



FROM THE DESK OF BOB WILSON

Maximizing Results Through People
A CEO to CEO Quarterly Newsletter

2/15/07

Thank You for Your Business

Dear Fellow CEO:

This April will mark the 21st year of business for BWA. A number of you will have been clients for all of those 21 years and all 17 of us really appreciate your allowing us to be of service.

During the first 8 years of our existence, I worked by myself and had very close contact with each BWA client (about 75 in 1994 – about 220 now). That contact was embodied by the quarterly visits. I'd work to begin each of these sessions by meeting with my primary contact – typically the CEO. Ideally, after spending some time catching up and answering whatever questions were at hand, I'd work my way through the halls of the business, meeting with all of those people who had been trained in P. I. – answering questions, providing as much service as I could, trying to assure that clients were more than satisfied with our overall service.

In 1994, things changed significantly. We bought the P. I. license for Western Michigan and I hired our first employee. From that point forward, I was looking to build a consulting practice. I began to hire and train consultants so as to spin off my clients to competent thought leaders. That allowed me to devote time to develop additional services to solve client problems while managing the business. It wasn't until about 1999 that I'd divested all of my clients to our talented team. It was a long, drawn-out process, but, it was worth the multi-year investment because clients were given consultants who were well trained and able to deliver our services as well or better than I could. This process continues to provide a mechanism for us to grow – as mature consultants help train and spawn new consultants.

In 2000, we had our first full-fledged company-wide strategic planning meeting. We determined that for us to “Enter into a virtual business partnership with our clients whenever we work for or with them”, we needed to develop ways in which to positively “touch” them in order to build the partnership we envisioned. Our team came up with a number of valuable ideas to provide that client contact that still are in place today. This newsletter was begun as a result of that meeting. So was our Quarterly Newsletter (sent to all of the people who attend P. I. training). A third, and equally important, “client contact” was the “Thank you for your business call”.

Because I was not having the same kind of client interaction that I'd had during my early years, we all thought that a call from me to the primary contact within our client companies on a regular basis – ideally, at least every two years – would help forge a stronger bond between BWA and each of our clients.

If you've gotten one or more of those calls from me, you know they follow a pretty regular script. It generally goes, “Hi, this is Bob Wilson from Bob Wilson & Associates, and I'm calling to thank you for your business and make sure you're getting everything you'd hoped you would get out of our services. How are things going in that regard?” Your answer to that question generally leads to a discussion of what you do use us for, what you're hoping to accomplish in the short and long term, how your specific consultant is doing satisfying your needs, whether or not you read and get value from our newsletters, and if you have anything that we could do to do a better job from your perspective.

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About 80% of our clients will talk to me voice to voice within the time that I leave three voice mail messages. The conversations are overwhelmingly favorable. Clients generally feel very positively about their consultants – many of those I had worked with in the past even teasing (I think) that their consultant does a much better job than I ever did. The majority of the other 20% with whom I don't make actual contact are left voice mail messages thanking them for their business and letting them know that I'm here if or when I can be of service. Generally, when there are issues that I can help with (this doesn't happen very often, but it does happen), clients do feel they can call me – and they do.

In the last 7 years, I've only had one client provide a completely negative response to my call. I got him on the phone, told him who I was, thanked him for his business and he promptly hung up on me. On touching base with the consultant (which I do after each contact is made to let them know whatever I heard) his response was, "Yeah, he can be a pretty challenging person to get along with. But, the company does use our services well and they do like what we do." And, we both noted, they continue to renew their agreement with us. Maybe it was just a bad day for that CEO.

So, while there are currently a dozen or so CEO files on my desk to make the "Thank you for your business" call, I thought I'd use this letter to make sure you hear that message in case it's some time before you get my call.

To put it simply, we're in business to help you "Maximize Results Through People". I appreciate, and all the people of BWA appreciate, you giving us the opportunity to help you achieve your goals. I want you to know that I am here to help in any way that I can to aid in your success.

I hope you enjoy these, our CEO Newsletters, as well as our Quarterly Newsletters. If you have any comments or thoughts about either, please let me know (I'll typically get several responses to each both by phone and email).

I hope you feel comfortable contacting your consultant or any of our people, including me, to inquire about our helping you with whatever you believe we have the capability to provide you service. If we can, we'll do our best to help. If we can't, we'll try to find someone who can.

I want you to know that if there is something you feel we could do better, we all will listen to your ideas and will do our best to try to overcome what you perceive is a weakness in our service. We can't do better unless we have a sense of where our flaws are.

Finally, know that I view an important part of my role is to assure that we "Do what we say we'll do" and work to "Amaze our clients with the promptness of our response and the value of our service". Those are important values to me and to everyone at BWA. You matter to us.

Thank you for your business. And, thank you for reading.

Sincerely,



Bob Wilson, President
Bob Wilson & Associates, Inc.