



Do You Have Marginitis?

Article published in eMERGE!

June 10, 2009
by

Stone Payton

GrowthANSWERS
Find, Keep and Grow Your Customer

2134 Lamplight Drive | Marietta, GA 30062 | 770.552.6028 | Fax 770.552.6099

www.growthanswers.com | drigby@growthanswers.com

Do You Have *Marginitis*?

The symptoms are easy to spot . . .

- Longer sales cycles and shorter commitments
- Rising “cost of sales”
- Competing on price
- Declining profits
- Increase in “transactional” sales and casual business relationships
- Decrease in “strategic” sales and deeper business relationships
- It's just not as fun as it used to be

*We don't have any hard stats to back it up, but we have every reason to believe that extended exposure to **marginitis** can cause substantial loss in IQ points and common sense as well. Many patients presenting the symptoms above have actually **cut** their Sales & Marketing budgets. Most did so out of fear and confusion, but some actually regarded this as a viable strategy for fixing the problem! (I'm quite serious. You just can't make this stuff up. I wonder if they would try to “smoke out” lung cancer, or “gorge” obesity into submission ???)*

If you're not experiencing any of these symptoms, you're in the minority. In fact, a record number of businesses large and small have exhibited these and similar conditions over the last 18 months . . . and the number is increasing at an alarming rate. *Marginitis* is spreading like wildfire throughout our economic system. It is, by all accounts a very real threat – a genuine epidemic jeopardizing the livelihoods and lifestyles of Business Owners across the globe.

That's disturbing news. Fortunately, there is immediate and permanent relief for those who are serious about immunizing their business from the crippling effects of *Marginitis*. The cure is simple, and the regimen is easy. Well, sorta . . .

Before you get too excited about this simple, easy solution, please recognize: The very same thing can be said about the vast majority of health concerns facing our population. Most health problems are a direct product of our mindset and lifestyle . . . We drink too much, smoke too much, eat too much and too much of the wrong thing, exercise too little, etc. The solution in both arenas really is quite simple, really is quite easy – but there is one fundamental, non-negotiable pre-requisite:

Personal Accountability

Marginitis thrives in an environment of Blame, Procrastination, and Victim Thinking. Remove these from your environment, and virtually any business pathology including *marginitis* will begin to dissipate very quickly. As long as you persist (and allow your people to persist) in believing “the economy” is responsible for your current and future state, you're doomed. Every symptom listed above is **your** responsibility, **your** doing – the direct product of specific choices **you** have made (or avoided) . . . and **you** have the ability to make new choices – **Right Here, Right Now**.

If you cannot or will not embrace this idea of *Personal Accountability*, this doesn't make you a bad person . . . a little “stiff-necked” and misguided perhaps, but not “bad.” It does mean however, that the balance of this article (or any other resource for that matter) will

probably offer very little if any meaningful relief. In these cases of extreme oblivion or stubbornness . . . When the patient can afford it, our recommendation is that they simply “wait it out” until the economy cycles back around (and it will) to a point where it will absorb and moderately reward marginal performance.

If you can’t afford to wait it out, have a strong disdain for mediocrity, and wish to capitalize on the power of *Personal Accountability* to eradicate *marginitis* from your life once and for all, we recommend the following regimen . . .

Rx Consistent, Focused Action – in concert with timeless principles and natural law.

Ironically, you probably need very little direction in this regard. Once you’ve decided to take (and expect) *Personal Accountability* for corporate results, the answers tend to come remarkably fast. You know exactly what to do . . . Improve your sales & marketing process, Invest in building deeper, more strategic relationships, Stop pursuing “bad business,” Build and nurture a community of people passionate about your products & services, and for Pete’s sake (actually for **your** sake) – unless you’re on the Mercantile Exchange trading crude oil and hog bellies . . . STOP SELLING ON PRICE.**

**** Side Note / Reality Check:** *My company specializes in solving the Sales & Marketing problem for boutique Training & Consulting firms. In almost every case, we advise our clients to **increase** their fees. This one change (and the resulting shifts in mindset, caliber of service, client loyalty, etc.) has worked every single time. Maybe it would work for you?*

You know what to do, what to stop doing, and you know why. What may not come so fast and easy for you is the **HOW**. Well, that’s partially because the WHAT is almost universal, as is the WHY. **HOW** is typically a bit more unique to any given situation. There are some timeless principles however, that should help you surface, select, and employ some practical “how to’s” for your business:

1. Consistency: Whatever you choose to do, do it consistently. Even the most arcane, clumsy, ill-conceived strategies & tactics exercised with relentless consistency will out-perform far superior, cutting edge approaches applied infrequently and unpredictably. If you don’t believe me, ignore your Caller ID and answer your phone during dinner one night this week. There’s only one reason these firms continue to go to market this way – it works. And there’s only one reason it works . . . *consistency*.

*By the way, this is one of two reasons so many very talented Sales Trainers and Marketing Consultants struggle to sell their own services and run a profitable business. They get so consumed with practicing their craft out in the field, they don’t consistently do what they’ve been teaching others to do -- and know they should be doing themselves. (Some of the worst cases of **marginitis** are found among Sales Training & Marketing Consulting firms.) The other reason of course . . . Selling professional services really is different – there are several nuances in meeting and serving the professional services market that require a distinctly different set of strategies & tactics.*

2. Focus: When your focus is clear, decisions are easy. Clarity of purpose is essential, and should govern all your business decisions. Consider crafting a control question that will help you exercise this discipline. In our shop – every project, every piece of business, every strategy & tactic, every set of choices is subjected to the same test:

Will This / How Will This help our clients produce Better Results In Less Time?

Until we can answer that question with compelling clarity, we don't implement -- period.

3. Circlenomics™: You're familiar with the term economics. **Economics** is the branch of social science dealing with the production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services. **Circlenomics™** is the set of disciplines and natural laws which govern our capacity to bring quality relationships and profitable business into our "circle."

Here again, you probably already know what to do. You were endowed by our creator from Day One to act in complete concert with natural law. Sometimes we may choose to ignore how the universe works, and try to circumvent natural law. It doesn't work – not over the long haul. Consider asking yourself and your team:

What Are We Doing / What Should We Be Doing to draw quality relationships and profitable business into our circle?

I think you'll find that plenty of practical ideas start to surface pretty readily – but if not, give us a call and we'll help you think it through.

For most of our clients, we've recommended placing a strong emphasis on building and providing for the care & feeding of "community." The concept is wholly consistent with natural law and the idea of **Circlenomics™** . . . and **It Works**. Recent developments in technology have made this strategy increasingly affordable and productive -- and executed properly, can quickly free you from the binds of considerably more expensive, tired and dying business models. In fact -- a properly resourced, truly focused commitment toward building and nurturing "community" can completely remove the need for traditional "interruption" marketing . . . which continues to deliver declining results at an ever-increasing cost for most businesses.

When you find yourself conducting business with well-informed people who understand your value and have a vested interest in (sometimes even genuine passion for) your products and services: Sales Cycles are substantially shorter, "Cost Of Sales" is dramatically reduced, Pricing is a non-issue or at least a secondary issue, Relationships are more strategic, Work is fun again, Business is more profitable . . . In short, you and your business are immunized from **Marginitis**.

#####