



Glenn's Guiding Lines
A tips, strategies and information newsletter from...

JGE J.G. Ebersole Associates *The Renaissance Group*
A Strategic Thinking Consultancy

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Articles Included
In This Version.

"We are pleased that our firm decided to embark on the journey through the strategic planning process. Since we were in unfamiliar surroundings, we relied heavily on the expertise of Glenn Ebersole of The Renaissance Group™ to lead us forward at a comfortable rate. Through Glenn's guidance, we have developed a strategic business plan that establishes a dynamic pathway to our company's goals." -- Terrance W. Grove, President, Grove Miller Engineering, Inc.

In This Issue:

15-Minute Marketing

Feature Article **15-Minute Marketing**

By Cathy Stucker

Do you think you don't have enough time to market? Here's a solution that can help you get started on marketing, or any other task you've been putting off.

Promise yourself you will spend 15 uninterrupted minutes working on one aspect of marketing. Edit the copy for your brochure. Update your email signature file. Make some phone calls. Revise a web page. Send a letter. Post a message to an email list. Or identify a media outlet and send your most recent press release to them.

You'll be amazed by what you can accomplish in just 15 minutes. Think you can't get anything done in that short time? How long does it take to clean your house? How long does it take if your mother-in-law will be there in 15 minutes? I rest my case!

Set a timer (so you don't watch the clock) and focus on your task for 15 minutes. Don't answer the phone or get distracted by anything else. When the timer goes off, you can stop. Of course, if you are on a roll, you might want to keep going for a little longer, but don't keep at it for so long that you lose focus.

There is nothing magic about 15 minutes. Make it 20 or 30 minutes, if you wish. Just commit to spending that time intently working on the task at hand.

By the way, this technique can work for anything else you've been putting off. Tackle filing for 15 minutes a day and watch the stacks of paper shrink.

Schedule your 15 minutes every day and see how that 15 minutes affects your results!

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The Power of Asking People What They Think - AND then Really Listening and Hearing What They Say.

Why Are You Waiting to Ask For Referrals?

Strategic Thinking & Planning Success Story

How to Write Press Releases That Work And Get Free Publicity for Your Business

In the next Issue - Look For:

Feeling Ill When Dealing with the Media - Here's a Prescription from the "PR Doctor" for Healthy Media Relations

Promotion Help

The Power of Asking People What They Think - AND then Really Listening and Hearing What They Say.

By: J. Glenn Ebersole, Jr., Chief Executive of J. G. Ebersole Associates and The Renaissance Group™

It truly amazes me how often in too many businesses there is such an aversion to sincerely asking people (employees, customers, suppliers, vendors, et al) what they think. During my 35 year professional career, I have witnessed countless missed opportunities to gain insight and powerful information in business because someone did not stop and ask "What Do You Think?" Or if they did ask, they "listened" but did not "hear" what the person said. Although many people and businesses tout their ability to "listen," I want to know the more important attribute of whether they also have the ability to "hear."

A reference to Henry David Thoreau was made in one of my business advisory boards while I was facilitating the meeting and asking each business owner there - "What Do You Think?" and then further stating how interested I was in what they thought and how important it was to me. Recently I discovered the source and actual quote from Thoreau and want to share that with you.

In "Life Without Principle," Henry David Thoreau stated "The greatest compliment that was ever paid to me was when one asked me what I thought, and attended to my answer. I am surprised, as well as delighted, when this happens, it is such a rare use he would make of me as if he were acquainted with the tool"

There is tremendous power in asking people what they think. If one is sincere and not only listens to, but also hears the reply. Why not amaze and delight someone today while conducting your business and ask them - "What Do You Think?" and be prepared to receive some insightful and powerful information to help you and your business.

And in the spirit expressed by Henry David Thoreau, I do value what you think and would like to ask you - "What Do You Think about this newsletter?" Please let me know by [contacting me](#). I promise to listen and to hear you.

Business Help

Why Are You Waiting to Ask For Referrals?

By: J. Glenn Ebersole, Jr., Chief Executive of J. G. Ebersole Associates and The Renaissance Group™

In December, 2004 I was referred to Bill Cates by The Brooks Group. Bill Cates is the author of 2 best selling books: "Unlimited Referrals" and "Get More Referrals Now!" Bill is President of Referral Coach International and is the nation's foremost expert on how to enhance customer loyalty and increase sales through high quality referrals and word-of-mouth.

Shortly after the referral from The Brooks Group, I visited Bill's web site and read a very interesting article entitled, "Stop Waiting to Be Referred Tap into Your Goldmine of Happy Clients." I was so impressed after reading the article and visiting the web site that I simply felt an obligation to refer you to him also. I recommend that you read his [article](#) and visit his [web site](#). The power of the quality referral awaits you!

AND - I always appreciate quality referrals. Please contact me if you would like to refer someone to me so they can receive "Glenn's Guiding

Time Management
Tips

More on Strategic
Thinking

Employee Turnover
is Expensive

and more...

Lines - Thoughts From Your Strategic Thinking Coach.

Business Help

Strategic Thinking & Planning Success Story

By: J. Glenn Ebersole, Jr., Chief Executive of J. G. Ebersole Associates and The Renaissance Group™

A majority of times when I ask small business owners if they have a strategic plan, a vision, a mission, etc. for their business, there is dead silence, a shuffling of feet, a distressed or puzzled look or responses like - "we are too small," "we have our plan in our heads," "no one uses those anyway," or some others that cannot be repeated here.

Fortunately, and to their credit, other small business owners respond differently and decide to embark on a journey of strategic thinking and strategic planning for their business to grow and prosper. Recently one of my clients experienced a great feeling of accomplishment when they completed their strategic plan with its vision statement, mission statement, company core values, short term goals (less than 1 year from adopting the plan), long term goals (beyond 1 year); and a commitment page, signed by each employee, endorsing the plan. The plan was distributed to each employee. In addition, an Action Plan for 2005 and beyond was completed with a breakdown of each goal into tasks with assigned leadership and a timeline. And this total process took less than 3 months.

Congratulations to Grove Miller Engineering, Inc. on their strategic thinking and planning efforts to date. And what did they think about this endeavor?

"We are pleased that our firm decided to embark on the journey through the strategic planning process. Since we were in unfamiliar surroundings, we relied heavily on the expertise of Glenn Ebersole of The Renaissance Group to lead us forward at a comfortable rate. Through Glenn's guidance, we have developed a strategic business plan that establishes a dynamic pathway to our company's goals." -- Terrance W. Grove, President, Grove Miller Engineering, Inc.

Stay tuned for future success stories. Maybe yours will be included here in a future issue. If you would like to learn more about strategic thinking and strategic planning, and how it can help your specific business, please [contact me](#).

Promotion Help

How to Write Press Releases That Work And Get Free Publicity for Your Business

By Cathy Stucker

One study found that as many as 90% of the stories you read every day in the newspaper came about because someone sent a press release. Why aren't some of those stories about you?

When people see you in the media, you become familiar, even famous! And it gives you credibility. When you are written about in the newspaper, or interviewed on TV or radio, you are news; and that's better than any advertising you can buy.

Anyone can learn to write press releases. It just takes a little knowledge and a lot of practice. To write a good press release, put your editor/producer hat on. What will the people who read this publication, watch this television program, or listen to this radio station want to know? What are their interests and concerns? The editor or producer's job is to figure out the answers to those questions and present interesting news. Your job is to make the editor or producer's job easier.

The headline is the most important part of your press release. Make it count! You have only a few seconds to grab the attention of an editor or producer, who may receive hundreds (or thousands) of releases every week. If the headline doesn't interest them, they won't read the rest.

Promise something of interest. Instead of "New Book Tells How to Make a Budget and Stick to It", describe the benefits of having a budget -- getting out of debt, retiring comfortably, putting your kids through college, etc. Sorry, but no one cares that you wrote a book. Don't even mention it in the headline. Describe the benefits of using your information. A hot topic is one parent quitting a job to take care of the children. Can you show the audience how to do that? There's your headline: "You Can Stay Home With Your Kids!"

Use the inverted pyramid style of news writing: The most important information goes at the beginning, with the least important at the end. The first paragraph should deliver on the headline. Start with a question, a statistic, a provocative statement or a powerful benefit. Subsequent paragraphs back up the first by providing background information, quotes, and other relevant details. Keep it to about one page.

When I edit press releases written by clients, I usually end up rewriting the headline and taking out the first two paragraphs. That's because the headline and first two paragraphs are usually about the person who wrote the release. If your press release is "me" centered and doesn't promise benefits to the audience, scrap it and start over.

While there are no guarantees that your story will run, there are several things you can do to help it along:

- Make it newsworthy. This isn't about you -- it's about the audience. What's more important: that you know the tax code, or that you can help them save money on taxes?
- Make it timely. Media love something new and they also love ties-ins to events, holidays, other news stories, etc.
- Make it accurate. If there are typos and misspellings in your release, it will get tossed. Make sure phone numbers, dates and addresses are correct. If they can't trust it, they won't run it.
- Make it easy to read. The release should follow one of the standard formats for press releases. If you're not certain of your language skills, have someone else proofread it.
- Make it objective. Don't use hyperbole and advertising language, such as "Greatest Software Ever!" They won't believe your inflated claims and they won't do a story that sounds like an ad.
- Make it easy to follow up. Include a name and phone number(s) the media can call for additional information.

Don't be discouraged if you get coverage in only a couple of places, or not at all. Keep working on your press releases, keep sending them, and you

will get results.

The most important thing to remember about writing press releases is this: The press release is not about YOU; it's about your media contact's AUDIENCE.

Write with that in mind, and you will soon be getting lots of free publicity for yourself and your business.

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Employment Help "The Perfect Labor Storm"

By Ira S. Wolfe

<http://www.super-solutions.com>

Fact #321:

Direct costs of insomnia, which include dollars spent on insomnia treatment, healthcare services, hospital and nursing home care, are estimated at nearly \$14 billion annually. Indirect costs such as work loss, property damage from accidents and transportation to and from healthcare providers, are estimated to be \$28 billion. (Source: National Sleep Foundation and NIH)

Fact #322:

15 medical conditions accounted for half of the inflation-adjusted growth of \$200 billion in health spending between 1987 and 2000. (Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services)

Fact #323:

The five illnesses where costs increased the most between 1987 and 2000 were heart disease, asthma, mental disorders, cancer and hypertension. (Source: Health Affairs, August 2004)

Fact #324:

The cost of treating heart disease rose 70 percent, diabetes by 44 percent. (Source: Health Affairs, August 2004)

Fact #325:

Out-of-pocket health costs average 19 percent of income for persons 65 and older. Medicare beneficiaries without Medicaid coverage spend 49 percent of their total income on health care. (Source: AARP)

Do you know about "The Perfect Labor Storm?" If not, I suggest you learn as much as possible as soon as possible so you and your business will be prepared to keep ahead of the "Storm". My recommendation to you is to obtain and read "The Perfect Labor Storm Fact Book" by Ira S. Wolfe. AND - For some great advice related to managing, motivating & matching your employees for success, I recommend you read Dr. Ira Wolfe's weekly newsletter "The Total View." Ira's web site address is: www.super-solutions.com You will find out how to get his book and how to sign up for his newsletter by visiting the site.

Virus Or Not - Hoaxes and Warnings

Listed below are the virus that were "coming out" this month and what the real outcome of the situation was. Use this information to find out if you need to update your protection or let it fly.

Virus Name	Out There Or Not Out There
Osama Vs. Bush	Not Out There
Mybabypic.exe	Out There
Missing Child	Not Out There
Fizzer Worm	Out There

If you want to check out other hoaxes and warnings visit -

www.truthorfiction.com

Until Next Time, keep striving to reach your goals and vision!

Glenn Ebersole

"Your Strategic Thinking Coach"

*P.S. Best personal wishes for a happy,
healthy & prosperous 2005!*

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