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BusinessBEAT

The Law and You

- Private Dispute Resolution
- A New Revolution 4
- Cellular Phone Use:
A Connection to Liability 6
- What To Do When You Are Not Getting Paid . 8

The CPA Corner

- Charitable Contributions 10

Windows To WallStreet®

- Have You Insured Your Stocks? 11

Biz Wiz

- My Marketing Isn't Working 3
- When No Means No 12
- Event Planning: Drama or Trauma 12
- Are You Ready to Sell Your Business?
Is Your Business Ready to be Sold? 14
- The War Against Identity Theft 19

Business Bookshelf

- Reclaiming the Ethical High Ground:
Developing Organizations of Character 23

Charity Angels

- 30th Anniversary Gala Makes a Splash 4

Entrepreneurial Edge

- People Come Before Profits 16
- 16 Deadly Start-Up Blunders 23

The Human Factor

- Humility Breeds Trust 15
- Business Etiquette:
Are You a Powerful Player 18
- Time is Not on Your Side 20
- Healthcare Costs Soar to
Double Digits in '08 21

Bankers' Box

- Banking Efficiency Increased
with Remote Deposit Capture 17
- Asset Financing Options 24

Business Bonus

- Lunch Bunch Munch 18



Photo courtesy of the Philadelphia Eagles

You Can't Do It Alone

by Bruce P. Murray



How many plastic membership or loyalty cards do you have attached to your key ring? At the forefront of the miniaturization of data processing technology and innovating products is Vanguard ID, and the entrepreneurial founder Rick Warther. When I met with Rick in June for an interview Vanguard ID was celebrating shipping 2 billion units of the customer loyalty keychain card product; the cards you carry very likely came from a modest looking building on American Boulevard in West Chester, PA.

When we met, Rick spoke frankly about the personal challenges, the business successes and how the company has grown from an

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When "No" Means "No!"

by Todd Cohen

When does "No" mean "No"? Is No always the end of the road for your sales campaign? When you hear "no" should you just pack up and move to the next client or prospect?

In a word, the answer is... "No"

Many sales professionals simply give up when they hear that word. It strikes fear in their hearts and a feeling that a great prospect has now evaporated! Hearing the word no actually is a good thing and it rarely means an absolute "no". Many times the word "no" mean something very different and this is a reason to continue your sales campaign to get to "yes" and eventually a signed contract.

Sales campaigns can be complex. Frequently, many moving parts need to be aligned. People must agree and products and services must fit the challenges that the client is facing. When you finally get to the point of presenting a proposal and articulating your solution, it is not uncommon to hear no. The challenge to you as a sales professional is to not hear "no", but to try and hear what the client is actually saying. Listen for the real reasons and what the client needs you to hear!

When a prospect says no, is he or she really communicating a different message:

"I am not comfortable with your solution." This is often the most common response and it says that you have more work to do. You need to commit more time to discovery, understanding what the client needs and adjusting the solution you have provided to match more closely with the client's challenges. In this case, hearing no tells you that more work is needed and it is a roadmap of sorts.

"I am not ready to commit." In this case hearing no means that the timing may be off for the client and they are not ready to make a purchase despite how great your solution is. Again, spend time understanding timeframes and purchase parameters. This does not mean never, it means not right now.

"I don't get it." This one is tough, because it means that the client does not understand what you have proposed. Your responsibility as a sales professional is to be constantly checking for their understanding throughout the entire sales campaign so when you get to the point of presenting your proposal they are confident and open to what you are proposing! If you are not educating your client as part of your sales campaign you will hear no and your sales campaign will face an uphill battle. Here is the key learning point—your client must embrace the value proposition and they must be willing to take it forward for you to the next level and have confidence and enthusiasm around selling it.

"Too risky for us right now." This is a first cousin of "I don't get it." A few things could be happening here. The client does actually understand what is being proposed. In fact, they may love the idea and really want to implement your solution. However, for a myriad of reasons, the timing is off. This is tough to deal with because you may never know the reason, but you need to commit to more discovery to find out. Do not give up here, ask more questions and keep probing. Your ability to develop a trusting relationship is very crucial. The client will only share things with you if they trust you.

"Our Company is not ready." Your solution may be viewed as too far reaching for a company that has not caught up with your technology or thinking. This one is less about discovery and more about the **culture of the company and what they are willing to adopt.** This point is always interesting because you can quite possibly turn a "no" into a "yes" if you ask the right questions. You will then carefully create a dialog about the culture and not your product. That conversation, if done correctly, and with extreme integrity, will yield more about the culture of your client or prospect than you ever dreamed. Once you find out about the culture, you can work in the background with your team to create a solution that does fit with the culture. This win can be especially sweet.

"I can't support this." In other words, your client is unwilling to endorse your solution because it may carry some risk to his or her career. In this case, you need to listen carefully to the client during the entire sales campaign for clues that may point to some level of risk if your client or prospect backs this change. Pay attention.

Next time you hear "no", take the challenge, relax, think carefully about what your client or prospect may really be saying, and work with them to get the "no" to a "yes".

—BWT

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Event Planning: Drama or Trauma?

by Frank Felsburg

In Shakespeare's *King Lear*, the Duke of Albany, who was a good man, was treated like a Caspar Milquetoast by his domineering wife, Goneril, the king's daughter. As Goneril plotted against her father, saying disparaging things against him, Albany tried to moderate her negativity as he thought she exaggerated the king's motives. The scene ends with Albany acquiescing to her saying "Well, well, th' event." What he meant, in the language of the day, was "We'll see what happens" or "Time will tell." Well, what ultimately happened was disastrous. Hopefully you don't take such a naive approach to your special events.

The special events industry has grown dramatically in the past decade. Entrepreneur.com says spending worldwide is \$500 billion annually. Not surprisingly, there are a number of world-class resources around town. Two relatively new noteworthy companies in the event arena locally are GEP Philly and The Hub.

GEP Philly, run by Mike Lyons and his staff, bills itself as a "destination management company" or DMC. They act like a general contractor specializing in the design and coordination of special events for organizations hosting activities in Philadelphia. They partner with clients to provide such amenities as transportation, decor and floral arrangements, convention services and themed receptions. The DMC has the specialized local knowledge and expertise of the city to help the meeting planners deal with the logistics to ensure their event is executed flawlessly. Lyons says, "Our job is to make a planner look good."

Lyons founded the company in 2002 to service the meetings and convention trade. GEP Philly is a member of Global Events Partners, out of Washington, DC. Currently, Global Events Partners consists of 70 of the top DMCs around the world, all providing top-notch customer service. GEP Philly's revenue has climbed from \$1.8 million in 2004 to \$4 million today. Located in the heart of Philadelphia at 16th & Arch, overlooking Love Park, they also have satellite offices at Loews Hotel and the Downtown Marriott.

Another top player in the meetings field is The Hub, with two downtown locations. With their tagline, "Because Meetings Matter," their focus is squarely on meetings. They say, "Meetings are simply ALL that we do—no other distractions." Their website boasts "From board meetings, to training sessions, to evening cocktail parties, The Hub CityView will exceed all of your meeting expectations."

John New and Bill Decker founded The Hub. They've already made a huge impact with their downtown facility, The Hub CityView, located in The United Plaza Building at 30 South 17th Street. They're directly across from the Westin Hotel and the shops at One Liberty Place, 1.5 blocks from Suburban Station. Rooms in the CityView facility include the Rittenhouse, with plenty of light during the day and a view overlooking Rittenhouse square, a few blocks away. Other rooms having interesting themes include the cutting edge Keystone room and the worldly Magellan room. Another room is almost entirely white board.

New and Decker celebrated the opening of their second facility in 2007 in The Cira Centre, the all-glass building with the angled roof at

(cont. on pg. 16)



GEP Philly summer party, "Feel the LOVE", fund raiser for the Paine's Park Project, skateboard park proposed for a site on the Schuylkill River trail. From left, Governor Rendell, Mike Lyons and Michael Nutter.