



The Franchisee FOCUS



Leading you to the T.O.P.

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A publication of
Success Handler, LLC
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TELEFORUMS**
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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.



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Happy Holidays



"I just wanted to let you know that I really appreciate you calling me on our "off" time and helping me out. Just a few supportive and empathic words can really make a difference."

- Andrea S, California

"I can't say enough how much I appreciate your help this year with my operations. You are a great coach!"

- Mike S, Texas

[Read more testimonials](#)

What I Didn't Know by The Coach, David Handler

Life is an ongoing opportunity to grow in knowledge and wisdom, and the holidays are a good time to reflect on lessons learned during the year. To that end, here are 10 things I discovered in 2007:

10. Customer care is the biggest differentiator. My last two articles were about the difficulties of cutting the cable and getting satellite. However, those were just two of the situations that drove me crazy. I could as easily have written about my challenging experiences with car repair, airport security, Bruce Springsteen tickets, or placing an ad for a client in a major metropolitan newspaper. If you want to take a leap in your business next year, make it your single purpose to be the Nordstrom or Ritz Carlton or Disney of your industry. Sound overwhelming? It's not...just adopt "amazing service" as your mantra, and live it every day.

9. The future is in good hands. My daughter's theatre troupe presented the musical *Les Miserables* this month. I've seen the professional version many times, and these high school students, with a few week's of rehearsal, put on five amazing performances. Having witnessed them achieve such lofty heights, I'm confident the next

Possibilities Explored™

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Knowing Why

Having everyone on your team understand the reason they walk through the door each day is essential to serving your clients and customers. To focus your organization on the same purpose, read [last December's article](#).

If you're a new subscriber, 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.

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Lords-A-Leaping Costs Keep Rising

Each year, PNC Wealth Management analyzes

generation will do great things.

8. Leaders at major corporations are just like you. My coaching expanded to include high-level executives at several large companies this year. And guess what? They have the same challenges to work through as the small-business entrepreneurs who make up the majority of my practice. The key to improvement is admitting there is a need, and being open to addressing issues honestly and deeply.

7. The fairytale myth is over. As I write this, I'm listening to George Mitchell's press conference about steroid use in Major League Baseball. Turns out Barry Bonds isn't the only pariah. Learning Roger Clemens is on the list is disappointing. His is the only autographed baseball card I own. My son has his jersey, and would name the Rocket as a hero. It will be hard to look him in the eye and explain Clemens' – and many others' – alleged illegal and unethical actions.

6. People have a hard time with confrontation. Two long-term clients simply disappeared this year without an e-mail or call to say our coaching relationship was ending. They just didn't answer the phone at our next few scheduled times. Months later both reached out to tell me how much they appreciated everything we achieved, and they didn't want to hurt me by saying goodbye. That sounds nice, but the real reason for their non-action was to avoid the negative feeling of addressing something that would make them, not me, uncomfortable.

5. The U.S. election process needs adjusting. The media dissect candidates and hold debates 18 months in advance of Election Day. Mitt Romney goes on national TV a year out to defend his faith, when most of the electorate aren't even aware of anything he stands for politically. Last week I read that if Barack Obama overtakes Hillary Clinton in the Iowa Caucus on January 3rd, her campaign will be in trouble, despite a substantial lead in the polls. Are we really being served with this approach to determining our nation's leader?

4. Al Gore wins. I voted for George W. Bush twice. However, in my opinion, his decisions have moved the country farther apart. Gore, on the other hand, after conceding a contest of chads, takes home an Academy Award and Nobel Prize, and has people saying, "Maybe there is something to this global warming thing." Losing the White House appears to be allowing him to achieve greatness after all.

3. Loyalty is a myth...in sports. The number of football coaches who break contracts to seek a "better life for my family" is amazing, and Bobby Petrino is the poster child. Last year he signed a contract

the cost of a True Love gifting his betrothed the objects in "The Twelve Days Of Christmas." Buying the 364 items this year will set you back \$78,100, up 4 percent since 2006. You can save by giving each item once; that will run you a mere \$19,507, a 3 percent increase.

PNC, a Pittsburgh-based bank, says its whimsical Christmas Price Index reflects trends in the economy, and, thus, serves as a barometer of the real cost of living. Blame higher food costs for lifting the six Geese from \$300 to \$360. Plus, rising commodity prices shot up the five Golden Rings 21 percent to \$395. However, three French Hens (\$40), two Turtle Doves (\$40) and a Partridge in a Pear Tree (\$15) all stayed the same.

While it's fun to look at such extravagant gift-giving, the learning opportunity as a business owner is to review your pricing. If you haven't adjusted recently, you might want to consider those eight Maids-A-Milking. Due to the 13.5 percent increase in the minimum wage, they're costing you \$46.80 every hour, and will be getting raises the next two years.

extension at Louisville, then left weeks later for bigger money in the NFL. Last week he walked out on the Falcons with three games remaining to take over at Arkansas. Where in the real world do contracts mean nothing? College athletic directors and NFL owners deserve exactly what they're getting for breaking the terms of the agreements they sign.

2. Stephen R. Covey is still relevant. The 7th Habit is "Sharpen The Saw" – which means take time to relax and rejuvenate. For the first time in 26 years of working, I took three vacations in 2007. I'm more energized, more focused and more valuable to my clients. My suggestion: Find time to disengage more often next year.

1. A life of service is emerging. My former travel company partner and his family are spending the holidays in Cambodia, helping improve educational opportunities for children (<http://www.pepyride.org/>). One of my clients collects supplies for military dogs and sends them to Iraq (<http://www.dogdaycare.com/k9support.php>). The high school-age daughter of a friend is taking her second missionary trip to Central America in the spring to deliver street evangelism. Whatever your calling, make 2008 the year you pursue a higher purpose. It's amazingly rewarding.

Many of these lessons originated from negative experiences. That's the way it should be: Celebrate successes and learn when things don't go well. Then, you'll keep moving forward fast.

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This completes four years and 48 issues of *The Franchisee Focus*. Next month we debut a new name, new look and new approach. It's a pleasure to gift my views to you. Thank you for gifting your time to me.

Season's Greetings to you and your family...and keep exploring!

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