



DESIGNING STRATEGIES®

Business Strategies for the Design Industry

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A crucial business facet that can be affected by the mass migration of Baby Boomers toward retirement is your company's market share and sales volume. If your business has been built over the years through contacts and influence with people of this age demographic, you may soon see that valued network disappearing. Your sales volume and market share may well disappear with them. If you are gambling on continued success based on an existing and static group of customers, you could be in for a big surprise.

Years of loyalty from that set of consumers can no longer be a guarantee of continuing or future business. While you may have been 'in like Flynn' for years, you could be 'out' in a heartbeat as new, younger employees take their place in the decision making process. When your contacts take their gold watches and head for warmer climates, your market share can go along as well.

Visualize

If you have not yet experienced this phenomenon, now is the time to do something proactive about it. How can you turn the tides in your favor? Think about doing an analysis of your customer list. Are there any obvious market segments where you see sales and profits dropping? Don't just think about the companies you deal with, but the people within those companies who are ultimately responsible for the purchase or specification of your products and services. How many of those in positions of influence are nearing or thinking about retirement? How many positions of influence have already changed hands? How can you get your foot in the door now to meet and create relationships with the new people?

Analyze

You may have heard about the dawning of the day of the consumer. Consumer voices are being heard online through chat rooms, forums and blogs in staggering numbers. Consumers are involved in creating advertising messages for major corporations. If you want high-quality input, and not merely venting, go directly to the consumer for information. Take a survey of customers to see what their opinion is of your company, products and services in terms of strengths and weaknesses. An outside, objective opinion is worth its weight in gold. Keep the survey short and to the point with a limited number of questions. Ask them what you can do better, and what your competitors already do better. Ask what there is about your business sector that just drives them crazy.



This can be done easily through an e-mail survey, but a personal interview might deliver better results. Have your sales staff alert customers that the survey is coming and ask for their cooperation. Most written survey formats bring back one or two word responses. Personal interviews glean more information through follow up questions and open-ended responses. Take the information you gain and use it in marketing and sales materials that will get you back in the door after your contacts have left, or in to meet those who have previously not done business with you. These types of surveys can be a great source for detailed marketing messages. Ask clients if you can use their response as a testimonial. NOW is the time to begin working on a plan to replace contacts from your 'old buddy' system, not after they have retired and moved away.

Strategize



Maurer On The Move

Want to learn more about the generations as clients and employees? See below for personal appearances discussing these topics. If you have questions about an event or topic, contact Terri at: tmaurer@maurerconsultinggroup.com

June 11th
Generations In The Workplace
NEOCON 'Building Show'

June 12th
The Changing Marketplace:
Selling to the Generations
NEOCON 'Office Expo by OFDA'

Now that we've been connected through this newsletter for over two years, it's time for a change. No, the newsletter will not be discontinued. With the exception of a few readers who comment on each issue, our newsletter experience has mostly been a one-way street. What I have missed is the ability to connect better with all of you, hear your comments on articles, hear what other topics you want to see, and just being able to 'reach out and touch you'.



So, Maurer Consulting Group will be introducing a blog to better connect our community. The format will be less formal and decidedly more interactive. I hope some of you will find the time to check out the blog and send feedback to spice up the conversation about our professional arena.

The name of the new blog: 'Designing Strategies: The Blog'. I know, I know, "How creative." The plan is to keep the name easy to remember for those used to receiving this publication. As soon as we are ready to launch the blog, we'll send out a notice to all of you with the address. We are also looking forward to an internet-based newsletter so that we can include links, surveys and other interactive tools to better serve our audience. It's time for us to move to Internet 2.0. Stay tuned for future developments!

Visualize - Analyze - Strategize... Plan for success!