



TURN IT AROUND

in 2008!



Turn It Around

Douglas Knorr, known as a "retail marketing activist" is president of Knorr Marketing (www.knorrmarketing.com), a full-service marketing and advertising agency specializing in the home furnishings industry. The agency provides strategic planning, creative production, public relations, sales promotions, website development and media buying services. Headquartered in the resort community of Traverse City, Mich., the firm serves clients throughout the United States.

by Doug Knorr

Last fall at the High Point market, *Home Furnishings Retailer* Editor Trish Kemerly and I discussed the need to create a new column that would provide innovative marketing strategies as well as stretch our thinking and get outside of the "retail box," so to speak. In addition, we wanted to discuss new ways to increase business efficiencies that would help retailers yield a stronger bottom line.

So, it is no surprise that we chose January to kick off this new column titled, "Turn it Around in 2008!"

Over the last few years, I have watched many businesses working harder while experiencing diminishing returns.

Some blame our overall economy. After all, just as the economy began to slow down, we began fac-

ing more competition for the consumer's discretionary dollar, such as plasma TVs, luxury hot tubs, mobile technology (with cameras, text messaging, web access, etc.), increasing popularity of cosmetic/weight-loss surgery (nearly 11 million cosmetic plastic surgery procedures were performed in the United States in 2006, up 7 percent from 2005), low-cost adjustable-rate mortgages (where some couldn't afford to furnish the new home they bought) and other products or services.

However, grouching about the economy doesn't solve anything without suggestions for improvement.

Rightfully, many questions are being asked, such as: "What is the answer to increasing my bottom line? Is there a marketing or operations strategy that works better today? Can the present trends be turned around?"

To each of these questions, I believe one answer remains: There is always a way to "turn it around."

Over the next months, this column will explore all of the things that are holding many retailers back from growing their companies, even in these more difficult times.

We will discuss how your business must change to meet the demands of the new consumer. Yes — the cheese has surely moved! Yesterday's customer looks nothing like the customer of the 21st century! You can no longer allow inefficiencies and operational waste to permeate your business. Retail conditions have changed and you must change with them.

We will discuss what it takes today to create a "loyal customer" and why loyalty is not freely given as it was years ago. In addition, we will discuss the importance of differentiating your business from the competition.

Recently, I was asked to come to a major market to see if we

could help “turn around” a business whose sales in the last three years had dropped by 50 percent. It was apparent with just modest market research that this company had imploded! Yet, they had a great opportunity in their market

and all they needed to do was reposition their brand message and target the customers who would appreciate what they offered, instead of trying to reach the masses with a same old, same old message!


Operations must be overhauled today. As an old friend of mine, John Lawhon used to say, “What gets measured, improves!” This has never been truer than it is today.

Over the next few months, we will take a close look at the importance of holding everything accountable and how to eliminate the “Leaky Bucket Syndrome.” You know what the leaky bucket syndrome is: those things we do and don’t do while struggling through the course of each business day that allow precious dollars to literally pour out the bottom of our business, instead of adding to, and staying on, the bottom line.

So, my question to you this January 2008 is: Are you going to make another New Year’s resolution? Or, will you decide to make a New Year’s *solution*?

Making a New Year’s resolution, while built on good intentions, all too many times never becomes more than just a good intention! However, if you make the decision today to make a New Year’s solution, then you will take the first step to turning your business around in 2008.

I look forward to our monthly discussions throughout this coming year, as we take a close look at how business has changed and how you can empower your executive team and your entire staff to become part of building the New Year’s solution.

It is my greatest desire that, together, we can “Turn it around in 2008!” 

Q:

What is the easiest and most cost effective way to lift sales, protect margins, improve customer service, enhance store and product image?

A:

Almost 80% of all purchasing decisions are made by customers in-store at your displays. So print better tags, signs, and labels in-store, on-demand!



Good bye.



Good buy.

Samples, Catalogues, Free Demo CD

Vinyl Pockets, Sign Protectors, Acrylic Sign Holders
Stylus-Sign & Tagging Software, Modular Sign Holder System
Labels, Paper and Sign Card Supplies
Sign Merchandising Solutions for Furniture & Appliances

RETAIL ADVANTAGE INCORPORATED

1-800-567-4467

info@retailadvantage.com