to get profitable sales that would otherwise be lost to you. A credit application or New Customer Information Form are steps in the process and not an end to themselves.

Don't get caught up in worrying about offering different terms to different customers, i.e. "price discrimination." You can offer different terms and charge different prices, unless you're doing so to create a monopoly.

And lastly, give some thought to the different categories that your customers fall into. Are they large corporations or government agencies and therefore unlikely to fill out a credit application? Are they Ma and Pa companies that will fill out a credit application? Then put together your "Credit Sales Process" and the tools and forms needed to support it.

Abe WalkingBear Sanchez is the first visionary leader of the profit centered credit and collection movement. Recognized as the leading practitioner in the field, he is the developer of the copyrighted Profit System of Credit and Collection Management, a unique and well proven set of methodologies recognized as the most significant [r]evolution in credit management in the last fifty years. Founder and President of A/R Management Group, Abe is a frequently published author and is featured in several training videos.

A hard hitting and fast paced speaker, Abe brings life and energy to a critical business function whose true potential has yet to be realized by most businesses.

Hair Today... Gone September

A Hair-Raising Fundraiser



On September 11, 2002 at the Oregon State Credit Conference, Betty Temler, District 10 Treasurer, will get a BUZZ CUT. Her hair will be donated to Wigs For Kids.

Proceeds will be split 50/50 between

CAO Scholarship Fund
and
Credit Education Resources Foundation

Send donations to:

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PO Box 234
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Creditors Want What?

By Sharon Gaskell

Consumer Credit Counseling Service of Southern Colorado

Calvin Coolidge once said, "The Business of America is Business." However, in today's society that "Business" includes credit, lots and lots of credit. There are very few goods or services that cannot be obtained with credit. We are all consumers and most of us are on the receiving end of credit in buying a home, automobiles and many other items. Consumers want to have ready access to credit. We expect all creditors to abide by the Consumer Protection Laws and we want to be treated fairly. As consumers we know what we want but do we really know what the creditors expect of us?

Lenders know that credit is convenient and easy for consumers to use. They know that if they increase their business they can increase their profits. They know they can increase their business if they extend a little credit, however many consumers are unaware of the expectations of the lenders. We all know that creditors expect borrowers to pay back the amount borrowed plus an additional charge for the use of the money. Of course, in most cases, if the borrower pays within 30 days there may be no additional charge. True of most things in this world **credit is not free**. Consumers are using future

income to pay for items bought on credit today.

However, most consumers may not know that creditors expect the borrowers to pay regardless of the personal crises or unexpected situations that might occur in the borrower's life. Therefore credit should not be used to increase one's income and one should have an emergency fund to pay for those unexpected expenses. Most creditors have no idea how much credit each borrower can really afford, so borrowers should decide how much credit they can afford to repay.

Creditors expect payment on time and if the borrower is late, the creditor has the right to ask the borrower to pay all the money owed immediately or charge an extra fee until payments are received as agreed. Many creditors refer to this as a **late fee** and this usually is charged one month for the preceding month. This late fee can also continue until all payments that are behind are paid and the account is then considered **current**.

Creditors expect the borrower not to sell any items bought until all payments are made. If the borrower cannot finish paying for an item, the borrower is expected



to give the item back to the creditor, losing all money already paid. If the item cannot be resold for the amount still owed, the borrower may have to pay what is still owed. Credit is not a way to buy what **one cannot afford**. Creditors expect the borrower to be responsible for any damage done to any item bought on credit if it must be returned. Creditors have the right to limit how much credit they will extend. They need capital to pay their bills too.

Credit is not a game. It is serious business that involves responsible use by both the consumer and the credit grantor. By employing a little education and accountability, creditors and consumers can make credit beneficial to all wishing to avail themselves of credit. Many people are unaware of help available to mediate between consumers and lenders. This is where Consumer Credit Counseling Service and other reputable non-profits can help consumers meet their obligations to creditors.

Are you ready for promotion?

Your readiness to move up in your organization depends a lot on how you relate to your boss and co-workers. To find out where you stand, pick the choice that best applies to you.

1. When extra work comes my way, I:
 - a. volunteer if I have time
 - b. volunteer even though I'm not sure I can do it in time.
 - c. suggest someone else to do it.
2. If I must admit a mistake, I:
 - a. wait until I have a good excuse.
 - b. do so immediately.
 - c. wait until I can prove I learned from the mistake.
3. When I talk with colleagues, I:
 - a. concern myself somewhat with confirming that they understand.
 - b. assume my words are always received as I intended.
 - c. question them to make sure they understand every part of my message.
4. If I help co-workers, I:
 - a. let them know I expect them to reciprocate.
 - b. say nothing to make them think they "owe" me.
 - c. consider it something I should do to get along with them.

Analysis: You're ready for promotion if your answers were: 1. a, 2. b, 3. c and 4. b. If your answers were: 1. c, 2. c, 3. a and 4. c, you're on the right track but need to work harder to qualify for a promotion. And if you picked 1. b, 2. a, 3. b and 4. a, you're not even ready for the first rung on the promotion ladder.

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Spring, 2002

Funny Money

All of these coded words are associated with credit. Find them using a simple substitution code. HINT: Code A = Plaintext C

EUMCSCBM

WYYFEAWMEPU

RLC RWMC

MCSGB

FWMC KCCB

TWFWUAC

GEUEGLG YWQGCUM

SCGEM

ASCREM FEGEM

BMWCMGCUM

Answers (in order): interest, application, due date, terms, late fees, balance, minimum payment, remit, credit limit, statement

Turning Down Job Offers

By Charles Heintzelman, MPCE



Turning down a job offer, especially during this tough job market, could be considered by many to be an act of lunacy. But saying no to an offer, especially one that doesn't hold anything new in terms of responsibilities or salary, can be as important to your career as those offers that you do accept.

To be sure, rejecting an offer is not without risk. You might not get a better counteroffer, or you might burn bridges you might wish to cross in the future.

The keys to deftly turning down an offer are to carefully consider why you want to turn it down, letting the prospective employer down as gently as possible, and avoiding outright rejection of the offer.

"It (the offer) needs to be considered," said Arlene Larsen, a career management consultant in the Phoenix office of Right Management. "You don't want to burn bridges. You could be meeting that person in another organization

or they could refer you to another position or department."

There are any number of reasons why you might want to turn down a job offer. First, you should be taking every interview you're offered, if for nothing else to practice your interview technique. As a result, you might get an offer from a company that you have no real interest in working for, according to Dave DeLuca, senior vice president and general manager in the Phoenix office of Less Hecht Harrison, a career counseling firm. He encourages clients to go on "throw-away" interviews, and oftentimes those result in unwanted offers.

Job seekers actually should reject more offers. All too often, job hunters succumb to anxiety about not working and take the first offer that comes along, says Eugene Krohn, the managing director in the Phoenix office of Andrew Stevens & Associates, a career management firm. "They feel that this is an actual opportunity... and are afraid to wait for the second and

third offers to come, which will happen," he said. "They are frightened. They want to be employed. That is the gamble. They may be taking something that is not exactly what they are looking for and may be accepting less income."

If the offer is something that's even remotely close to what you are looking for, then Kroehn suggests never outright turning it down.

All the problems you might have with an offer—the benefits, salary, responsibilities—can be negotiated, transforming an unattractive offer into something you desire. If you've interviewed with other companies and are waiting to hear from them, then stall for time before rejecting it.

"The big talent is to be able to keep those balls in the air while you wait for the most attractive offer," DeLuca said.

Ask to get the offer in writing and to be given a week to ten days to study the benefits package and to

talk the offer over with your family, Larsen said. If the offer is from an in-town company, you might be able to buy two weeks, longer if the offer would require relocation.

"You want to thank them for their offer and say that you are excited about the opportunity and that this is an important decision that you need some time to think about," she said.

"If you were brave enough to tell them what's going on and they force your hand right away, it's not a good sign," DeLuca said. "Maybe you don't want to be with them."

Once you have an offer on the table, you should then inform the other companies that you interviewed with that you have a firm offer in hand. Ask the other company where they might be in the decision process and when they might make a move. "They may make an offer, and then you have a decision to make," Larsen said.

Having more than one offer on the table is the most enviable position a job seeker can be in, resulting in better benefits, salary and opportunities.

When you do have to tell one company that you are taking the other offer, inform not just the human resources person who extended the offer, but also the top executive you have interviewed with and anyone who might have recommended you.

Charlie Heintzelman, MPCE, is the past president of Business Professionals Connect, the Phoenix CPI local association.

A 60-day Settling-in Plan

Make quick progress during the first 60 days of a new job. Stick to this schedule:

First 14 days: Cultivate four allies. These days, fitting into an organization's culture is almost as important as hard work.

Set up lunches with a teammate, a key employee in another department, a supportive higher-up and an in-the-know political insider who monitors the grapevine. Ask lots of questions to learn about the culture.

First 30 days: Meet with your boss to compare notes. Ask "How am I doing?" Then report what you're working on in order of importance and ask for feedback.



First 45 days: Update your job description from the one you received on Day One. Write a more accurate summary of your duties using what you've learned in the first month and a half. Ask your boss to approve your new version. That helps you stay focused on what matters most.

First 60 days: Produce concrete results. Pick a short-term project that harnesses your strengths and complete it.

Example: The boss seeks your help in designing and leading focus groups. You agree to plan and run a series of successful group meetings while still tackling all your regular duties.

Adapted from "Tips for Employees" <http://pm-resources.com>

Book Review

It's Your Ship: Management Techniques from the Best Damn Ship in the Navy. By D. Michael Abrashoff. Warner Books. May 2002. Hardcover, 256 pages. \$24.95.

What does managing your business have in common with running a Navy Destroyer? Quite a lot, according to former U.S. naval commander Mike Abrashoff.

"The most important thing a captain can do is to see the ship from the eyes of the crew." With this philosophy in mind, Abrashoff was able to raise the retention rate of the U.S.S. Benfold from 28% to 100% in just 12 months. The Benfold went from having the worst morale in the Navy to winning the Spokane Trophy for having the fleet's highest combat readiness.

According to Abrashoff, good leaders, whether in business or the military:

1. Lead by example
2. Communicate purpose and meaning
3. Create a climate of trust
4. Look for results, not salutes
5. Take calculated risks
6. Move beyond standard operating procedures
7. Listen aggressively
8. Strengthen others
9. Generate unity
10. Improve quality of life.

"Leadership is about empowering with clear rules and guidelines," says Abrashoff. And his leadership techniques will work on land as well as at sea.



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Local Association _____

Daytime Phone: _____

Fax: _____

_____ My check for \$10 is enclosed.

_____ Charge my MasterCard/Visa/Discover

Card # _____

Exp. Date _____ Signature _____

Creating an Interactive Web Site

By Kaye Vivian

Today an increasing number of professional services firms have web sites on the Internet. Unfortunately, most of these web sites are little more than the equivalent of an on-line brochure. The web is a dynamic medium, and effective web sites invite participation rather than viewing. To energize your web site and get people to spend time there getting to know your firm, try the following:

Content, content, content! If you have a specialty niche or unique expertise, demonstrate it through articles, checklists, reprints, copies of speeches. It's not expensive to convert older documents into a hyperlinked archive.

Games or entertainment. Everyone likes to be entertained. Create something that will teach about your business or solicit leads.

Training or on-line seminars. Using Powerpoint or other programs, it is possible to create mini-seminars on topics related to your specialty area that can be used on the Internet.

Bulletin boards (discussion groups). For very little expense you can set up a moderated discussion group where people post and reply to messages on topics you can choose.

Live discussions. Interest in live presentations and interactive discussions on-line is increasing as technology like CU-SeeMe and NetMeeting becomes more widely available. Host a monthly discussion group on topics relevant to your specialty niche or current events in the profession.

What's Hot in Web-Based Communications?

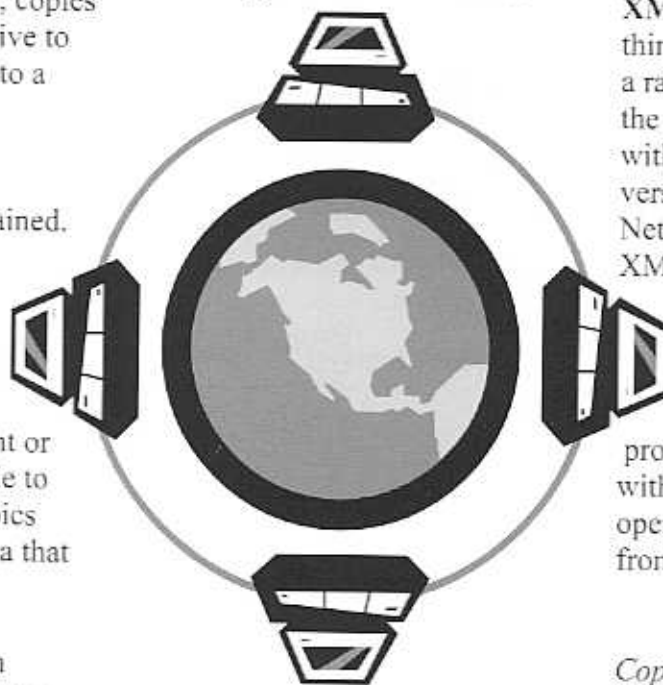
Most companies have Internet and/or Intranet web sites these days. And while "flashy technology" is not what drives

Java. Java is a programming language used to create "applets" that can transcend various operating systems. A primary business use is to access legacy databases of information in various formats and make them available across platforms.

Dynamic HTML. A new version of HTML, the language used to program web pages for display. DHTML allows designers to design in layers and use style sheets without losing tables. It can also access databases.

XML. Considered "the next big thing" for the Web, XML provides a range of options that will involve the whole computer interacting with the Internet. Upcoming versions of Microsoft and Netscape browsers will support XML.

ActiveX. Primarily used on Windows-based machines, ActiveX is a Microsoft program useful for companies with a lot of DOS-based operations, allowing them to run from Internet web pages.



successful communication endeavors, it's still important to plan your sites now based on what is coming down the road. Here are some quick explanations of terms you may already be hearing about.

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Membership News

The following people have joined CPI since the last magazine was published. We welcome these new members.

Capitol City, AL
Shirley A. Simmons
Richard C. Dean Jr.,
Attorney

Lake Charles, LA
Steve Farrell
UC Lending
Beth Kelly
Habitat for Humanity
Helen Manuel
Hibernia National Bank
Ann O'Reilly

Jackson, TN
Tina P. Ray
Wells Fargo Home
Mortgage
Deborah D. Tyler
Jackson Storm Window
& Door Co.

Fremont, NE
Debra Jost
Fremont National Bank
Karen L. Kliment
Kid Care

Lawton, OK
C. Kay Abbott
Bankfirst

Alamo (San Antonio), TX
James L. Brister
Law Offices of James L.
Brister, PLLC
Carl Harris
Interstate Adjusters

Alamo, TX, continued
Kyle Neill
Kyle E. Neill, P.C.
Marty Reyes
San Antonio Federal
Credit Union
Denise Sanchez
Kyle E. Neill, P.C.
Linda Joyce Simbeck
San Antonio Federal
Credit Union

Anchorage, AK
Kathleen L. Adams
OSI/Alaska Financial
Services
Terry Birkholz
Municipal Light & Power
Vicky E. Delaune
Hickel Investment Co.
Ingrid A. Holloway
Hickel Investment Co.
Kristin M. Lutes
Hickel Investment Co.
Michelle MLP
Municipal Light & Power
Edward Witterholt
ACS

Great Falls, MT
Darla L. Hoover
Credit Associates

Central Oregon, OR
Yvonne Clark
Professional Credit
Services
Ninna Dague
Bank of the Cascades
Wes Fisher
Credit Associates

Pendleton, OR
Carolyn Ann Burgess
VESTAS-AWT

Pendleton, OR, cont.
Arthur John Hill
Blue Mountain
Community College
Barbara Jo Holman
Umatilla Reservation
Housing Authority

Certification News

The following people have received professional certification since the last issue of The Credit Professional.

Master Professional Credit Executive (MPCE)

Shirley Cox
Concord (Cabarrus County), NC
Corrie Edmonson
Atlanta, GA

Professional Credit Executive (PCE)

Cathy Casper
Concord (Cabarrus County), NC
Anita Dingleline
Jackson, TN

Professional Credit Specialist (PCS)

Joyce Baughm
Concord (Cabarrus County), NC
Elaine Humphrey
Kannapolis Cabarrus County), NC

Ann Sims
Concord (Cabarrus County), NC

Professional Credit Associate (PCA)
Carrie Lou Baker
Concord (Cabarrus County), NC

The following people have received recertification or upgrades.

Barbara Bibb, MPCE
Gary (Northwest Indiana), Indiana

Terri Downing, PCE
Mount Vernon, WA

Paul Greve, PCE
Winston-Salem, NC

Vicki LeDuc, MPCE
Centralia (Lewis County), WA

Yvonne Long, PCE
Clarkston, WA

Lori Orton, MPCE
Portland, OR

Harriet Samad, PCA
San Angelo, TX

Betty Temler, PCS
Mid-Columbia, OR

Margie Vaught, PCE
Ellensburg, WA

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Firm Name _____ # of Years _____

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525-B. North Laclede Station Road
St. Louis, MO 63119
Phone: 314-961-0031 Fax: 314-961-0040

Credit Professionals International Annual Conference

June 13-16, 2002
San Antonio, TX



The 2002 Credit Professionals International Conference will be held in San Antonio, Texas June 13-16, 2002 at the San Antonio Marriott Northwest Hotel.

Once again, the members of CPI will meet for education sessions, association business meetings and special events, such as our Annual Walk-A-Thon and a trip to San Antonio's famous River Walk.

For more information on the International Conference, please contact Credit Professionals International, 525-B N. Laclède Station Road, St. Louis, MO 63119. Phone: 314/961-0031. Fax: 314/961-0040. Email: creditpro@creditprofessionals.org. Web site: www.creditprofessionals.org

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