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## Networking for life

By Ranil Herath, MCIInst.M., RPM



Ranil Herath, MCIInst.M., RPM

Most of us think of networking when we are out of work, looking for a new job, venturing out on our own to build a new business or struggling to keep our own businesses afloat. This perhaps may be the worst time to start networking! Networking is not only about 'what's in it for me.' It is also an opportunity to see 'what I can do for the other person.' I find that this approach to networking has allowed me to build and sustain an extensive network of great professionals around the world.

It was only a few weeks ago that I met an entrepreneur in Calgary through LinkedIn, a professional networking site. Though his work did not relate directly to my organization, he was doing some interesting pro-

jects and I was keen to learn more. So I invited him to visit the campus for a meeting. We shared information about what our organizations are doing and what our continuing organizational needs were. We discussed how some of the work he did could benefit our students at DeVry Institute of Technology when they are searching for employment opportunities. I also shared that we were recruiting for some positions and talent was hard to come by for some of these vacancies. Within a week of us meeting, he recommended a person as a possible candidate to fill one of the vacancies that I had mentioned to him. The interview process found him to be the best candidate for the job. He was hired and started working for DeVry in October.

This is a good example of how we should approach networking. I did not meet with an aim to fulfill a business need. I wanted to make a connection, which I did. I was genuinely interested to in getting to know another colleague. However, in the process he was able to help my organization and I was able to help

his friend. Had I approached networking as a way to 'meet a need,' I would not have made the connection, let alone be of help to one another.

The key to good networking is building long-term professional relationships. I feel that networking can be most rewarding and beneficial when there is no immediate need to be fulfilled. This gives you the opportunity to approach and get to know people from a wide range of backgrounds and positions. Because you are not out to 'get something' from networking, it becomes easier to spend time getting to know and sharing information with others. As a result, others maybe more receptive to you and would be more likely to want to establish a connection.

It is unfortunate that most people tend to seek out those who hold key positions in organizations that can assist in helping to get jobs and opening up business opportunities. It is also unfortunate that some people approach networking as a race to give out

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## Networking

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and collect the most number of business cards. I have seen this at many networking events. Such individuals are quick to tell their story and why one should invest in their products/services and move on to the next person. These are very narrow approaches to networking. It's difficult to establish a good network of people that you can tap into for years, if your approach is short-termed and as a result you may not reap the best benefits out of that connection.

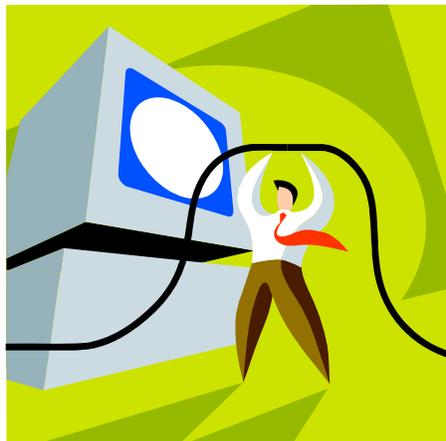
Good networking is also about helping others to make connections. This immediately takes away the need to put yourself first and have the 'what's in it for me' frame of mind and instead apply a 'how do I get to know you' and 'what can I do for you' attitude. This approach will also open up your mind to network with not only those who are holding senior and key positions in organizations but also people who are starting up and who maybe seeking for opportunities just as you do. Throughout my career I have always been actively engaged in helping someone who is starting out. It gives me great satisfaction to help someone else just as I have been helped at many times in my career. It is my way of sharing what I have received.

I recently took on a person I had known for sometime under my wings. He was a new immigrant and was struggling to establish himself in the Canadian job market despite his excellent credentials. I coached and helped him on building up a resume and facing interviews. I also put him in touch with potential employers and professionals who may assist him in securing employment. I not only introduced him to my network but also made it a point to talk to my network about the person who will be calling on them soon and why he would be an asset. Through one such connection, he was able to secure a management level po-

sition in a Toronto based firm.

While one makes the connections and builds on relationships, it is also important to maintain them by keeping in touch. Keeping in touch with your contacts via email, over coffee or lunch will allow you to get to know them well and their ongoing needs and also give you an opportunity to update them on your ongoing needs and goals. It is also important to find ways of passing on new opportunities to your contacts or connecting your contacts with each other, if specific needs exist.

When I was working in Toronto, I



connected with an organization that was looking for a specific training for their engineers. I realized that one of my contacts, who specialized in this type of training, may be of help to them. I took the time to introduce the two parties which resulted in the company getting their training requirement fulfilled and my trainer contact getting additional business. So, it is important to know how best you can connect the opportunity with the right person as well. It builds trust and goodwill.

There are many ways one can network. While networking events are good opportunities, there are some very useful online tools and Web sites that can help you connect with people from all backgrounds. Web sites such as LinkedIn, Xing, Konekts, eCademy and Ryze can help you con-

nect with thousands of other professional like yourselves. Professional membership bodies are another great source and tool. They not only provide networking opportunities with those in the same profession or industry but also will help you to gain additional credentials to enhance your profile. Community service organizations such the Rotary Club can provide great opportunities to build fellowship while serving the community. Volunteering for charity organizations and not-for-profit organizations can also help you build connections and friendships while reaping the benefits of giving back to the community. Stepping up to service on committees or boards of organizations can also open up doors to great networking opportunities.

At DeVry Calgary and the more than 90 locations of DeVry University spread out in the US, students are encouraged to start networking and connecting with the industry well before they graduate. For example, we host the Calgary Chamber of Commerce Small Business Seminars to which some of our students get invited. Not only do these students get to network with business people in Calgary, they also get to listen to talks on timely topics. In our CARD 405 - Career Development course DeVry students learn career strategies, resume building and job search tactics, etc. The final project our students complete is a real life simulation and solution to a business or technological problem. We have professionals from the industry come in to the campus to judge these projects. This allows our students to showcase their talents to the industry experts and at times get hired by them.

Building and fostering relationships is the key to growing a great network. To do this you must invest your time and stay connected. If you are a lifelong networker, you would already have a great network that you can tap into

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with ease and reap ample rewards. But if you are someone who did not network much and wondering when to get started, the best time is NOW! All you need is an open mind and a heart to genuinely connect with others.

Ranil Herath is the President of the Calgary-based, degree-granting institution DeVry Institute of Technology ([www.devry.ca](http://www.devry.ca)). DeVry Calgary offers a range of undergraduate degree programs in Business and Technology at their Calgary campus and online across Canada. Ranil serves as the Chair of the Canadian Institute of Marketing, a membership body of marketing professionals in Canada.

Ranil holds a BA from Delhi University in India, a Post Graduate Diploma in sales and marketing management from the National Institute of Sales in India, and a MBA from Colombo University in Sri Lanka. In addition, Ranil holds the F.CIM designation from the Canadian Institute of Management and the RPM and M.CInstM designations from the Canadian Institute of Marketing. Ranil is a member of the Rotary club of Calgary downtown, Calgary Chamber of Commerce, Calgary Petroleum Club and the Ranchmen's Club.

When he lived in Toronto, he was a mentor with the Mentoring Partnership, an initiative of the Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council (TRIEC) to mentor internationally educated professionals in their integration to Canadian work force and society. He also served as a board director of the Progress Career Planning Institute (PCPI), Canadian Institute of Marketing and the Canadian Institute of Management – Toronto.

Ranil is an active networker and builds lifelong networks in the many cities, provinces and countries that he lives and works in. He also mentors high potential individuals in growing their careers and networking. Connect with Ranil on LinkedIn or you can e mail him at [rherath@devry.edu](mailto:rherath@devry.edu).

DeVry University operates as DeVry Institute of Technology in Calgary, Alberta.



## Leadership—today and tomorrow

By Ron (Doc) Halliday, MBA, M.CInst.M., RPM., FCIInst.M., CMC



Ron "Doc" Halliday  
MCIInst.M., RPM., FCIInst.M

The belief that leaders are born couldn't be further from the truth. Leadership is an art. Much of its mystery is founded in sound principles of understanding human nature. The mantle of leadership occurs when a leader is able to rally others to a cause, can inspire total commitment, understands, and is aware of the psychological needs of those he/she leads. Leaders can positively change a culture by living the values established to guide its conduct – by keeping promises. Keeping one's word will communicate sincerity and trustworthiness to the entire organization and ultimately foster success or change, just as breaching one's commitments will have a significant impact on the entire organization. Evidence of conduct is far more persuasive than shallow promises glibly conveyed in a corporate speech. Beyond character traits and a dynamic personality, new research indicates that the following seven competencies are most critical for influential leaders:

- Leading people
- Strategic planning
- Managing change
- Inspiring commitment
- Resourcefulness
- Doing 'whatever it takes'
- Being a quick study

Asking yourself how you measure up against these legitimate benchmarks for evaluating leadership competency

is a worthwhile exercise. The habit of asking tough questions can bring extraordinary clarity. For individuals, teams and organizations alike, few things shape us as much as the questions we ask or those we fail to ask. Questions like: Do I have the ability to direct and motivate people? Can I translate my vision into realistic business strategies, including long-term objectives? Am I able to lead and manage change, implementing strategies to facilitate organizational change? Do I recognize and reward employee achievements? Do I work effectively with others while persevering under adverse conditions? Am I committed to adapting quickly and mastering new technical or business knowledge? What am I doing to improve my leadership skills? What am I doing to help others improve their leadership skills? If I am taking action, am I doing enough?



Leadership begins with humility, genuine interest in people, and good listening skills. People will naturally be interested in what is said when they sense authenticity and sincere interest which translates into their trusting what's being said. The best of the breed are givers. As givers, they understand that the only way to get what they want is by first helping others get what they want. A leader possesses a conscious awareness of his/her strengths, weaknesses and inner beliefs which are intrinsic to forming the culture of the business.

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## Leadership

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Leaders communicate a clear vision, an idealized picture of what the business will be in the future, so that employees can believe in and invest themselves in making that a reality. A vision defines what the business is, why it exists, and where it fits in the grand scheme of things. A shared vision exists when every person in the organization understands the destination and sees how their role is critical to achieving it. A shared vision helps guide the behavior of all employees and can lead to productivity and efficiency. It builds and strengthens loyalty through involvement and sets a high standard of excellence and a sense of integrity that inspires people to align their energies in a common direction.

People oriented leaders are empathic and have the desire to understand those who do not think, act, and feel as they do, and therefore they have loyal followers. Sensitivity to others' feelings seems to be largely instinctive and usually developed early in our lives; however, there are ways to hone one's empathy. Leaders gain the respect of others regardless of their decisions, because they have taken the time to listen to other points of view before making those decisions.

Consistency is a derivative of honesty, that eliminates ambiguity. People depend on the trust they place in leaders as a touchstone in times of change. With constant change being the reality, the values of an organization must remain fixed while it adapts strategies and tactics to meet unforeseen changes. People look to leaders for direction and a sense of organizational purpose. Stay tuned.

Ron 'Doc' Halliday, CEO / Strategic Imagineer  
 doc@twincreekmedia.com  
 www.twincreekmedia.com  
 Office: 250-762-4001  
 Cell: 250-718-1052



## An exemplary social marketing program

By Dr. Ranjan Madanayake, DBA, CPM, FCMP, FSPMgt, FSBP, MCIInstM, RPM, MMA, MNZIM, MIM (SL), MSLIM



Dr. Ranjan Madanayake, MCIInstM, RPM

A good example of an excellent social marketing program would be the one that took place over three decades ago (1971) when a relatively backward society was exposed to the mass marketing of condoms in Sri Lanka. The International Planned Parenthood Federation found that the population growth in the country was very rapid and was near 'population explosion'. It was of concern, as growth was mainly among the masses, most of whom were below the poverty line barely managing their day-to-day needs. Poverty breeds poverty and not the rich or middle class, hence the problem of excess population became more complicated.

### Population Crisis

Department of Census and Statistics 1999

| Year | Pop'n '000 | Inc.  | % Inc. |
|------|------------|-------|--------|
| 1871 | 2,400      |       |        |
| 1921 | 4,497      | 2,097 | 87.3%  |
| 1971 | 12,689     | 8,192 | 182.1% |

The increase from 1871 to 1921 was 87% while 1921 to 1971 period was 182%. The increase between the two 50 year periods was 428%. This was a very disturbing sign, as the trend was on a significant increase.

Department of Census and Statistics 1999

| Year | Pop'n  | Inc.  | % Inc. |
|------|--------|-------|--------|
| 1953 | 8,097  |       |        |
| 1963 | 10,582 | 2,485 | 30.6%  |

The seriousness can be seen from the above, where the increase was 30.6% for the 10 years from 1953 to 1963. Deaths have not been taken into account in the above statistics.

### Initiating the program

It started by identifying the problem and asking the question how do we curtail this? Marketing research was extensive and one of the main things identified was that at the lower income levels, there was no entertainment other than liquor and sex. There was no TV, and cinemas were few and far between. The number of children in a family was like the steps of a stairway. Reducing pregnancies was a major goal.

This needed mass education, but there was no television broadcasting in Sri Lanka at that time, and in fact TV came 10 years later in 1981. Education had to be done by other direct and indirect methods. Among other methods for family planning were use of a condom or a pill. These were the only available methods at that time in 1971.

The tactic favoured for family planning was to encourage men to use a condom. Condoms were used in the sex trade to prevent venereal diseases and for safe sex. The challenge was to encourage men to use a condom at home. Such was the social stigma attached to the product. Marketers knew that an unprecedented approach was needed.

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## Social marketing

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### Research

Research findings were critical where condoms were associated with social bias, inconvenience, spontaneity, planning, lack of awareness and above all embarrassment to obtain condoms from a retailer. But research also pointed to the fact that males can be encouraged to use condoms. When informed about the problem in population growth, females in general agreed that population was a problem and condom use was a way out.

### Segmentation

The market was segmented to young adults, adults, the young married couples and the older couples. We deliberately stayed away from ethnic groups and religious groups.

### Target

Using the traditional marketing route, we targeted the young married couples, because we knew that the message would reach the others as well.

### Positioning

Positioning wasn't heard of during that era but we could say that the product was positioned as a tool to a happy small family of two, ideally, a boy and a girl. It carried the theme small is beautiful. The hero here was not the product but the customer or the user, the guy.

### Product

It was to be branded in vernacular to make it customer friendly which otherwise was alien being Durex. A team of sales personnel were deployed to find a suitable name, and I was fortunate to be one of them. The following two names were selected, and the first was the one chosen by most of the respondents who were from the target market.

Seema – meaning limit  
Preethi – meaning joy

The first was most meaningful and was subsequently selected. However, when it came up on the flip chart at a pre-launch conference, (there weren't any multi media those days), the Chairman of the advertising agency the late Hon. Dr. Anandatissa de Alwis walked up to the flip chart and with a stroke of his pen made a change in the name that was in vernacular. With it read **Srima**, which was the name of the Prime Minister in office, the first woman Prime Minister of the world Mrs. Srimavo Bandaranaike. Need I say more? Naturally, the second was chosen. Thus Preethi meaning joy became the brand of a condom and the curse of those who bore that name. There were boys and girls here who had that name.

The project being a social marketing program was highly subsidised and had an affordable price tag. Three condoms of international repute, branded Durex in the inner cover, were inserted into an attractively printed boxboard envelope that carried the local brand Preethi. Forty of such envelopes were put into a dispenser, carrying a total of 120 condoms. The dispenser had an opening at the bottom where an envelope could be pulled out conveniently. There were also packs of twenty that can be inserted into a normal carton. The logo had very deep meaning where it showed a hand holding a male gamete. The inference was that you hold back and hence avert a pregnancy. The graphics were very cleverly done.

### Price

Anything given free is not appreciated, hence it was decided that it would be sold just like any other FMCG. Each envelope was sold at .30 cts a very affordable price to the user, each costing only .10 cts. The trade was given a very handsome margin as trade resistance was envisaged.

### Distribution

Mass distribution was the tactic, but how do we get this product into the

outlets in a social background as was in this country? The profit to the trade is one thing but stocking it and selling it – is another. Social responsibility is a concern in any marketing program, but this wasn't the case then. However, this was a key feature in the whole program. The sales force was able to give assurance to the trade that there would be off-take purely due to the promotional support both after the launch and before the launch. The sales force was told to target all pharmacies and grocery retail outlets. They had to sell in a pack of 40 or 20.

The total sales force was sent to their territories to hand a leaflet to the trade they usually visit each month. A hand out in the form of a folder was produced with an envelope containing three samples inside, which appealed to the trade to be supportive and to be an important link in solving the country's problem of over population. All details of the product were given explicitly. These handouts were given prior to their normal sales visit so that they would read and understand the product without the salesperson having to explain. This obviates the salesperson from confronting any embarrassment or giving any details. They simply delivered it and requested retailers to read it.

A week after the visit, the sales force returned with the usual stock of products and the condoms as the new addition. When they entered the outlets they took with them a carton and the point of purchase material. A planned sale talk was delivered seeking support of the trade.

### Promotion

There was no television at that time and only media were press, radio and cinema. Two weeks before the distribution process took place all the newspapers ran a teaser campaign. The logo – depicting the male gamete held by a male hand, giving the idea of a male

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## Social marketing

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holding back his own gamete was the only visual. This created a buzz. In the week before the launch, the visual changed and the logo had the brand PREETHI below it. This brought about more curiosity. Finally the product was introduced to the market and just the day before this, the complete press advertisements were published. This was one integrated campaign. Following are the promotional tools used.

The salesperson visited the outlets with a dispenser of 40s, leaflets and a pouch to hold the leaflets. These leaflets explained the details of the product, and shelf strips both horizontal and vertical were available to support and enhance the impact of the dispenser pack, show-cards to fix inside the store and a tin plate to be fixed outside the store so that people on the road would see it and know that the store sold Preethi.

If anybody wants to know and asks about the product, all the shopkeeper had to do was to tell the person inquiring to read the leaflet. Not a word need to be spoken and that was deliberate, to avoid dialogue. The entire advertising campaign had a very serious angle to it, always focussing on the population problem. This austere approach was a winner. Otherwise, it may have been treated as a joke and even something vulgar. In fact, the product commanded respect from everybody. There was however a snag. School children wanted to know what it was. The planners envisaged this and decided to leave it in the hands of the parents.

In addition to press, radio and cinema supported the program. There were also house visits and meetings in bazaars by Population Services International. Our local Family Planning Association was also an important stakeholder.

### Post launch synopsis

The success of this campaign brought several persons from countries having similar problems to study and implement a program suitable for them. It must be said that this fully integrated social marketing program was one-of-a-kind of that era and it was delivered with much commitment by all the participants such as the International Planned Parenthood Federation, Population Services International, Family Planning Association, Reckitt and Colman of Ceylon Limited, Unilever Ceylon Limited, and, among others, De Alwis Advertising.

Department of Census and Statistics Internet

| Year | Pop'n '000 | Inc.  | % Inc. |
|------|------------|-------|--------|
| 1971 | 12,689     |       |        |
| 1981 | 14,846     | 2,157 | 16.9%  |
| 1991 | 17,259     | 2,413 | 16.2%  |
| 2001 | 19,015     | 1,759 | 10.1%  |

Following the launch the next period from '71 to '81 we saw a significant drop to 16.9%. In the subsequent 10 years down to 16.2% and from '91 to '01 down to 10.1%. I think every single member who contributed in that program must be honoured. If these visionaries did not do what they did, the population now would have been a staggering 30 million. To comment, mail to [rpmadanayake@slt.net.lk](mailto:rpmadanayake@slt.net.lk).

Dr. Ranjan Madanayake is Author Strategic Marketing Plan – The 12 'P' Model, Sri Lanka. Author PCM Study Text, Sri Lanka Institute of Marketing. Co-author The Marketing Collectibles, New Zealand & Malaysia. Co-author Marketing Skills in Management, India. Co-author & co-editor Marketing Perspectives, Canadian Institute of Marketing, Canada. Honorary member of the International Academic Board, Phoenix International University. Country Director, Sri Lanka and Member of Advisory Council Global Marketing Network, UK.

#### Reference:

Department of Census and Statistics (1999) Statistical Abstract.

## Asia e University, Malaysia soon to be in Sri Lanka



Dr. Ranjan Madanayake Managing Director of Phoenix Business School (Private) Limited (PBS) and Prof. Dato' Dr. Ansary Ahmed President / CEO of Asia e University (AeU), Malaysia (extreme right) exchanging MOU. Also in the picture is Mr. Kapila Dodamgoda Director, PBS (extreme left).

The 8<sup>th</sup> Asia Corporation Dialogue (ACD) Ministerial Meeting for the year 2009 with the support of 31 ACD member countries was held in Sri Lanka in mid October and Sri Lanka was the host nation. Asia e University of Malaysia was initiated at the 5<sup>th</sup> ACD Ministerial Meeting, in Qatar, in May 2006, in the presence of representatives of 28 ACD Governments. Malaysia's proposal to implement the AeU was unanimously accepted and this was reflected in the Doha ACD declaration.

A unique event took place during the meeting in Sri Lanka. President / CEO of AeU, who accompanied the Malaysian delegation, signed an MOU with Dr. Ranjan Madanayake Managing Director of Phoenix Business School (Private) Limited (PBS), Sri Lanka to conduct their academic and professional programs in Sri Lanka.

Prof. Ahmed President / CEO of Asia e University mentioned that Asia e University is a dual mode international university established in Malaysia under the Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD) with the support of 31 ACD member countries including Sri Lanka. AeU programmes focus on affordability and

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## Asia e University

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accessibility. AeU qualifications are approved and supported by the Government of Malaysia and has MQA approval.

Last year at the 7<sup>th</sup> ACD Ministerial meeting in the Republic of Kazakhstan, on 16<sup>th</sup> October, the role of AeU was reaffirmed as an instrument for human capacity building, closing digital divide, increasing higher education accessibility and promoting e-education for the benefit of all ACD member countries.

Ahmed said that government to government discussions would take place now in Sri Lanka to recognize AeU as an approved university and obtain UGC approval. He concluded that the UGC in India has already approved AeU, and they are now operating in India.

Madanayake said that PBS is looking forward to conduct most of the programs but will focus immediately on their top quality MBA that has no less than 14 modules and conducted over 18 moths. He added that many who are now keen on doing an MBA are looking for a complete MBA and not short-cuts. The AeU MBA is a rolling model with open book exams, practical assignments and a final dissertation. The launch he said was planned for January.

Mr. Kapila Dodamgoda Director, PBS said that face-to-face lecture sessions will be conducted by one of the best lecturer panels in Sri Lanka. He added that all materials and members of the faculty are now in place to deliver an MBA learning experience. He is very confident that the AeU MBA would eventually be a world class qualification.



**The Canadian Institute of Marketing**  
**L'Institut Canadien du Marketing**

## CODE OF ETHICS

*The Canadian Institute of Marketing is reviewing its Code of Ethics and is posting key elements for public input. Please go to the Institute's Facebook site and comment on the following, or respond to [info@cinstmarketing.ca](mailto:info@cinstmarketing.ca).*

Members shall conduct themselves as people of **integrity, honesty and trustworthiness**.

Members will respect and conduct themselves according to the laws contained in the Canadian Human Rights Act and provincial human rights codes.

- a. Forbidding such things as: discrimination inclusive of age with exceptions in some cases regarding mandatory retirement and bona fide occupational requirements.
- b. Sexual harassment is considered unethical and unprofessional conduct.
- c. The use of or being under the influence of illegal drugs and other illegal substances is prohibited.

### Role of the Individual

It is the duty of all members to assist the Institute in implementing this Code, and the Institute will support any member so doing:

#### Misuse of the Code

Unfair, reckless or malicious use of this Code by members or others to damage the reputation and/or professional practice of a member, and/or their organization shall be deemed a breach of this Code.

#### Procedures of Handling Complaints

As a condition of joining, members agree to honour the CInst.M Code of Ethics. The ethics committee has the responsibility to both evaluate the extent by which the code has been followed and apply sanctions against those who are found to be guilty of code infractions. The CInst.M ethics committee and Council, have the responsibility to decide if there is a prima facie case to answer. If there is such a case, the ethics committee shall initiate the necessary procedure for its investigation.

#### Sanctions for Breach of this Code

If the ethics committee having duly and properly examined an alleged breach of this Code by a member, and finds a member in breach of this Code, it shall be empowered to take such disciplinary action as it shall deem appropriate. If decided to expel a member from the Institute, it shall act in strict accordance with the provisions of the Constitution.

CIM members are asked to comply with the laws of Canada, and/or any international treaties, and agreements undertaken by the Government of Canada. The principle of self-regulation, in both the spirit and the letter of the CInst.M Code of Ethics is mandatory.



# The growing interest in caring for customers better for competitive advantage and growth

By Prasanna Perera, F.C.I.M. (UK), MCIInst.M., FCIInst.M., M.S.L.I.M.,  
Marketing and Management Consultant, Chartered Marketer—CIM (UK)



Prasanna Perera,  
MCIInst.M., FCIInst.M.

There is growing interest by all categories of businesses, in terms of customer care and management of customer relationships. This is due to growing competition and the resultant choices that customers are exposed to. It makes business sense to care for customers to build loyalty and retaining them.

## Why customer care is important

- A dissatisfied customer will tell 8-10 people about their problem.
- It costs six times more to attract a new customer, than it does to keep an old one.
- Eighty percent of successful new product and service ideas come from customers.
- If you resolve a complaint on the spot, 95% of complaining customers will continue to do business with you again.
- Firms selling services depend on existing customers for 85% - 95% of their business.
- The following statement made by Sir Colin Marshall of British Airways, sums up the importance of customer care. To quote, "The simple principle is that the company exists to serve its customers, long into the future. Business leaders that act

on this, and persuade all of their people to believe in it, can transform ordinary companies into world beaters."

## Methods to be better at customer service

Good customer service revolves around respect for the customer, his or her time and intelligence. Customers hate uncertainty. They also hate waiting, but can manage it if they are provided with an honest accurate answer.

The following steps will help in providing a better service to customers.

- Don't keep your business closed when you should be open. The important thing in business is to be open! We now see in Sri Lanka supermarkets operating extended hours and even retailers and restaurants.
- Answer the telephone speedily, preferable within 3 rings. Never keep a customer on hold, listening to your selection of music, when the customer simply wants your speedy attention.
- Knowledge of your product and service is important. Be knowledgeable about what you talk about to a customer. It is better to be honest and truthful and avoid unnecessary jargon.
- Never run out of stock, because this is unacceptable in this age of electronic commerce.
- Do not over charge the customer for a few mundane extras. It is better to include all costs chargeable in your quotation, rather than frequent additions, which end up irritating customers.
- Delivery of product and service on time is important. Once a

commitment is given to the customer, this should be fulfilled, unless in very exceptional circumstances.

- When making refunds, it is important to be decisive and fast. With unnecessary delays, the opportunity of maintaining customer good will through the refund will be lost.
- Make it easy for customers to make payments. After all, the customer is willing to pay you and you should not make it a painful experience.
- It is better to under promise and over deliver rather than the other way around. In this manner you will not lose the respect and regard of the customer.

## How to cultivate and manage a customer relationship

Customer relationships occur at the point of contact. This is also the start of a relationship process. The following methods will help organizations improve customer relationships.

- Begin by listening to the customer. There is nothing more irritating to the customer than a manufacturer unwilling to listen. By listening carefully, you indicate to the customer your seriousness and commitment toward what is expressed.
- Be genuinely helpful to customers, when help is sort. It may even be better to volunteer and help. For best results, provide the customer with assistance promptly.

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## Competitive advantage

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- Make it easy for customers to complain because this is valuable feedback, which can be utilized to build relationships with customers.
- It is important to respond to customer complaints promptly. A customer making a complaint expects a response. The worst thing to do is to ignore complaints.
- Organizations will do well to encourage customer loyalty and good will. It is only loyal customers that will provide you consistent returns. There are many methods of building customer loyalty, such as loyalty programs, special promotion and preferential treatment.
- Customers want to be cared for. Treat all customers well and make them feel special.
- Being nice to a customer is not enough. Niceness is a process. Customers want results, so don't assume niceness is enough.
- When a customer is lost, it is important to take the time and effort to find out the reasons. This will help you to avoid certain mistakes, so that your existing customers do not get affected.
- However strong, a customer relationship should never be taken for granted. Your competitors are always making attempts to secure your customers. So, once a relationship has been built, work hard to retain it.
- Nordstrom empowers its employees with the freedom to make decisions, and is willing to live with those decisions.
- Nordstrom expects, encourages, preaches and demands individual initiative and ideas from its frontline people.
- Motivated employees perform "heroics" – acts of outstanding customer service, which are part of the Nordstrom mystique.
- Nordstrom's best salesperson will do virtually everything possible to ensure that a shopper leaves the store a satisfied customer.
- Because Nordstrom pushes decision – making responsibilities down to the sales floor, shopping with a Nordstrom salesperson is like working with the owner of a small business.
- Salespeople must have a complete understanding of the product and its selling points.
- "The customer is always right" is not a cliché at Nordstrom.
- The underlying Nordstrom culture and philosophy is not difficult to pass on to the next generation because its simple: "Give great customer service".
- Keeping current good workers with the company is just as important as attracting new ones.
- If you treat customers like royalty and let them know that you will take care of them, they usually come back to you.
- "Trust" is the coin of the realm. Sales people earn the confidence of customers by being well versed in the merchandise they sell. They aren't just selling merchandise, they are also selling service.

### Customer care in practise

Nordstrom is an example of customer care in practise in its quest to be America's No.1 customer service company. Nordstrom is successful because of the following principles:

The stated principles are not magical. They border on common logic and simple application of business processes.

Another example comes from the mar-

ketplace performance unit in British Airways. When Sir Colin Marshall became chief executive of BA, he realised that it was vitally important to see things from the customer's perspective. He therefore created a "Marketplace Performance Unit" that has the job of measuring and benchmarking operating performance. Their job is to find out what the customers really want, rather than what the management thinks they want. A good example of this comes at check-in time.

The management view had always been, that what concerned passengers most was the time it took to get to the front of the queue. However, when the Market Place Performance unit asked passengers, they found that they were far more concerned with the length of the queues and the rate at which they moved.

This obviously meant a different approach was needed, than had been adopted before. Listening to the customer always helps!

### How to improve business processes to provide excellent customer service

Business processes can have a positive or negative impact on the levels of customer service provided. The following list provides some insights on how business processes can be improved.

- Innovate all business processes to keep up with the times. This can be done by creating a more innovative culture, using experiments and initiatives to unleash and exploit the organization's ideas.
- Monitor your competition, in terms of their business processes.
- Don't assume, because its on the computer, it must be right. Computers seldom err. Remember garbage in garbage out! It may be a computer error to you,

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## Competitive advantage

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- but its often also lost business.
- Be part of the solution, not the problem. This is an important element of business process. When you are part of the solution, people want to talk to you. When you are part of the problem, they want you to go away.
- Concentrate on the big picture, and worry about details. Obtaining customer feedback is important, as are focus groups and other methods of customer satisfaction measurement.
- Study and learn from best practice, to benchmark effectively.
- Empower staff to take decisions that have an impact on customer satisfaction. There are many operational decisions to be made at the point of customer contact.

### Conclusion

Caring for customers has always been the bedrock of business success. However, there are many new perspectives to be considered. The market leaders of the future will be those whose strategy is based on delivering superior customer service. Against this background, it must also be borne in mind that customer demands have escalated significantly, competition within and across market sectors has grown rapidly, and technology will be the key to reducing costs of superior service. But, technology will not be a substitute for people.

***“Customer satisfaction is no longer good enough to survive in today’s competitive market place. What is needed is customer delight” (Tom Peters)***

***“To customers, your most important ability is reliability”***

Prasanna Perera is a Senior Marketing Consultant for several organizations and a much sought after Marketing and Sales Trainer. He won the “Marketer of the Year” Award in 2001. Contact Prasanna at prasannaperera@mail.ewisl.net.



## Professional services marketing: make account management work

By Daryll Cahill, Associate Head, Academic Programs in the School of Accounting and Law, RMIT University, Melbourne, Australia  
Louise Robinson, a National Director of Business Development and Marketing

**Guest Spot**

Professional services firms comprise highly driven technical specialists delivering advice to numerous clients. Busy with delivery, these specialists are focused on meeting client needs and at the same time, achieving billing and productivity targets. Against this approach, professional services marketers are challenged to provide advice on marketing and develop programs that are delivered through the specialists that will yield new work or retain satisfied clients.

Marketers are also tasked to provide some form of return on investment for their resource as well as for the time of the fee earners undertaking marketing activities. At times, this can be difficult, given the need to meet a large range of tactical demands across the firm which can divert time away from proactive strategic advice and analysis that supports the business plan.

With busy practitioners focussed on client demands, a key platform that needs to be established, promoted and implemented is that of account management. The importance of account management, which comprises the identification and development of client relationships that are of strategic importance to the firm, understanding how, when and why professional services are purchased and by whom, as well as sharing insights about these and their needs cannot be underestimated.

This approach, although logical, sits opposite the general operating model of professional services firms which historically consists of setting budgets based on a supply-based model. This entails calculating the number of fee-earning staff and maximum billable hours multiplied by charge-out rate. Overheads, recoveries and other costs

are factored into the budget that firms then strive to meet.

The resulting conflict of the supply and demand models means, that fee earners are not in a position to regularly review or analyse the client base or targets. Marketing professionals have the opportunity to play an integral role in changing the firm’s orientation from supply-based services to those that are more demand driven, that is, based on client and market needs. This will elevate the role of marketing from one of reactive, tactical delivery to being perceived as value add and offering strategic marketing advice. Sometimes though, marketers will need to assume both roles to deliver to the unique needs of the client. The balancing act must focus on a meaningful market driven effort.

### Implementation

The premise and results of an account management program is appealing to partners. However in practice, marketers run the risk of being unable to make an impact and gain the essential support that is necessary for its success. After all, the fee earners hold the primary relationships with clients and it is their interactions that need to be harnessed in a consistent manner.

Initially, a small group of clients can be selected to run a ‘pilot’ program. A good starting point is to review the client base for likely candidates. The review can cover: fee history, the number of existing touch points between the client and the firm, strength of relationships with the firm and if these are positive, negative or neutral,

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## Professional services marketing

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(negative relationships need to be identified as potential hurdles, and also consideration of a longer term plan), past and current engagement history, identified service needs, propensity to purchase, amount of work outsourced (as well as consideration of competitor work history), and relationships.

Once the pilot is set up, plans and budgets for relationship building and profiling activities can be developed. Importantly, reporting requirements are established that can include short-term goals such as relationship development and mapping, opportunities identified and then longer-term goals such as depth of penetration of relationships, number of opportunities and leads and eventually engagements won.

The planning outputs can be covered in one central document that utilizes the information uncovered during selection and also incorporates the goals, both short term and longer term, financial and strategic for the account. Tactics such as events and entertainment, sponsorships, public relations and advertising directed at these clients and targets — can be mapped out and considered as to resourcing, budgets and timeframe with anticipated benefits. This set of marketing initiatives can be reviewed against other key accounts and firm initiatives to ensure that all are in agreement as to activities, priorities, resources, costs and importantly, reported against.

For marketers, the ability to review and consider leveraging different account plans across the firm enables a set of priorities to be agreed, as well as providing the ability to leverage different activities such as sponsoring an external event that might be attended

by several clients and targets, provide media opportunities, and other profiling outcomes that also provides follow up opportunities that increase relationship development with clients.

Benefits of client account management  
Implementing account management practices in a professional services firm provides numerous benefits.

The centralized process brings a consistent approach to account planning that can then be tailored, include regular reporting and review, and importantly, include a co-ordinated approach to individual clients and market segments. Too often, busy partners from various practice groups can approach clients on an ad hoc basis which impacts on efforts of others and it is this uncoordinated approach that can detract from efforts and potentially harm relationships.

**Too often, busy partners from various practice groups can approach clients on an ad hoc basis which impacts on efforts of others and it is this uncoordinated approach that can detract from efforts and potentially harm relationships.**

Firms with a focus on agreed targets and markets can reduce the overall cost of marketing by planning their spend and resourcing of activities. In this way too, cross functional teams can discuss approaches and leverage relationships to introduce others and win work across different practice specialities. This can result in coverage across a client that in turn impacts on competitors and their ability to gain access to a key client. With the knowledge and relationships gained of the client and their purchasing behaviour, it is easier and more cost effective to expand engagements or win new work from existing clients than to constantly win new clients.

Marketers, often reacting to last minute opportunities or responding to tenders found in newspapers and websites, (the vast majority non-strategic clients or targets), will also be able to focus their efforts on challenges facing clients and targets and not be spread across a number of tactical low yielding activities. This outcome also increases the satisfaction of marketers in their role, how they are perceived within the firm, and provides some meaningful measures to marketing resources.

Firms will also benefit from this demand-driven approach in that strategic decisions such as training, recruitment and retention of technical staff with skills to match current and anticipated client needs will be able to be made.

Long term client relationships are vital to a firm's business success. Active account management is critical to support these efforts and to continue to drive focus on agreed priorities. To maximise the efforts of busy practitioners buried in a large file loads, account management provides a framework through which to direct marketing efforts, the results of which can be reviewed, reported and marketing resources measured.

### About the authors

Louise Robinson is a national director of business development and marketing with over 12 years of senior professional services experience in large Australian legal and global accounting firms. She is currently based in Melbourne, Australia.  
lourobinson@deloitte.com.au

Daryll Cahill is Associate Head, Academic Programs in the School of Accounting and Law, RMIT University, Melbourne, Australia with research interest in measuring intangible assets and intellectual capital.  
daryll.cahill@rmit.edu.au

## Institute member preparing to launch new book



Oluwabamidele Adeyemi, MCIInst.M

“Dele” Adeyemi is an accomplished marketer and lecturer located in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. He is a Chartered Marketer from UK, holding an MBA in Nigeria and membership in several professional organizations.

His latest accomplishment is a book entitled, “Modern Approach to Marketing Management” which he hopes to launch in early 2010.

His book is a detailed anthology of marketing theory, principles and best practices. In itself, the book accommodates marketing standards taught worldwide, and would serve very well as an office reference source and a complementary read for marketing students using assigned text books.

Chapter one covers Marketing fundamentals over 31 pages. Chapter two on Marketing strategies and paradigms covers 29 pages, while chapter 3 on Marketing management is a short but informative 17 pages. Chapter four deals with Product management over 64 pages and Chapter five on Price is 81 pages. Chapter six, Promotion is 90 pages in length and Chapter seven on Distribution Channels covers 38. Chapter eight on Direct Marketing is 17 pages, and Chapter nine 14. Market research is covered in chapter 10 over 46 pages and the last chapter covers Service marketing.

The approximately 500 page book is an easy read that is well laid out in chapters, sections and subsections, complete with charts and diagrams. Dele can be contacted at [dele.adeyemi@yahoo.com](mailto:dele.adeyemi@yahoo.com).

## Conestoga takes OCMC 2009

Conestoga College is the 2009 winner of the 30th annual Ontario College’s Marketing Competition (OCMC). The college racked up 50 points to win. The school placed first in Event Marketing Research, Sales Management and Sales Presentation, and second in Integrated Marketing Communications to take the competition.

Placing second was Georgian College and Niagara College third.

Dignitaries complemented the event and gave testimony to one of the best supported student events in Ontario’s college network. His Worship Mayor Fred Eisenberger of the City of Hamilton brought greetings from Council, while Sophia Aggelonitis MPP, Parliamentary Assistant with the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade (Small Business) brought greetings from the province.

The banquet that preceded the awards ceremony was followed by presentation of awards to individual students and organizers, and sponsors recognized. Held at the Sheraton Hotel in Hamilton Ontario on November 19 and 20, the event was hosted by Mohawk College.

Every year in November, Ontario’s top college marketing students get together to see who can do the best in a set of events designed to test students on the practical, under-the-gun skills that faculty strive to inspire in them.

The event was initiated in 1980 among 6 colleges. In 1986, the event was hosted by Mohawk College in Hamilton which reached beyond the original six, inviting every college to participate.

The Canadian Institute of Marketing is a sponsor of the annual competition. It provided two judges for the 2009 competition; Dwight Dyson, MCIInst.M., FCIInst.M and Grant Lee, MCIInst.M., RPM., FCIInst.M.



Dwight was a member of a judging team for Integrated Marketing Communications, hearing presentations from 14 teams. Lee was on the judging team for International Marketing.

The Canadian Institute of Marketing has sponsored OCMC for several years and in so doing gets to view first hand the quality of the marketing programs that it accredits to fulfill the academic requirements of membership in the Institute. The competition leaves no doubt that Ontario’s colleges deliver the standards necessary for graduates of the programs to have rewarding careers in marketing. If the graduates take the next step and join the Canadian Institute of Marketing, they have the opportunity to advance their careers as professional marketers.

The Canadian Institute of Marketing gets involved in many ways to assess the quality of the academic programs it accredits and the relevance of standards being taught by university schools and colleges. It is not good enough to assess candidates for membership without a reasonable understanding of the quality of the programs it accredits.

OCMC is one of the best events available for assessing the quality of marketing education in Ontario.



## New Members and Membership Upgrades\* (to December 2009)

|                     |         |                          |              |
|---------------------|---------|--------------------------|--------------|
| Professional Member | No. 863 | Gloria O. Abijo-Williams | Nigeria      |
| Professional Member | No. 864 | Pierre K. Wirawan        | Toronto, ON  |
| Professional Member | No. 866 | Kapila Edirisinghe       | Brampton, ON |
| Professional Member | No. 867 | Shoaib Nasir             | Calgary, AB  |
| Professional Member | No. 868 | J. Denis Yunker          | Calgary, AB  |
| Graduate Member     | No. 865 | Matthew Bradley          | Toronto, ON  |

### Registered Professional Marketers (Certificate of Registration Renewals to Sept.—Dec. 09)

|                                       |         |
|---------------------------------------|---------|
| Geerish Bucktowonsing, MCInst.M., RPM | No. 737 |
| Ranjan Madanayake, MCInst.M., RPM     | No. 678 |
| Marcello Pitino, MCInst.M., RPM       | No. 434 |

### Canadian Institute of Marketing Council

|                 |                     |   |
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| Ranil Herath    | Chair               | DeVry Institute of Technology, Calgary        |
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| Prasanna Perera |                     | Marketing Consultant and Trainer, Sri Lanka   |
| James Schauer   |                     | Easton Marketing Services Ltd., Brighton      |
| Faythe Pal      |                     | Hands of Time Inc., Toronto                   |

### Scribbles from Council

Following are notable projects and issues that are being addresses by Council and the Institute's Executive Director.

- Educational webinars
- Colleges and Universities marketing programs accreditation
- Registered Professional Marketer promotion
- Registered Professional Marketer Examination Protocol
- Vanier BDC Case Challenge
- National Universities Marketing Competition
- Code of Ethics review
- Strategic alliances
- Web site upgrade
- Member services (lapel pins, insurance, membership cards)
- Succession Planning
- Web site development
- Social Network development on Facebook and LinkedIn
- Distribution of Marketing Perspective books to CInst.M-accredited colleges and universities

## Membership Requirements

### Professional Member (MCInst.M):

- A) Has held an acceptable marketing position for 5 years, the last 2 at senior management.
- B) Holds a recognized qualification in any of the following, or mature entry instead.
- A diploma of an Institute of Marketing;
  - BA, MA, or Doctorate degree with marketing specialization;
  - Diploma or University Postgraduate Diploma in Management Studies, or Business Administration with marketing specialization;
  - Other educational or professional qualification of equivalent or higher standard with marketing input – approved by the Canadian Institute of Marketing or one of its affiliated marketing institutes.

### Registered Professional Marketer (RPM)

A candidate must meet the following requirements:

- A) Be a Professional Member (MCInst.M)
- B) Acceptance by Registrar of written case study or examination demonstrating competence in

marketing knowledge of industry issues and ethics.

### Associate Member (ACInst.M):

A candidate must meet the following requirements:

- A) Has held an approved marketing position for 3 years, the last in marketing management at a lower level than for full membership.
- B) With one of the following Academic qualifications:
- A Certificate of an Institute of marketing or, subject to its marketing component being approved by the CInst.M., a BA or MA in a business-related subject;
  - Diploma or University Post graduate Diploma in business Administration or in Management Studies;
  - Other educational or professional qualifications of equivalent or higher standard approved by CInst.M.

### Graduate Member (GCIInst.M):

A candidate must meet the following requirements:

- A) Have successfully completed an approved Marketing Certificate or Diploma programme from a Recognized learning institution, or possess a business-related

Bachelor degree.

- B) Be elected by the Institute.

### Student Member:

A candidate must meet the following requirements:

- A) Be registered in a Marketing Certificate or Diploma programme;
- B) Be registered in the final year of a degree programme with Marketing specialization. The Marketing component must be approved by, and the learning institution accredited with, the CInst.M.

### Fellow (FCInst.M):

- Ten years of membership in good standing (exception rule in place)
- Vote of College of Fellows, Past Presidents and Board based on nomination and application and review.
- Based on leadership, knowledge, experience and sustained membership.

### Affiliate (Corporate) Member

Organizations that wish to be Affiliated with the CInst.M. This Category of membership does not carry the right to vote at Canadian Institute of Marketing meetings, or carry a professional designation.

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To be recognized by business, governments and academia as the governing and standards-setting body for professional marketers in Canada.

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**Grant Lee, Editor**  
info@cinstmarketing.ca  
Canadian Institute of Marketing  
205 Miller Drive  
Halton Hills (Georgetown)  
Ontario, Canada L7G 6G4  
Tel: (905) 877-5369

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