

Mar"key"t place

We conclude our two part series on marketing your business during the holiday season.

Christmas cards and gifts are a tradition to show you appreciate your clients. But in this economy, tradition weighs heavy. We want to encourage some of our clients and associates who are burdened with tight cash flow to consider giving in different ways:

- Donate your time or product to your customers' favorite charity or church this year. Donate something on your shelf that isn't selling. This serves a



good cause and clears out some inventory.

- Hire a Santa for your storefront on a particular day, and invite your customers to bring their children in for free pictures.
- Have a raffle for a Christmas tree or turkey. Let your customers know that with every purchase, they are entered into the raffle. Designate the raffle drawing day and deliver the prize yourself to the customer.
- Give gift certificates to your clients for your product and/or service. If you are an auto shop, offer a certificate for a free oil change. If you are a print shop, offer 10% discount on your customer's next order

Sometimes Christmas can feel like a burden to give, but the true gift of Christmas is appreciating what you have and showing it.

Quote

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.

—from Paul in the Letter, 2 Timothy 4:7

Q&A

Client: How do I give a Christmas bonus in this economy?

BKC: We have found that skipping Christmas bonuses or gifts all together is a drain on employee moral.



Instead, consider a smaller bonus than usual, or a gift certificate for a pie at a local bakery. Something with a warm "thank you" attached to it is better than nothing at all.

Employees don't expect as much right now, but a token is appreciated.

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the KEY to keeping business^(R)

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BUSINESS-KEEPERS CONSULTING

...the KEY to keeping business.

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ACCOUNT-ABLE

There are a few thoughts we'd like to discuss before wrapping up this series on calculating employees' capacity:

- Learning curve. Every new job, especially if you are in a creative industry, has a curve. This isn't the same learning curve of a new employee. This curve is the one your company takes on a unique project or client. At that point it turns into a quoted capacity job, not an employee capacity job. Bid accordingly.

- Once you have addressed the employee who is not working to capacity, you must give him/her a benchmark in which to correct their work output. Just saying, "do your work faster" is not enough to track progress. Establish, in writing, your output goals for the employee and graciously monitor their progress and give them feedback.

- Know your industry standards. If your competition is getting 82% capacity and you're at 75%, find out what they are doing differently. How do you find out? Attend conferences, read trade magazines, join associations. Gather your information, know your competition and know your own reasons for capacity, or lack there of.



Calendar

Thursday, December 10th

Personal Property Tax Due

Monday, December 21st

Winter Solstice

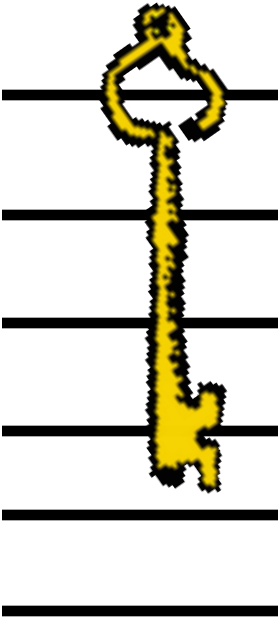
Friday, December 25th

Christmas Day (observed)

Thursday, December 31st

New Year's Eve

The Sound of Business...



Intuit released their Quickbooks Pro 2010 software in October, and we continue our review of the new version, but first a couple of thoughts on upgrades and updates:

- There are no upgrades to the Quickbooks (QB) software. Every year, QB comes out with a new version but it is the program in its entirety. Intuit (the maker of QB) does not offer an upgrade version at a fraction of the cost, like other software companies do. It's not a "patch" or add on. You get the whole program in every year's new version.
- We don't encourage, and in fact we discourage, our clients from keeping the Update feature on in QB. The update feature is automatically "On" and when you install, you have to disable it. We do this immediately for our clients when we install the software. The reason being, we have found no significant QB update, between yearly versions, that benefits the client. In fact, it's just the opposite in some aspects. When you update one computer, you have to update all the computers that use QB so it's time consuming and cumbersome. The main reason, in our humble opinion, that Intuit sets the updates to On is because every time you launch QB, the software is programmed to "swim upstream" via the internet, check in with Intuit's system and report to Intuit how you (the QB user) are using the software. We have very little proof of this "conspiracy," except for one clear example: several years ago, we had a client using the payroll module inside QB. He had not yet paid for the new version because the old version was working fine for him. He had not turned off the update feature. Intuit, via internet, sent in a command to his computer to wipe out his tax tables. And thus he could no longer do payroll without paying for the new version.



More next month on the 2010 version.



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www.business-keepers.com

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Merry

Christmas.

Katch the Day

During our summer of Katching the Days, we recently re-discovered the Central California coast. We continue our five part KTD series on this area of wonderland.

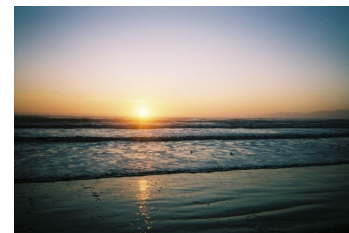


The third city we want to highlight is Pismo Beach. It's just north of Grover Beach and Oceano beach. Pismo has an annual two-day clam festival in October. However, the natural tourist attraction happens November through February when hundreds of thousands of Monarch butterflies migrate through this town. February 5th is the Official Annual Monarch Butterfly day.

Though this town may start to feel like just another beach city, it quickly turns into a boutique town with its quant shops, restaurants, and nice "cruising" street with parking in the middle of the street instead of along the sidewalks. To add to it's uniqueness is an annexed police station downtown in the same building as the Chamber of Commerce.

RVing is a big thing in this little town. The Pismo Coast Village RV Resort is well named. It feels like a village. There are 400 spaces with electric/water hookup, laundry room, restaurant, and general store. They even have their own private access to the sand of Pismo Beach.

Because it is in Central California, the water is a little colder, but it's a nice change from the bustle of Southern California beaches. Pismo has a picturesque pier, accommodating restaurants, and plenty of places to sleep if you'd rather skip RVing and stay in a hotel.



Katch a Pismo Beach Day, and leave the business-keeping to us!