

Ethical Theft ... how to steal business from your competition !

By Don Farrell

You are on an airplane and you strike up a conversation with the person next to you. She is the decision maker of a company that buys your competitor's products and services. You have such a great exchange during the flight that she asks you for your card and gives you the opportunity to bid for their business. You do and you win the account. Ethical or unethical way to liberate business from your competition? Every single one of you should said very ethical. But, it is not. The explanation will come later ... try another one ...

... you have been unsuccessful for quite some time now at trying to get into see a large prospective client. You read in the paper that they are having a meeting at a local hotel and in fact, your competition is sponsoring the meeting. You know that most meetings have an AM and PM coffee break. You know that the AM break usually occurs at around 10:30-11. Sure enough, you see as you enter the meeting room area of this hotel that your potential client has people milling all around talking to one another over coffee. You don't know who is in charge, so you walk up to the nearest person with a nametag on and you pardon the interruption. You ask them who is in charge and he points to another gentleman and says, "David Hart over there is the VP of Operations ... he's the main man." You get close to Mr. Hart and you wait for a break in his conversation and you approach him saying " ... Mr. Hart, my name is John May (hand him your card) and I know that this is not the time nor place for this conversation, but I would like to speak with you about doing business with my firm ... can we set something up for later this week after this meeting has concluded?" Ethical or not? Very ethical! Here's why:

You are the top dog, or one of the top dogs in your company and you are the one who is supposed to make it rain. Your employees are counting on you to provide for them. If each employee has 1.75 family members ... now each employee counting on you is closer to being 3 people. Add in all your vendor partners and their families who are counting on you to be their client. Mortgage payments, rent, car loans, college educations, trips to visit grandparents ... sometimes just enough to eat are all the vitals that your employees and their families are counting on you to help them provide. They are not looking to be social cases, they just want you to be the leader of a company that gives them a fighting chance to succeed. You drive the revenues and give them the tools and direction they hunger for and off they will go ... fighting the good fight to deliver your reputation. If you don't feel that hurt when you have to lay them off, or cut their pay or reduce their hours, then I would strongly urge you to think back to those days when you lived paycheck to paycheck like so many of your employees do.



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Ethical vs. Unethical ... what is right and wrong when it comes to stealing business? Simply put, nobody is a good enough salesperson to come in and take a client of yours if they are loyal to you and your company. Period. If they are able to take your business then you did not deserve it. Same with your good employees who leave you for your competition. So what is ethical? It is easier to define unethical so let's do that one ... not doing all you can within the limits of the law to provide for your employees. End of story. So now, think for a moment or two, how many times did you not pull out all the stops to acquire and account from the competition. In doing so, how many people did you let down?

What do you need in order to steal business? First off, courage and commitment to provide for you and your family and those of your fellow employees. Next, you need to know what companies use your competition (that's really what you are stealing). Then you need to make a loyalty driving sales call on those potential accounts. You are not guessing if they have potential for you they are already buying. These are the best leads by far to be following up on vs. calling on people you don't even know have potential. Lastly, your employees need to know what you did for them and how they too must do their part to earn loyalty each and every day with these clients.

By the way, remember the airplane story that lead off this article? It is unethical because if you had called on that client a year ago, they probably would have used you starting then. What was unethical about that story is the fact that you did not provide for your employees sooner.

About the Author

Don Farrell is the author of "Ethical Theft ... how to steal business." He is a speaker who conducts training workshops and consults select clients on how to create a unique sales and service culture. His clients thrive in recessions or good times alike because they have adopted his philosophy of liberating from the competition. To find out more about Don's company or to buy his book, you can go to www.FreshRevenues.com or call 731-514-1589.

