

Deception Destroys Trust

July 2009

A couple of months ago my wife received a promotional mailing from a car dealership in a nearby town. It was a huge flyer with bright colors to really grab your attention. There was a sweepstake involved, and most of the time I'm very, very wary of such promotions. But this one seemed to indicate that if you had a certain code that you would definitely win "up to 3 prizes," and the least of these three prizes was worth \$250. We had that code. I was sure that there was some sort of gimmick involved, but I couldn't find any fine print that would clue me in on what it would be. It actually appeared that we had won something of value. We had wanted to visit another store in that town anyway, so decided to take an afternoon drive and see what was what.

Upon arriving at the dealership we were immediately greeted and escorted to the area where they would check our "winning" numbers and share with us what we had won. Of course, they asked us about our intent on purchasing a vehicle. While I wasn't interested in purchasing anything that day, I was very interested in one of their new models, and I had wanted to take a closer "in person" look at the vehicle that I had only viewed on the manufacturer's website. Of course, that wasn't exactly what they wanted to hear, and it seemed like the salesmen sort of handed us off to different people as we went along, all knowing that we weren't going to buy that day. But they also acted as if they were feeling a bit uncomfortable about the whole thing, as well.

We then met the young lady that looked up our number and shared with us that we had won the \$1000 prize, which was a "shopping spree." All we had to do was go to a particular website and register and we would be given access to our shopping spree, all from the comfort of our own home. My wife, who had already been skeptical of the whole deal, was less than enthusiastic.



**Resource
Development
Systems LLC**

Managing the Human Side of Business™

By Gary Lear
President & CEO

We finally got a look at the vehicle that I'd come there to check out, and then we left and went home. My wife went online to check out the "shopping spree" and discovered that what you got were different coupon packages giving you discounts on a variety of purchases, such as hotels, entertainment, groceries, etc. Total value of the coupon packages that you could order: \$1000. In other words, you had to spend money to save money. Not exactly the "shopping spree" that we were led to believe. Furthermore, most of those coupons were really discounts that were fairly widely available elsewhere, including directly from the manufacturer, hotel, or entertainment complex.

This kind of deceptive practice to bring customers into the store actually does more harm than good. While the goal was to get new potential customers into the dealership, the opposite effect probably occurred. I wonder just how many people purchased a vehicle during this promotion that weren't planning on purchasing a vehicle before they arrived in comparison to the amount of people who walked out and vowed never to return because of their deceptive practices.

After all, if the dealer will be deceptive and lie about a promotion, what deceptive practices might they engage in during the purchase of the vehicle? How are they going to treat me when it comes to service or warranty repairs? The actions of this dealer with this promotion have led to a whole host of questions that I now have about them, and it makes me not want to do business with them. I'm sure that I'm not the only person that felt this way as a result of responding to the promotion.

Before engaging in a business promotion an organization should always consider how it

(Continued on page 2)

934 Falling Creek Dr.
Macon, GA
31220

(478) 254-3155
(888) 909-6194
info@rds-net.com

www.ResourceDevelopmentSystems.com

(Continued from page 1)

will help the organization Build Trust with both employees and the customer. When promotions don't "feel right" employees know it and they seem to send unintentional, and sometimes intentional, signals to customers. But when promotions are designed to Build Trust and relationships with customers, then employees are enthusiastic and customers end up being happy. This translates into positive business results for the organization. Simply put, this car dealer wasted a lot of money on a promotion that probably ended up costing them more customers than they ever gained.

Deception involves either indirectness, the leaving out of information that is important to know, or dishonesty, providing misleading information that is not truthful or accurate. Both are the antithesis of Straightforwardness, one of the Four Behaviors that Build Trust™. Failure to exhibit Straightforwardness neither Builds nor Destroys Trust, but exhibiting behaviors that are indirect and dishonest are certainly going to Destroy Trust. As I have said many times: "Those who Destroy Trust can't stay."

When employees engage in Trust Destroying behavior the course of action by the organization is clear. But what happens when organizations or their leadership engage in these actions, such as the car dealer? That's pretty simple. As customers learn that organizations are acting in deceptive ways they cease to do business with the organization, thus, not allowing the organization to "stay" in their lives. As employees learn of deceptive practices, they, too, don't allow the organization to "stay" by either leaving, or what's worse, by remaining with the organization and not giving their best. Both have negative consequences for the longevity of the organization.

So what practices are going on in your organization that are deceptive towards your customers, employees, or others? Are you Building Trust in your day-to-day business operations and special events? Or are you doing things that are Destroying Trust in order to gain temporary results at the expense of achieving long-term organizational performance?

The Seven Elements of High Performance™



The Four Behaviors that Build Trust™

1. Straightforwardness

Directness

We are clear about what we mean

Honesty

We are always truthful and honest

2. Openness

Responsiveness

We are open to feedback and new ideas

Disclosure

We share our own ideas and opinions

3. Acceptance

Receptiveness

We value the differences in others

Respect

We value the abilities and contributions of others

4. Reliability

Seeks Excellence

Striving to do our best in everything we do

Keeps Commitments

We do what we say

*Gary Lear is the President & CEO of **Resource Development Systems** LLC, an organizational performance research and consulting firm that helps organizations increase performance by more effectively **managing the human side of business**™, resulting in the achievement of their goals.*

Contact Resource Development Systems, LLC for more information.