

Sunday 9th September

Weekly tips and ideas for business professionals



The search for value

Negotiation Update



Dry as a bone in the Kalahari (and that's the last of the holiday pics)

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Sunday morning...

Sunday morning in New York and it's 30 degrees and hot... that's the way we like it.

I'm here until Tuesday when I fly to Houston and then on Friday off to LA and a quick detour to Las Vegas before spending a week in Carlsbad in California. It's nice when you can mix business with pleasure.

Apologies again this week to the MNOP people who got multiple copies last week. At least it was only 3 copies this time!

I'm in some sort of sports heaven. Listened to England beat India on the internet, watched England beat Israel and USA simultaneously in a sports bar then watched Justine Henin win the tennis and then watched A-Rod work miracles for the Yankees. Today we'll get Lewis Hamilton home in the Grand Prix and everything's well in the world. Even Western Province won yesterday in South Africa.

I'm in a hotel with 117 channels of rubbish on the television...more is definitely less. The game is how many consecutive channels can you jump to showing commercials.

Have a good one...with 3 tips as usual.

This week I...

I'm in Borders and Barnes and Noble country so I'm looking at books while I'm in the USA but not finding too much that's new. I'm really enjoying reading "Around Africa on my bicycle" by Riaan Manser and like all good travel books it gives you a good read as well as a travelogue. Africa has some good travel books these days. Kingsley Holgate is doing wonderful things and this is equally as good which is praise indeed.

And finally...

(09-06) 13:01 PDT Farmington, Maine (AP) -

A 65-year-old woman who went into a Farmington supermarket to buy wine was turned away because she didn't have an ID with her. But Barbara Skapa of Mount Vernon says that won't happen again.

"I'll be bringing my driver's license with me from now on," Skapa said.

She normally carries her license. But with her leg in a cast, Skapa was being driven by a friend when she went into the Hannaford Bros. market last week in and picked up several items, including a few bottles of wine.

The cashier told her it was policy to check for identification, said Skapa, who believes "no one would mistake me for 30 or even 40." Skapa asked if her friend could buy the wine for her, but that was disallowed too because it's considered "third-party" purchasing. Skapa asked to see the manager.

A spokeswoman for the supermarket chain, Rebecca Howes, said Hannaford's new policy is to check IDs of anyone who looks under 45 and wants to buy alcohol. The previous policy was to check for proof of age of those who look younger than 30.

The policy is not unlike those of many other Maine businesses and chains who want to stop minors from illegally buying alcoholic beverages and cigarettes.

In 2005, the state Legislature passed a law that requires identification from those who look under 27 years old before they can buy either.

The Big Apple chain's 90 stores in Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont require clerks to require identification from anyone, regardless of age, who buys alcohol or tobacco. The strict policy went into effect after two Portland stores sold alcohol to minors in one night.

Earlier this year, some Portland establishments tightened their ID policies following an undercover sting of dozens of bars and convenience stores that led to 20 summonses for selling alcohol to underage customers. One restaurant, the Flatbread Co., told employees to card anyone ordering drinks who looks under 40.



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Management Tips

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New company

I was talking recently to a manager who'd recently changed companies. They'd moved from an old established industry giant to a new start up which was growing rapidly.

It wasn't surprising that they were having difficulties finding a way forward in terms of the new culture and the the organisational processes.

As we talked I showed them the models of Charles Handy that he explains in his "Gods of Management" book. In his jargon she was in an Apollo company that wanted to become a Zeus company and was having growing pains.

Handy has written many books on management. His style is easy and approachable and if you've not tried his work before then "Gods of Management" is a good entry. It's good an interesting inventory to complete to test how good a fit you are with your corporate culture.

It's good to see a book like this have such practical applications.



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Sales Tips

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Scope creep

I do a great deal of work in the professional services sector and all the companies I work with suffer from scope creep.

Scope creep exists when the job starts small (at a small price) but grows in the execution into a big job without any real increase in price.

Sellers are often guilty of this themselves. A client wants a price reduction so they reduce the scope but are then too cowardly to say "no" when the client asks for little extras on the way.

Remember...the client gets what the client pays for. Obviously we show good will and some investment in the contract but if you keep allowing the client to increase the work then the price must increase also.

The next time you hear a client say..."Could you just do this while you're at it..." you must either say "no" or price up the extra work. Gifts are fine and charity has to end somewhere.



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Negotiation Tips

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Markers and emotion

It's always good to see negotiation in action. Here's what I saw this week in New York.

A mother and small child are looking on a junk stall at the assorted "antiques". The young boy sees a toy...a space shuttle...and his eyes light up. He grabs it.

The mother then looks at the seller and asks how much the seller wants for it. The seller puts down their marker. The mother then looks at the child and says..."sorry, sweetie but the nasty man wants to charge more than Mummy can afford. You'll have to put it back." Tears flow.

5 minutes later Mum walks away with the heavily discounted Space Shuttle.

What a double act.

(I tried to write Mom but my fingers wouldn't let me!).