



## Love what you do; do what you love

**T**wenty-plus years ago, a man came into my father's concrete block plant to buy rebar to use as tomato

plant stakes. That man struck up a conversation with my father regarding his profession; he taught art at the local university. His name was Jim Meade, and that day he impressed upon my father the joy of his chosen profession. And that is how I entered into my field of work.

It has been many years since Jim Meade, Vernon Merrifield and others opened my eyes to the world of art, design and marketing, but I love it as much today as I did as a college freshman. Sure, sometimes I dream about being a private detective or a hairdresser but I truly found my calling the day an art professor came looking for tomato stakes.

Marketing success can be driven from many directions. At the core of any campaign, business or venture there has to be a true enjoyment and motivation. The most expensive marketing is marketing that doesn't work. No matter how much money is spent, if there are not motivated individuals involved, the marketing will fail.

As a consumer, one of the worst dining or shopping experiences you can have is to be served by unmotivated, unhappy people. Even a grilled cheese sandwich tastes so much better when it's served with a smile. The same is true of any business. A slick print campaign may get people in the door, but if they're met with frazzled, stressed employees, what good has it done?

There's a common saying, "If Mamma's not happy, nobody's happy," so lead your employees and co-workers with enthusiasm. Ensure that each member of your team knows their responsibility in the success chain. Find the strengths and weaknesses within and coordinate accordingly.

Recognize that some people just are not going to be happy. If you have an unhappy employee, by all means, do not have that individual be the face of your company. A thousand dollars of advertising cannot overcome the negative impression of one employee.

Once your team is motivated and prepared,

keep it going. Follow up every marketing effort with feedback from your clients. When a negative comment or complaint is discovered, handle it immediately. If negativity is shelved, it has a tendency to worsen. One good analogy is the unseen, forgotten bag of potatoes. They'll shoot out some roots and, if not discovered and dealt with, they will permeate an obnoxious odor. The potato situation doesn't get better by being ignored and neither will shelved business issues.

Stephen Stills wrote the lyric, "If you can't be with the one you love, love the one you're

with." The same can be said of work; if you can't be the greatest ballerina or the next king of England, then today is the day to make the best of what you are doing. Be positive about your business, your job, your life and you will certainly reap the benefits that positive attitude will produce.

*Tish Pierce, Pierce Creative Marketing Service (www.piercecms.com) Member of the Livingston Parish Chamber since 2006. Tish can be reached at 225.284.8231 or email info@piercecms.com.*



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