



PASSPORT TO
OPPORTUNITY

**BUSINESS
INFORMATION AND
TOOLS TO NAVIGATE
THE EVER-CHANGING
MARKETPLACE**

VOLUME 2, NO. 3



WHERE IN THE
WORLD IS THE
OPPORTUNITY GUY

SEPTEMBER

Gettysburg, Penn.
Atlanta, Ga.
San Jose, Calif.
San Francisco, Calif.

OCTOBER

Dallas, Texas
Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio
New York, N.Y.
Appleton, Wisc.
Santa Fe, N.M.

NOVEMBER

Alaska Road Show
Finger Lakes, NY
Los Angeles, Calif.
Portland, Maine

Are you Customer-Focused?

For most Destination Marketing Organizations and Travel Suppliers the past year has been one of challenge and change. People discuss getting back to normal; however, by all indications the road ahead looks like there is and will continue to be a New Normal! How do we continue to navigate in uncharted waters with the uncertainty of the marketplace and behavior changes in customers' buying patterns? The solution lies with your customers and client base! In order to achieve results, you must be constantly focused on your customers' world and their ever-changing needs.

To assist you and your organization with a solution to ongoing challenges, Opportunities Unlimited is happy to announce a new pro-



gram called, "Customer Focused Selling." It is being offered in conjunction with Success Dynamics, a worldwide sales consulting group. CFS is a sales program designed for

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Dear Colleagues and Friends:

As the summer comes to a close and folks in New England watch the seasons begin to change, one thing is certain with life and our industry. Change. This summer

has been anything but lazy for travel suppliers and even with weeks of hazy weather, many waited for visitors up until the last minute before determining a successful week, month or season.

The current economic environment has been a challenge for tourism & hospitality industries. Daily numbers from Wall St., the airline industry and the government continue to create uncertainty. However, people are still traveling. Consumer behaviors are shifting as people stay grounded rather than fly, booking windows are closer and local, in-state and regional markets continue to grow.

The tourism industry is continuing on a course of navigating in uncharted waters. Shifts in consumers' behaviors and values have created a new travel paradigm. The leisure drive market has and will continue to offer opportunities and results for many savvy suppliers who tap this segment.

Jim Camissa, publisher of "Travel Industry Indicators," a monthly travel trade newsletter on the industry economic trends says, "there are major structural changes that are impacting the current market. These changes will not be short lived and will reshape many aspects of the industry."

When will things get back to normal? What is normal? Where are we going for 2003 and beyond? What market segments will grow and develop? The answers will come for those people who continue to monitor the Pulse of the market and the needs of their customer base. Once understood, proactive organizations have been Positioning their products to the needs of customers in the "New Normal" marketplace. This has resulted in testing new Products and services while moving at rapid pace. Finally, successful companies have also looked at Partnership opportunities to maximize market distribution.

Welcome to Normal.... there are lots of opportunities.... carpe diem!

Joe Veneto

Joe Veneto, The Opportunity Guy



RESOURCES

The following are companies that are on my radar screen and may be helpful resources

Award Vacations is a technology company that provides seamless solutions to CVBs and travel supplier members looking to create and sell destination packages via the Web. Award offers turn-key solutions on DMO Web sites and provides customers with real time package quotes, reservations and fulfillment. They are currently working with Orlando, Florida's Space Coast, the Atlanta CVB and others. Contact Bill Reed at 480-777-9793 or info@awardvacations.com, Web site is www.awardvacations.com

Escapemaker.com is an online Web site that provides customers with vacation Getaway information and planning tools. It focuses on drive market destinations within a 500-mile radius of the greater metro New York City area. The site recently expanded its focus from seven original states Conn., Del., Mass., N.Y., N.J., Penn., and R.I. to twelve adding Maine, Md., N.H., Va., and Vt. The site asks browsers to answer 5 questions about their travel preferences and presents destination options. Visit www.escapemaker.com or contact Cory Jones, Sales Manager at 718-398-5766.

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sales people that creates measurable results and grows sales revenue. It positions the sales process in a consultative model whereby solutions are achieved collaboratively.

The CFS consultative sales model includes the tools and techniques to focus on customers' needs. The program encompasses learning and implementing the five stages of the "customer focused" sales process. These include building trust and credibility, investigating the buying factors, offering solutions, gaining agreement and building long-term relationships.

CFS will allow you and your team to better understand the ever-changing needs of your customers. This will allow you to position your products and services to meet the needs and changes in the marketplace. It will also position your organization as a true partner in providing solutions for your customers on an ongoing basis.

Nancy Stephens, principal of Success Dynamics says, "We are thrilled to be collaborating with the Opportunity Guy. Joe has presented CFS to a number of our clients in various industries. Through his industry expertise he will provide Tourism and Hospitality organizations with a proven program of success that has had world-wide success."

CFS is a full-day session that combines skill development with hands-on learning exercises to improve performance and create immediate sales impact. There is also a Selling Skills Assessment Tool (SSAT) that may be administered in advance of the program that measures the strengths and skill development needs of sales people. This information allows for a customized session to focus in on the specific needs of a sales team and ensure measurable results!

To immediately focus your organization on your customers' world and achieve results contact Joe Veneto, The Opportunity Guy at 1-800-840-4919, a full description and outline of "Customer Focused Selling" may also be found on-line at www.opportunityguy.com



YOU HAVE GOT TO BE KIDDING

A few months ago, I landed later than expected at LaGuardia airport in New York City. After picking up my luggage, I proceeded to the rental car counter presenting all the necessary paperwork and I.D.s. I then tried to reconfirm my reservation and rate and was told that the AAA rate was no longer valid when picking up a car after 5 PM. I quipped, "you must be joking, your yield management team has your inventory changes down to hours and minutes...?"

The woman behind the counter then said, "let me see what other discounts are available for you." All of a sudden she said, "I found a discount of 15%." I was relieved for a moment. Then she said, "it's the AARP discount!" I said, "I don't qualify." Upon looking up from her station, she said, "of course you don't sir, but you do want the discount, don't you?"

The Opportunity Guy meets Miss Scarlett

This May, I had the pleasure of experiencing the Land of the Legend as I traveled to Atlanta to facilitate a meeting with the Partners of the Gone With the Wind Premier Pass. The Pass is a seamless, year-round five-attraction ticket. It includes all of the must see attractions in the metro Atlanta area connected to the book and the movie "Gone With the Wind." This epic novel written by Margaret Mitchell and published in 1936, still has an audience of 250,000 people who buy a copy of the book annually! My initial visit included secretly visiting and shopping the attractions to assess the experience they are each offering to visitors. This was followed by a full day on the Power of Partnership and Packaging with attraction members. The focus was to bring stakeholders together to leverage and grow the business of all attractions with the pass.

Since May, I have been creating partnerships to develop new package opportunities with the Pass. The group's goal is to grow the number of distribution channels to the travel and trade outlets. The pass strategy is being initiated in Jonesboro, Georgia which is the officially designated home of Gone With the Wind.

I must admit however, I am referred to as a Windy, not because of my speaking ability... but rather, because I have seen the movie and not yet read the book. I highly recommend that on your next trip to Atlanta you visit Scarlett and friends. The Web site is www.visitscarlett.com and tell them the Opportunity Guy sent you!

According to Stacey Dickson, CEO, *"Working with Joe has been a real boost to the Premier Pass program. He has created interest and partnerships with major travel trade organizations. He has energized our stakeholders and kept us on track while customers line up to buy!"*

The Opportunity Guy goes to Camp!

As the seasons begin to change in New England and the leaves start to turn, I reflect back on the summer. One of the highlights for me was going to camp for the day in Florida. I facilitated creativity and brainstorming sessions for Florida's Space Coast Office of Tourism.

Each year the Office of Tourism hosts an annual session entitled "Camp Creative." The one-day program is designed to review the successes and challenges of the past year. It also looks to get partners "Out of the Box" to develop new and innovative ideas to assist the Office of Tourism with planning and future direction. It brings all partners in the county together to tap into the currency of the 21st century — creativity.

I believe the executive team at the Space Coast CVB take to heart a quote from Marsh Fisher, founder of Century 21 who said, "The real source of power in any organization is ideas...the rest is just housekeeping. Ideas are



the DNA of Everything Worthwhile." How often does your organization tap into its creative DNA? Why not send your organization to camp?



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SHARPEN YOUR SAW

PRESENTATIONS BY THE
OPPORTUNITY GUY:

- Customer Focused Selling- sales tools that generate measurable results
- Driving Opportunities-creating results in the leisure Drive Market
- Get Turned ON in the Off Season-developing products and events for the off season
- UFEs, UFOs & U- Your Customer Connections-connecting with customers through creating UnForgettable Experiences.

CONGRATULATIONS

Joanne DeSantis, a well-respected and talented Tourism Industry veteran has opened DeSantis Restaurant Marketing in New York City. Specializing in representing a variety of City dining establishments to tourism operators and wholesalers, Joanne matches the needs of clients and restaurateurs looking for quality dining in the city. She was most recently Director of Travel Industry Sales at Windows on the World Restaurant. Congratulations Joanne and watch out, Martha!

Current and past editions of *Passport to Opportunity* are available in a downloadable PDF Format at www.opportunityguy.com