



# The Franchisee FOCUS



Leading you to the T.O.P.

October 2007

A publication of  
Success Handler, LLC  
[www.successhandler.com](http://www.successhandler.com)  
[coach@successhandler.com](mailto:coach@successhandler.com)



David Handler is founder of [Success Handler](http://www.successhandler.com), a professional business coaching organization. With him as your coach, you'll explore the business and personal dreams you desire. Much like sports coaches with athletes, David will show you how to soar to new heights as a franchisee, franchisor, small business owner or corporate executive.



## Masquerade by The Coach, David Handler

### Part I of II

Two weeks from tonight, doorbells will ring and little voices sing, "Trick or Treat," as the tradition brought to America by Irish immigrants over 150 years ago plays out across the country. Some choose to debate whether it's appropriate to celebrate an event with Pagan roots. I see neighborhood children having fun and my mind instantly transports back 40 years to my mother burning a cork and smearing its black residue on my face to create that authentic hobo look, then sending me and my brother – whose birthday is October 31st – out to haunt the houses on our street. Back then there was no need to screen every piece of candy, people dropped homemade caramel apples and popcorn balls into your paper bag, and you didn't have to avoid some houses because "we don't know who lives there."

This reminiscing isn't meant to come across as some old fogey with a warped memory longing for the good old days. Actually, the costumes worn and decorations displayed now are a lot more fun and creative. Like all things commercial, Halloween has evolved into a revenue machine that generates more than \$5 billion in annual retail sales. Yet, there are things about those dark ages of the 1960's that made for a more pleasurable experience in many parts of life.

Take the local department store, where everybody knew your name, the same man fitted your kids for shoes each school year, and S&H Green Stamps were a valuable commodity that allowed you to add extra gifts to your Christmas layaway. Or, the local drive-in, where the carhop was the teenage girl who also babysat for you, your burger

*"Your coaching calls always come at the perfect time. I really needed to talk to you today."*

- Barbara G, Texas

*"It's great to know you are on our team and rooting for us. You're the best!"*

- Anne D, Canada

[Read more testimonials](#)

## Possibilities Explored™

.....

### The Fall Classic

It's that time of year when dreams come true. The Indians and Red Sox are battling to see who plays the red-hot Rockies in the World Series. To find out how prepared your business is for achieving your dreams, read [last October's article](#).

If you're a new subscriber to this E-Newsletter, you'll find previous issues in our [Archives](#). If you're a long-time reader, the best compliment you can give is to [share](#) it with a friend.

.....

### Contact Us

.....



### Opera Ghost Striking A Chord

The second act of Andrew Lloyd Webber's *The Phantom of the Opera* – the longest running

and fries always came out right, and they hung those little plastic giraffes or monkeys on your root beer float glass. And, of course, there was the filling station, where gas was 33-cents a gallon, the owner filled your tank while a young man checked your oil and cleaned your windshield, and when your car wouldn't start in your driveway, he'd come give you a jump.

Fast-forward to 2007, and here's the scary reality of customer service...

Two of the biggest cable companies swap franchises in major cities around the country. In Houston, where I live, the new provider says there will be no changes, then two months later announces a rate increase. Our package, which includes HD but no premium channels, goes up \$12 to more than \$80 per month. Having been a cable subscriber for more than 20 years, I decide to call and find out what they will do to retain us. After 10 minutes on hold, the rep returns and says she spoke to her supervisor. They would "happily reduce your bill \$20 for the next three months," although, she points out, "that will make you ineligible for another discount during the next year."

Resisting the urge to laugh, I said, "Let's do the math on this. Say our average bill the past two decades was \$50. That's \$12,000 we paid your predecessor. Handle this right, and I'm not going anywhere for the next 20 years. Handle it wrong, and you're going to lose, at \$80 each month, \$20,000 in revenue. For that, you're willing to give us 60 bucks, which is just \$24 when you subtract the new increase?" You already know the next words out of her mouth: "I'm sorry, sir, that's all we can do." I said thank you, please give us the discount, and tell your supervisor we'll be cutting the cable and switching to satellite. "Thank you for being a loyal customer" were her parting words.

There are all sorts of studies that compare the expense of adding new customers with the cost of keeping current ones. I'm sure somewhere in the research is evidence the gap between the two is much greater than \$60. While I never had a specific amount in mind, something like this would have made the difference: "Mr. Handler, our subscribers are the most important thing in our business, and we definitely want to keep you happy. I'm authorized to remove the increased charges for one year, and will do that right now." That decision would have cost the cable company less than \$150 in revenue, they could have counted on my loyalty for another 20 years and I would be writing this article about the incredible customer care they displayed.

The most haunting part of this situation is it became evident the woman I dealt with was just following orders, simply reading from a

musical in Broadway history – begins on a majestic staircase. The scene is an extravagant ball, with guests attired in colorful costumes. The music is powerful, the dancing enchanting and the lyrics haunting...

*Masquerade!  
Paper faces on parade.  
Masquerade!  
Hide your face,  
so the world will  
never find you!*

*Masquerade!  
Seething shadows  
breathing lies.  
Masquerade!  
You can fool  
any friend who  
ever knew you.*

Unfortunately, this is the approach many companies take to customer service. Their words suggest a wonderful performance, but too often they hide behind that illusion, and once the mask is removed, reality appears and the story changes. As a small business owner, the greatest competitive advantage you have is the ability to serve your customers better than others. Use it the right way and you'll unleash the true power of the music of the night.

.....

script. "If he says this, you say that. If he asks for A, you offer B." Her supervisor must have been doing the same, which makes me wonder what messages the CEO and executive leaders are sending to their team? Surely it can't be: Never make an exception to these procedures. Something tells me if I could get to the CEO and explain what happened, he'd say, "You've got to be kidding me."

As the leader of your small business, it's essential your employees have the power to fix things with your customers, without ever having to ask your permission. Where you set the bar is up to you. The Ritz-Carlton puts it around \$2,000 per guest, no questions asked. While positioning your business model next to theirs may be like comparing the world of the living to the world of the dead, there is a number that makes financial sense for you. Do the math and figure out what it is, then train your employees how to graciously use it to treat your customers. This new tradition will ensure they continue to visit your doorstep every year.

**Next Month:** The frustrating experience of making the switch, and how, after many hours and many conversations, the country's largest satellite provider finally made things right.

.....

## Lake Wobegon Daze

The meaning of the word "average" suggests some people have to be below the number and some above it. However, in Garrison Keilor's humoristic *Prairie Home Companion* world, "All the women are strong, all the men are good looking, and all the children are above average." Obviously, those in Lake Wobegon see themselves differently than mathematicians.

A recent survey asked employees, "In your company, are you among the top 10 percent of performers?" Care to guess the results? Not surprisingly, 90 percent of respondents answered yes. While that's statistically impossible, it does reveal a possible disconnect between the expectations of leaders and the perceptions of those who follow them.

Consider your own team members. If you have 10 employees, the math suggests at least three are below average. However, if nine of them see themselves as above average, you will need to adjust their thinking by clearly stating your objectives for success and meeting with them regularly to assess and redirect their performance. Otherwise, you'll exist in an atmosphere of fiction.

Would you or someone you know benefit from professional coaching? [Success Handler](#) shows clients how to explore the outcomes they desire most. As our client, you will discover the path to your success. Ready to start? Call 281.251.3200 or [send us](#) an e-mail.

.....

To read previous issues of this E-Newsletter – which has subscribers in 17 countries (USA, Canada, England, Germany, Australia, South Africa, Norway, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, India, China, Taiwan, South Korea, Argentina, Colombia, Ecuador) – visit [www.successhandler.com](http://www.successhandler.com) and look in Archives.

.....

For an e-mail subscription, please [visit our Web site](#) and register in the Subscribe area.

If you no longer wish to receive this, please use the link at the bottom of this message.

.....

We will never release, sell or give a subscriber's

.....

[Visit Our Web Site](#)

.....

[View A Print Version](#)

.....

[Send This To A Friend](#)

.....

### Speaking Of Service

This month's travels took me to Las Vegas for a keynote on *The Law Of Attraction*, and how to achieve exactly what you want from your business and life. "I've heard speakers all over the country," one attendee told me afterward. "You are among the best." If you're looking for a fun and engaging session for an upcoming conference or convention, please send an [e-mail](#) or give me a call at 281.251.3200.

Each presentation is customized for your audience, so you won't experience another "here's my message, fill in your company name" approach. Recent topics include: Coaching Your Way To Success; Breakthrough Thinking; Developing The Leader Within; Standing Out In A Crowded Marketplace.

.....

Copyright © 2007 Success Handler, LLC.  
All rights reserved.

name or e-mail address to any other party or organization. Our subscribers will only receive e-mail messages that contain requested information, new articles or services announcements.