

The Communicator

T H E C A L I F O R N I A M O V I N G & S T O R A G E A S S O C I A T I O N

Speakers Aim to Win Audiences At 2012 Convention

It's not too late to send in your registration forms for the 94th Annual Convention! Many educational and entertaining speakers have been scheduled to inspire and inform convention delegates.

Our Convention speakers will offer insights and instructional presentations on how to produce the best results from your business and staff in tough market conditions.

Keynote Speaker – Jeff Rendel

With experience as a federal regulator, financial executive and Congressional lobbyist, Jeff Rendel knows business.

Lured to greener fields, he oversaw the strategic operations of one of California's preeminent regional banks. There, he directed corporate initiatives and guided the bank to record growth, the No. 1 spot in regional market share, and financial results that shareholders could not help but enjoy.

Now, as President of his own consulting firm Rising Above Enterprises and as a professional speaker, Rendel works with companies that want elite results in leadership, sales and strategy. His company researches, synthesizes and articulates essential achievement elements to help corporations profit – financially and inside their corporate culture – in their pursuit to fulfill their missions and strategic endeavors.

Interstate Moving Issues - Linda Bauer Darr

Serving as Executive Director, President and CEO of AMSA, Linda Bauer Darr has more than 20 years of experience in transportation policy, association management and government relations. She has held several senior positions for transportation-industry associations, such as the American Trucking Association and the American Bus Association. Darr also served in the U.S. Department of Transportation during the Clinton administration.



Association Reports

CMSA 2011-2012 Chairman **Dennis Doody** of **Blue Chip Moving & Storage, Inc.**, and CMSA President **Steve Weitekamp** will provide an overview of the past year's activities and what the Association has planned for 2012.

Legislative Presentation – Jean Fuller

California State Senator Jean Fuller represents the 18th district, which includes approximately 850,000 residents of Bakersfield, Barstow, Bishop, California City, Frazier Mountain, Porterville, Ridgecrest, Taft, Twentynine Palms, Tulare, Visalia and other areas in the Kern River Valley and in Inyo and San Bernardino counties. She has previously been elected as an Assemblywoman for the 32nd District in 2006, with the priorities of expanding technical career education programs for high school students,

(Convention Speakers cont. on page 5)

Chairman's Corner

By: Dennis Doody



They say time flies when you are having fun. For me, the last year has flown by too fast, and serving as your Chairman has been a blast!! When I first set out on this adventure as Chairman, I had no idea what was in store. The daunting task of writing an article for *The Communicator* was scary enough. Now that this is my last article, I feel like I have just begun and have so much more I want to share with our great members.

My travels with Steve to all the chapters opened my eyes to what membership in the CMSA represents. I had the unique opportunity to visit a variety of movers in their respective cities and offices. There were some core values that I sensed at each visit. As members, we value our customers, our industry, our colleagues, our companies and our families. Having a good set of core values is what drives our companies and the CMSA. Each day, these values are put to the test to deliver qual-

ity relocations the moving public expects and deserves from a member of the CMSA. This higher standard of service and values is what separates a CMSA member from the rest of the movers up and down this great state.

The bill I mentioned in last month's column is gaining momentum. The proposed legislation is now bill AB-2118. It is just starting to make its way through Sacramento and will hopefully become law. This bill is meant to make it easier for legal movers to do business, and punitive for illegal movers to stay in business. For one, the bill proposes to allow movers to electronically distribute the PUC-required paperwork like the Order for Service and the Important Information booklet. There are severe penalties for rogue movers to encourage them to either get their PUC license or get out of our business. The CMSA has led the way to help this bill become law because it is the right thing to do. This bill would protect the moving public from the rogue movers because we understand all too well the heartache they can cause to a customer and the negative impression it leaves against all of us in this industry.

(Chairman's Corner cont. on page 4)



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President's Comments

By: Steve Weitekamp



Recently, I had the opportunity to participate in the confirmation hearing of California Public Utilities Commissioner Mark Ferron. The CPUC Commission, the governing body of the agency, consists of five commissioners each serving staggered six-year terms. Commissioners are appointed by the Governor and must be confirmed by the California State Senate. The hearing was conducted by the Senate Rules Committee and was held in one of the historic meeting rooms in our State Capitol. Prior to the hearing, CMSA member Fred Wallace and I had the chance to meet Commissioner Ferron, thanks to CMSA legislative advocate Chuck Cole, and share our concerns about illegal movers and enforcement. As is almost always the case at the Commission level, there was no discussion about transportation or moving as five senators questioned the appointee. That is, until we spoke during the public comment period. We made sure that the Senate Committee members, Commissioner and staff present all understood that illegal operators are a critical problem for our industry, and that more impactful enforcement is needed.

In addition to verbal comments, I was able to submit a letter reviewing our concerns, which was distributed to each committee member as well as Commissioner Ferron. Below is an excerpt from that letter:

"Today, our industry is being assaulted by large and frequently sophisticated groups of unlicensed operators. I call them operators and not movers because State law requires movers who transport used household goods to abide by the Household Goods Carriers Act and to successfully complete and remain in compliance with the permitting process of the CPUC. Unlicensed operators advertise broadly and without fear of reprisal on the Internet and create a chaotic environment, failing to provide consumers with any of the protections that are mandated by the California Public Utilities Commission's MAX4 tariff. In addition to doing damage to the moving public, unlicensed operators damage the regulated industry, taking away much needed business and

(President's Comments cont. on page 4)

(Chairman's Corner *cont. from page 2)*

I may be signing off, but I am not signing out. I will always remember this last year with nothing but joy and gratitude. I hope to see you all at the 94th Annual CMSA Convention in April.

(President's Comments *cont. from page 3)*

charging rates outside of the legal maximums. This is particularly frustrating because an unregulated operator has a lower operational cost basis than a permitted carrier. Many, and I believe that is being generous, fail to report their illegal income to State and federal taxing entities and none pay the CPUC the .07 percent of total revenue that permitted movers are required to pay, therefore illegal operators are doing damage to the taxpayers of the state of California. Illegal operators even do damage to their own employees by failing to regularly provide workers' compensation insurance or paying employment taxes that allow for the possible collection of unemployment insurance at some future date.

"Failure to adequately curtail and penalize unlicensed operators in the marketplace is creat-

ing a tipping point where some currently legitimate movers and those considering entering into the business community are hard pressed to see the necessity of being members of the regulated and legal industry. California has historically been a leader in consumer protections. The health of a legal and permitted industry that provides consumers with assurances of a fair shake and a reasonable system for recourse in the event that things go wrong is a worthy goal. In regards to California movers and their customers, job one is to create a Commission-driven environment where CPUC enforcement staff are encouraged, supported and rewarded for the aggressive and creative pursuit of operators who fail to comply with the process that requires movers to be permitted by the CPUC."

Your Association is working on the issue of illegal operators on multiple fronts and will be asking for your assistance in the form of letters to selected state legislators in support of AB2118, our sponsored legislation that will make positive changes to the California Public Utilities Code.

Finally, it isn't too late to register for CMSA's 94th Annual Convention, take action and sign up today!

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(Convention Speakers cont. from page 1)

increasing the amount of local jobs, reducing unnecessary regulation of small businesses in the state, and reducing tax liabilities for hard-working families.

Senator Fuller's top legislative priority this year is reducing regulations that burden California's businesses that prevent them from hiring, or rehiring, workers. She believes that putting more people to work and solving each Californian's personal budget crisis is the key to California's economic rebound.

Military Breakout

The Convention will also feature a Military Breakout Session panel discussion on the DP3 program. The panelists are **Matt Connell** from **Total Military Management**, **Terry Head** from **International Association of Movers** and **Peg Wilken** from **Stevens Worldwide Van Lines**.

International Business - Terry Head

Terry Head, President of the International Association of Movers (IAM), has been an active force in global transportation and world trade. He serves on various transportation-industry committees and associations and has

frequently been called by the U.S. Congress as an industry expert. He will be speaking about current international shipping news for CMSA members working with international business accounts.

The IAM represents more than 2,400 companies operating as movers, forwarders, and other service providers in more than 176 countries around the world.

Brief on International Business Discussion Panel

A panel discussion, including Terry Head of IAM, Sherry Williams of Pan American International Movers Association (PAIMA) and several others, will discuss the current state of the international household goods moving. This panel will be a great opportunity for the panelists to answer members' questions about international business and where it is headed in the upcoming year.

CARB Truck and Trailer Rules – CleanFleets.net Representative

A CleanFleets.net representative will present new information on the California Air Resource Board (CARB) Truck and Trailer

(Convention Speakers cont. on page 6)



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(Convention Speakers cont. from page 5)

Rules. The CleanFleets.net organization has participated in major on- and off-road rulemaking over a number of years.

Van Line Panel Discussion

The popular Van Line panel discussion, moderated by **Steve DeBolt** of **San Diego Van & Storage Co.**, will include **Conrad Swanson** from **Arpin Van Lines**, **Steven Hermann** of **Atlas Van Lines**, **Donna Martin** of **National Van Lines**, **Dan Robertson** of **North American Van Lines**, **Morrie Stevens Jr.** of **Stevens Worldwide Van Lines**, **Pat Larch** of **Uni-Group, Inc.** and **Fred McBroom** of **Wheaton World Wide Moving**. During the Van Line panel, delegates will have the opportunity to interact with van line leaders in a conversational, yet informative atmosphere.

The CMSA has an educational and enjoyable program scheduled for delegates at the convention. Learn about regulations affecting you and your business, and how to come out ahead. Come to John Ascuaga's Nugget and cash in on the valuable information this year's convention has to offer!

Calendar of Events

Thurs., March 22	Northern Region Golf Tournament
Wed., March 28	Twin Counties Golf & Bocce Ball Tournament
Thu., March 29	Mid Valley Chapter Spaghetti Dinner
Sat., March 31	North Bay Bocce Ball Tournament
Sun., April 1	Greater L.A. Chapter Day at the Races
Wed., April 4	Ventura/SB Chapter Meeting
April 10-15, 2012	CMSA Convention
Fri., Oct. 5, 2012	Monterey Bay Golf Tournament



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Independent Contractor Seminars A Hit with CMSA Members

CMSA hosted its 2012 Independent Contractor Seminars on Tuesday, February 21, and Thursday, February 23, in Livermore and Long Beach respectively, presented by CMSA Legal Counsel Mark Hegarty of Hegarty Law Offices and CMSA President Steve Weitekamp. CMSA saw a strong attendance for both workshops.

"Steve and I really appreciated the lively interaction with CMSA members who participated in our recent seminars," said Hegarty.

In the morning section, Hegarty discussed the leading governmental agencies that are targeting moving companies for possible worker misclassification. From there, he delved into the advantages and disadvantages of engaging an independent contractor. Advantages include cost savings of contributions, discretionary fringe benefits, work-

ers' compensation, etc. The disadvantages of working with an independent contractor involve the company's loss of control, cause requirement of termination, and the risk of misclassification of worker. With companies working in a tough market today, moving companies may consider the cost savings of engaging an independent contractor as part of their operations.

Hegarty also discussed the determining factors of an independent contractor versus an employee, such as company control over worker's performance, employee-type benefit packages given to a worker, the worker's opportunity for profit or loss, etc. These determinations would be helpful for CMSA members who may be audited in the future.



(Seminars continued on page 8)

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(Seminars continued from page 7)

Following lunch, Hegarty stepped away from the legal outlook of independent contractors to present the insurance considerations when dealing with independent contractors, such as cargo insurance, workers' compensation insurance and liability insurance. Companies should have an annual review of their current insurance plans that fits their needs.

In the event that a company is audited, Hegarty outlined a suggested checklist for CMSA members to follow to protect the company throughout the audit process. Hegarty also spoke about the important step of consulting your lawyer with any correspondence and/or request issued by the auditor. A few misspoken words to an auditor can undermine the moving company's legal ground in the independent contractor audit case.

Mover members found the seminars to be

informational as well as applicable to their company's operational needs.

"Having grown up in the moving and storage industry, I have attended numerous seminars. Of all the van line seminars I have attended, this CMSA Independent Contractor Seminar was by far the best for providing information to movers that can be used every day regardless of van line affiliation, size and market," P.J. Welch said.

Besides Mover members, Associate members, like Grover Perrigue of Grover A. Perrigue, A Law Corporation, found value in attending the seminar.

"With over 30 years involved in labor issues in the moving industry, I can assure you that Mark and [Steve Weitekamp] did an outstanding job. It was clear, helpful and scary. This is a must for movers that want to stay in business," Grover Perrigue said.

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Central Coast Chapter Fires up the Grill at its 2012 Barbecue Fundraiser

The Central Coast Chapter held its 2012 Barbecue Fundraiser at Spencer's Fresh Markets in Santa Maria on Saturday, March 10, 2012. With about 250 people attending the event and enjoying the tri-tip sandwiches with chips, Central Coast Chapter President Megan Andersen of Andersen Van & Storage couldn't be happier with the turnout to raise funds for the CMSA Scholarship Fund.

"[The Central Coast Chapter Barbecue Fundraiser] was incredibly successful, and [I'm]

looking forward to doing it next year," Andersen said.

A special thank you goes to the sponsors of the event: **Pioneer Packing**, Frito-Lay, Coca-Cola, Spencer's Market, Power Western Local and the Elk's Lodge. Without their support, the fundraiser wouldn't have been as successful as it was.

Food purchased by donations on behalf of CMSA member companies were donated to the local Salvation Army.



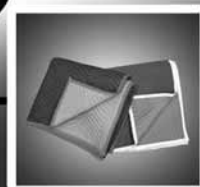
On the left, Central Coast Chapter President Megan Andersen, 9-month-old Lillyn Andersen and CMSA President Steve Weitekamp pose with one of the barbecue grills. On the right, Owen Foreman of Lompoc Van & Storage is lending a hand to the Chapter by working at the check-in registration table.



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Wheaton World Wide Moving Acquires Bekins Van Lines

Creates the Fourth Largest U.S. Household Goods Carrier

Indianapolis, Ind. – In a move creating the fourth largest household goods carrier in the United States, Wheaton Van Lines, Inc., is completing the acquisition of Hillside, Ill.-based Bekins Van Lines. The asset purchase agreement is in process and the transition of ownership is expected to be complete by mid-March 2012.

When the acquisition is final, both brands – Wheaton World Wide Moving and Bekins Van Lines – will continue to be operated as separate brands with combined operational efficiencies. The new Bekins will be headquartered in Indianapolis, also the corporate headquarters of Wheaton.

Together, the brands will increase the van line's agency base from 240 agents across the country to approximately 370 nationwide.

The acquisition is designed to bolster both brands and bring increased operational capabili-

ties to bear for the combined company's entire client base – including private individuals and corporate clients. Approximately 38 employees will be added to Wheaton's corporate staff in Indianapolis, bringing the total number of corporate employees to about 175. Bekins offices in Hillside, Ill., will be shut down.

"It's rare to have an opportunity to acquire a brand like Bekins, a company that truly helped to create the moving and storage industry, an innovator in that space and brand that's so well recognized," said Mark Kirschner, CEO of Wheaton Van Lines. "Consolidation in the relocation industry is inevitable as the market shrinks with the economy. But acquiring the Bekins brand and becoming partner to 130 Bekins agents will allow the van line to grow its market share overall and put us in an even better position to compete moving forward."

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The Associate Board Member Reminisces of his Four-Year Tenure

By: Mitch Snelson, *CDS Moving Equipment, Inc.*

Howdy everyone. May you be in good health and great spirit!

I have had the good fortune to serve two terms as the CMSA Associate Board member. It's been quite the eye opener and very educational. To see the incredible commitment of time and money the CMSA board members put into this valuable Association is amazing. I have had the pleasure to serve under four wonderful Chairmen: Vince Cardinale, Tim McCarthy, Brian Larson and Dennis Doody. Gentlemen, thank you for your service and support to the CMSA and to its Associate members. I can't tell you how thankful I am on the amount of time and consideration each and every Board I have served on has put toward the Associate members. I shall miss being part of this process, but will continue putting time into the local chapters.

Steve Weitekamp, you are amazing or maybe I should say nuts ... You choose. You and your small staff put in the work to make this organization the NUMBER ONE moving and storage association in the country. Your continued work with the PUC, the State, CARB, CMSA seminars, annual Convention, Scholarship program, Special Olympics, etc. is so underappreciated. Steve, you have done such a great job, it's easy to take you for granted, for you make it look so easy ... AND I know it isn't easy. I have great respect for your commitment and continued drive to make CMSA what it is today. THANK YOU, Mr. Weitekamp!!

Associate members — Listen up. My term will officially end at this coming Convention in Sparks, NV. I have heard from a couple of you who plan to apply for the position. You get a

few minutes at the Associate Members Committee meeting at 5:00 p.m. on Thursday, April 12, after golf, to share why you would like this position. Afterward, we have a quick vote and our new Associate Board member will be announced at the meeting. If you would like to throw your hat in the ring, please email or call me.

I have to say there are so many nuggets of opportunity in this CMSA Association. For one, if you are a California-based business and part

of our Associate member group, you have more than 30 opportunities to participate with moving companies between local chapter meetings and fundraisers like the infamous Monterey bocce ball tournament and the annual San Diego golf event each year. The beauty is you get to have REAL fun at these meetings and events while working and networking. Find another association that avails you to that many social opportunities for so little.

Associate members — If you feel you don't get much out of CMSA then suit up, show up and try some participation. Local chapters need all of our help, and I am not talking about door prizes. Helping set up meetings, working the front door, making head count calls etc., will ONE, continue to improve the CMSA Association and TWO, give you some exceptional face-to-face opportunities. Support your local chapters and use these simple opportunities that usually cost less than \$30 to attend and it includes dinner!!!

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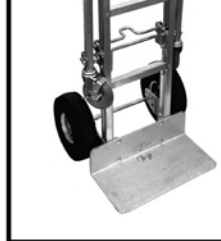
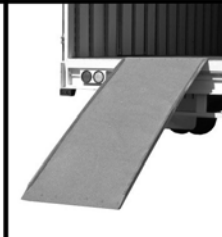
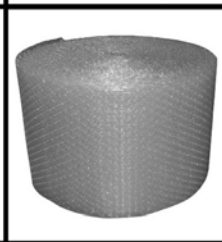
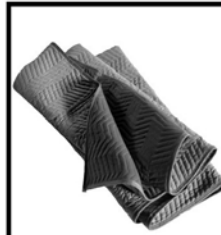
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Ventura/Santa Barbara Chapter Hosted 90 Bowlers for Bowling Tournament



Pictured on the left is the winning team from Blue Chip Moving & Storage: Dane Price, Julius Panaranda, Perry Hernandez Jr. and Perry Hernandez Sr. Pictured in the center is Roger Babbitt of NMS Moving Systems, who was one of the main organizers. On the far right, we see Bernadette Lance of NMS Moving Systems getting ready to throw her ball down the lane.

The Ventura/Santa Barbara Chapter held its bowling tournament on Sunday, February 19th, at the Brunswick Zone in Simi Valley, Calif. The Bowling Tournament was coordinated by Roger and Jayma Babbitt of NMS Moving Systems, Inc. A practice session was scheduled at 11:30 a.m. for members to brush up on their bowling skills, followed by the tournament.

With 90 bowlers competing at the event, the

Blue Chip Moving & Storage dream team had taken the trophy home. The first-place winners included Dane Price, Julius Panaranda, Perry Hernandez, Jr. and Perry Hernandez, Sr. The second-place winners included Jeff Fishel, Bryce Hester, Pat Hester and Ray Villasenor, all friends of NMS Moving Systems. The

(V/SB Bowling cont. on page 16)



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The \$64.64 Question: Will Your Customer Be Right, Wrong or Gone?

By: Jeff Rendel, *Rising Above Enterprises*

Three days, three customer service representatives and three ink cartridges taught me a great deal about customer service.

Day One

My HP all-in-one printer-copier-fax-scanner indicated internal trouble. "Print Head Problem" the miniature screen read. After a brief time on the telephone with Technical Support (TS), the TS representative concluded that my all-in-one needed – drum roll, please – a new print head. And he could have it delivered to my front door in seven days. And it was covered by the one-year warranty, too. Jackpot.

"But your website shows I can purchase the same print head and have it delivered tomorrow – for free," I replied. "Don't you have access and authority to use your own website to resolve a customer issue?"

Do I even need to elaborate?

I ordered the print head online and, with the TS rep's blessing, agreed to call back when the print head arrived. We would make sure the all-in-one worked and refund my American Express card for \$64.64.

Day Two

The print head arrived. The print head worked. I was back in business. Now, I needed my \$64.64. A telephone call to TS revealed that TS could not refund my American Express card. That was the realm of Customer Service (CS). A telephone call to CS revealed that I would need to call TS to get my money refunded. After all, it was the dominion of TS. Apparently, according to TS, I must abide by a "process." This course would have delivered my print head in seven days versus purchasing the same product – from the same company – and having it delivered in one day.

"If I followed the 'process,' would TS have

(Jeff Rendel continued on page 15)



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(Jeff Rendel continued from page 14)

compensated me for six days of lost productivity?" I asked.

Oh, why do I try? I perceived a vicious cycle was about to commence. So, I emailed the CEO of HP.

Day Three

It worked. Someone read my email. My unpleasant incident was escalated. It didn't hurt to point out that I address tens of thousands of decision-making executives each year who gain knowledge from my examples of magnificent – and miserable – customer service. And they pay money for lots of computer-related products and services.

The Escalation rep understood my matter. She agreed with my reasoning. The product was defective. It was under warranty. I needed a new print head. It was faster to buy it from HP. I just wanted my \$64.64.



And she could not refund it. A system difficulty, she said. "What can I do to make this right?" she asked. "May I send you some ink cartridges – say, three?" Three ink cartridges carry a street value of \$113.11. That's more than \$64.64. I really wanted a refund, but this was a good deal. A 74.98 percent return on investment.

The ink arrived on Day 4. I paid my American Express bill today.

Lesson # 1:

Integrate your systems in a manner that when customer issues crop up, staff members have access to the same information and resolution systems. Customers don't want to move to the next window. Customers want the person at hand to understand and put an end to the problem.

If one system (or person) says "One day" and another system (or person) says "one week," go with "one day." The net effect is the

(Jeff Rendel continued on page 16)

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(Jeff Rendel continued from page 15)

same, but your customer increases his commitment with "one day." Let the accountants settle the books.

Lesson # 2:

Take ownership of customer issues. Don't transfer. Don't redirect. Don't make it easier said than done. Just help your customer stay productive. Just get it done perfectly.

Tell your front line that they are the leaders of your organization. They are the ambassadors of what you sell. Now, let them lead. Let them resolve. Let them decide.

Lesson # 3:

Straighten out the customer issue and give

the customer more than he expects. Do more than make an apology. Upgrade them. Waive more than the fee. Increase their value received.

Waiving a \$5 fee charged incorrectly solves a problem. Giving the customer another \$5 demonstrates your commitment. The customer will reward you – at some point – with his commitment in the form of new business and referrals.

HP owed me \$64.64. They gave me \$113.11. That cost HP \$48.47. However, they gained an assurance of future purchases – laptop computers, desktop computers, all-in-one printers, and the related products that accompany.

Now, that's a worthy investment in the commitment of a valued customer.

(V/SB Bowling cont. from page 13)

third-place winners were Bradley Kussoy, Sharon Kussoy, Ben Smith and Lee Smith, also friends of NMS Moving Systems.

A special thanks go to the tournament's sponsors for all their support: Champion Risk & Insurance Services, L.P., New Haven Moving

Equipment Corp., Pioneer Packaging, CDS Moving Equipment, Inc., Box Brothers, The Sticker Girl and the Simi Valley Brunswick Bowling Center.

Most of all, thank you to all bowling tournament participants for supporting the CMSA Ventura/Santa Barbara Chapter, and for your help in donating funds to the CMSA Scholarship Fund.

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8 Ways to Use Twitter in the Market Place

By: Jay Adams, *smedio.com*

So you've finally decided your company needs to have a presence on Twitter. Congratulations! You're joining a number of companies that have made that exact same decision and seen a lot of success because of it. Twitter, however, can be a harrowing experience in the marketplace if you're not educated and informed on what to do and what not to do. Here are eight tips to get you started:

Do it all, or don't do it at all

Twitter, much like all of social media, requires time, patience and focus. Doing Twitter halfway is worse than not doing it at all. Name your favorite company. Now, imagine you go to that company's Twitter page and its most recent tweet is from last summer. Obviously, that's not a company that cares enough about feedback from its customers to be bothered with paying attention to Twitter. You don't want to gain that reputation. The first thing you have to do is make

a commitment to spending time every single day monitoring your Twitter page, your followers and some other things we'll point out a little later. Twitter success is not found by doing the bare minimum.

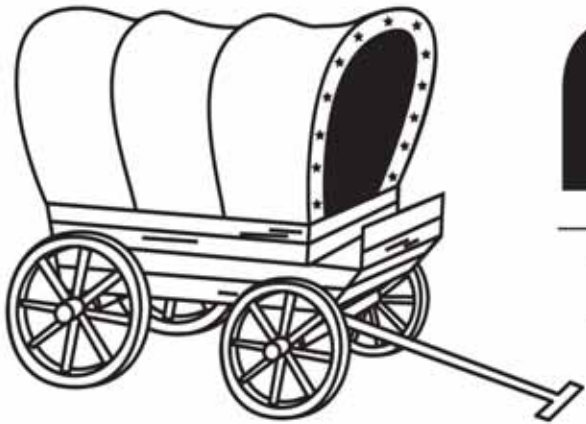
Be yourself, not your company

If you look through the Twitter pages of social media specialists who work for companies, you'll likely notice that most of them are themselves. The page is for a person; not a logo or a company name. No one wants to talk to a logo. Be yourself, talk like yourself and act like yourself. You're more likely to build on our third tip if you're not hiding behind your company's logo or slogan.

Make connections

Twitter is a great tool for making great connections with the most important people to your business: your customers. Engage them. Talk to them. Ask them questions. Who knows what you

(8 Ways to Use Twitter cont. on page 18)



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(8 Ways to Use Twitter cont. from page 17)

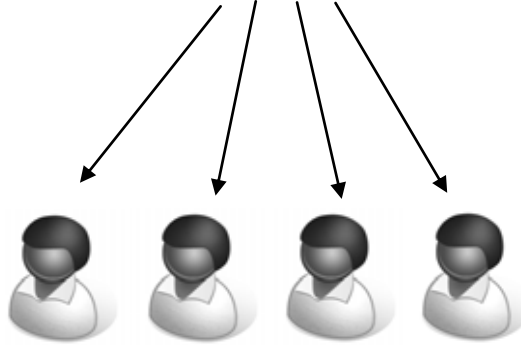
might learn about the way you do business. What if you get negative feedback? Listen to it and learn from it. Talk to the person giving you that feedback and find out more. Why do they feel that way? What can you do as a company to change that opinion? This is important information to have, and one of the reasons you signed up for Twitter in the first place, right? Connections with your consumers will change your business perspective in ways you never thought possible.

Respond to @ replies in a timely fashion

Under the home tab on the right side of your Twitter feed is where you will find your @ replies. Click on it and you'll see every tweet that mentions your Twitter name. Some replies will be statements. Others will be questions. Whatever they are, respond right away. Don't let any of your followers think for a mo-

ment no one is listening to what they have to say. If you don't know the answer to the question they're posing, kindly @ reply them back and tell them you'll find an answer for them as soon as possible. Using the @ reply function is an important part of building relationships with your customers, so don't neglect it.

@ reply



Share often

Twitter is not your stage to wildly promote your own products or services. Sure, a plug here or there is great. But your focus should be on what information you can provide your followers that they would find helpful. For example, I run the social media for The Legends Poll, a top 25 college football poll voted on by legendary college football coaches. Our

followers don't just follow us to hear about our poll. They follow us to talk about all things college football, so that's what I give them. If there's a great article on another site that I think

(8 Ways to Use Twitter cont. on page 19)



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(8 Ways to Use Twitter cont. from page 18)

would spark a good discussion or provide information to our readers as college football fans, I post it. Look at the big picture and provide information about your industry or your specialization instead of just your company. Be a source for your customers like no one else can.

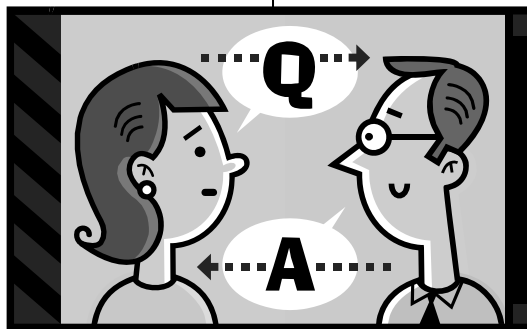
Post often, but not too often

Figuring out how much is too much can be difficult. The key here is to not overload your followers' Twitter stream with a bunch of information at one time. A good rule here is to tweet maybe three times per hour. Maybe that's too much for you, and that's fine. But going over that means you run the risk of annoying your followers. You don't want to do that.

Monitor conversations

Twitter search is a powerful, wonderful thing. Use it. Search for your company's name and see if anyone out there has been talking about it

on Twitter. Get in the habit of doing this, as you'll likely find opportunities to make connections and gain followers by engaging those users. Also, use Twitter search to find conversations related to your industry. Look at the big picture. If you're a graphic designer, search for a term like "designer" and see what comes up. You may find that people are tweeting about needing the services of a skilled graphic designer, and that's where the true value of Twitter search really shows itself.



designer, and that's where the true value of Twitter search really shows itself.

Compliment others

It may go against one of the top rules of business, but it's a good idea to mention your competitors and be complimentary of them on Twitter.

Scott Monty is a good example of this. Monty is the head of social media for Ford Motor Company, and while Monty does a great job of talking about Ford products, he'll sometimes point out products from other car companies and be complimentary of them. Compliment others on Twitter, even if they're direct competitors, and it will come back to you.

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HISTORICAL PHOTO

As the CMSA closes in on its 100th year, join us in looking back down memory lane at these wonderful historical pictures. If you have any pictures you would like to share, please email them in .jpeg format to: bwahlstrom@thecmsa.org.



Plucked from the CMSA Photograph Vault, we have a North Bay Chapter meeting photo above from the 1950s. The gentlemen included in the photo are Pop Hanson of San Rafael Van & Storage, Walter "Smitty" Smith of Hagen Smith Allied, Dick Hardin of Pierce Hardin North American, Irv Dowd of Dowd's Moving Bekins, Bud Hanson of San Rafael Van & Storage, Ralph Hagen of Ralph's Moving, Jerry Freeze of Carlson Moving, Al Couderc of Sausalito Moving & Storage. Earl Pereira Town and Country Moving, Evert Rulle of United Moving & Storage and 1970 CMSA Chairman Tom King of Crockett Moving.

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