

# ACHIEVING WOW EXCEEDING EXPECTATIONS

*From the Publisher: No matter what business you've started, you're going to be dealing with customers or clients. And they are going to make decisions on working with you based on how they are treated and how they value the experience of working with you. All business, new or old, need to be concerned with meeting and exceeding expectations. To provide insight and guidance on the subject, New Business Denver sought out Ray Schiavone, President / CEO of Quark Inc., which Tameka Montgomery, executive director of the Denver Metro Small Business Development Center, to share what they've learned about the art of the Wow. Montgomery and Quark's Director of Marketing for North America Sophia Farina will present a workshop in September. For time and location, go [www.newbusinessdenver.com](http://www.newbusinessdenver.com).*

## Exceeding Expectations Through Communications that Set You Apart

**Aim High and Be Consistent with  
Your Branding in Print and Online.**

**By Ray Schiavone  
& Sophia Farina**

*Special to New Business Denver*

**W**hether creating eye-popping designs or crafting a marketing plan, achieving Wow is never an accident.

Companies, large and small, that create and execute marketing plans that generate exceptional results all follow some very basic but key marketing fundamentals to help them achieve their success.

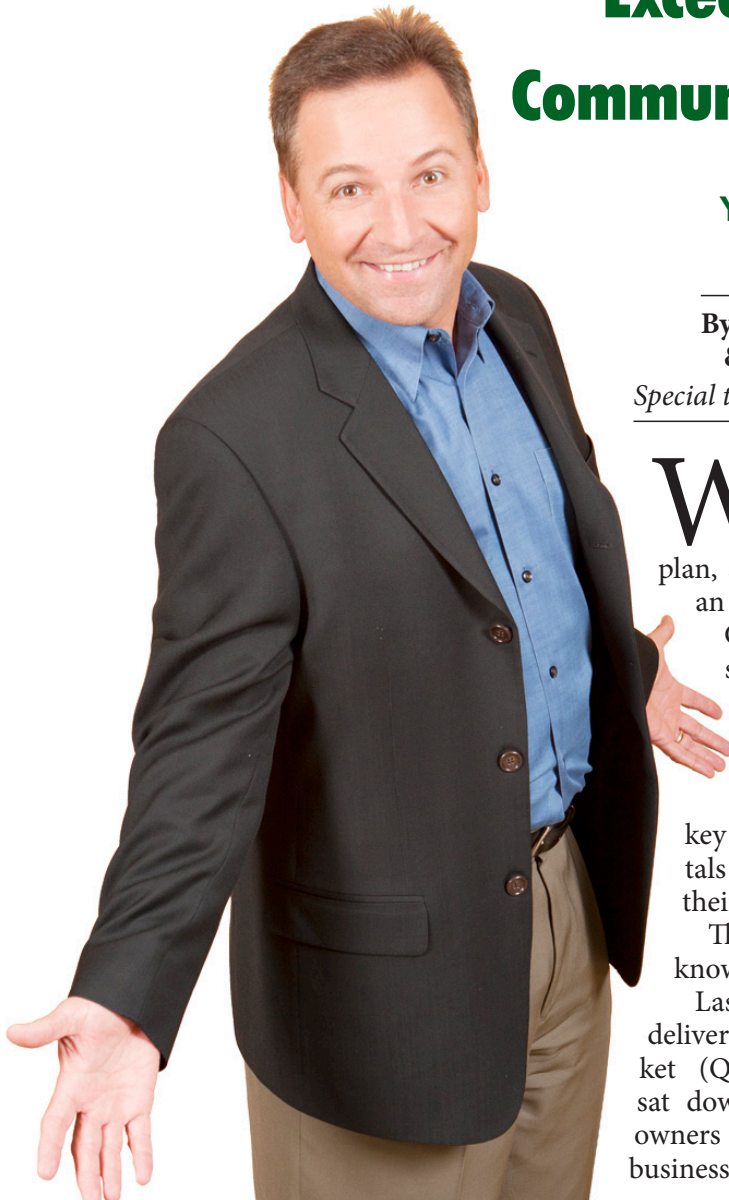
The first fundamental rule: know your customer.

Last year, in preparation to deliver a new product to market (QuarkPromote.com), we sat down with small business owners to discuss their biggest business challenges.

We weren't too surprised to find that their pain points are the same we experience in our day-to-day work at Quark. A few key challenges bubbled to the top of almost everyone's list. Finding expert and loyal talent came up often, as did the



**Quark Continued on Page 4**



# Don't Just Satisfy Your Customers, Wow Them!

**Wows Produce the Highest Levels of Customer Satisfaction.  
Every New Business Should Raise the Bar and Aim for Wow.**

By **Tameka Montgomery**  
*Special to New Business Denver*

Every year at the Denver Metro Small Business Development Center we help hundreds of new and established small businesses launch, re-launch and adjust their trajectory to business success.

Often times the mission is to find the weak link and strengthen it. Or it's to identify their strong suit and play it up. What nearly all businesses – new or old – need help with is delivering what I like to call a “Wow” experience. It's easy to overlook the value of exceeding expectations amidst all the commotion of running a business.

The truth is that if you can't afford not to pursue Wow. In our current age of social media, providing great customer service – or a Wow experience – is vital. Bad news and tales of bad customer experiences travel at the speed of light.

Online customer rating sites such as Yelp and others can make or break your business. Twitter can be a huge amplifier for one customer to tell hundreds or thousands of “followers” what just happened to them, good or bad.

It is much easier to define your Wow as you launch your new business than it is to do so after something goes wrong. I am sure you have heard that it costs more to gain a new customer than it does to retain an existing customer.

Committing time and resources to enhancing your customer's experience is a worthwhile investment. Think about how you can create a “WOW!” experience for your customers.

Some people argue that customers don't know what they want. I disagree. While some customers may not always articulate what they want, they clearly know when they have had an experience that they did or did not like.

## How to Wow

The KANO Model of customer expectations is a great tool for discovering your customers' needs so that you can provide them with a Wow experience. The KANO Model was developed by Japanese researcher Noriatki Kano.

Montgomery Continued on Page 5



Quark from Page 2

## Exceeding Expectations Through Communications that Set You Apart

overall challenge of managing costs.

But even above those important issues, small business owners confirmed that customer acquisition and retention is a daily concern. We can all identify with that. Which brings us to another fundamental rule: deliver a consistent brand experience.

Small businesses are faced with a unique challenge because of their limited resources both in terms of time and money. Most don't have a marketing department or the money to launch elaborate marketing campaigns. Instead they need an easy way to create a memorable brand experience through simple, effective communications.

### Building a Memorable Brand

It's been documented that businesses look bigger and more successful when there is a consistent and professional look and feel across all of their communications, whether in print or online. This can sound like a daunting task, especially for non-designers or non-marketers.

The good news is that there are tools available to help you build a brand. The first step is to create a logo that uniquely identifies your business. Online design directories, such as YourOwnDesigner.com, provide access to designers and their works, so you can choose one that best suits you.

The next step is to create basic marketing essentials (business cards, brochures, flyers, and post cards) required to help you promote your business. It's important to incorporate your logo and color theme into these materials in order to maintain brand consistency.

These elements should also be reflected in your storefront as well as in your emails and website.

Having served the design and print community for almost 30 years, we at Quark continually see the need to create these marketing essentials. That led us to incorporate those principles into a new product called QuarkPromote.com to help small business cost-effectively create professional print material.

This service provides professional marketing copy, a choice of color themes, stock photos, and the ability to use your own logo and images. For Web and email marketing help, one should look for services that allow you to maintain your brand elements in the design and measure the effectiveness of your email communications and Web campaigns.

### Effective Communication Requires Frequency

Now that you have your marketing materials, it's important to create a plan for engaging customers on a regular basis. It makes sense to use all the methods of communication (email, direct mail, and the web) available to you. Frequent communication creates a relationship that nurtures customer loyalty and drives sales.

For a reasonable cost, business owners can purchase lists of prospects from list vendors, publications, or direct mailing services. Consider starting by geo-targeting prospects near your place of business for local consumer-type businesses, and choosing industries and job titles for more business-

oriented businesses.

Once you have a list of customers and prospects, you will need to develop a communication plan. The plan will vary by business and audience.

In general, all communications should be informative and easy to understand. A few reasons to communicate with customers include promotions, holiday specials, announce what's new (location, staff, services, products), special events, customer appreciation, request for an informational meeting or just to welcome new resident to the neighborhood.

### Don't Forget!

Sometimes the most obvious information is accidentally left off of marketing material. Before you hit the print or send button, double check that you have included the following on all your customer communication:

- Logo
- Location
- Phone number
- Email address
- Website URL
- Call to action!

*Ray Schiavone is President and CEO of Quark Inc., and Sophia Farina is Director of Marketing for the publishing software company, which has been headquartered in Denver since 1981. Quark software is used by small and large publishing houses alike. Farina has been a marketer for nearly two decades, working with both startup and established brands. She can be reached at:*

*sfarina@quark.com.*

—NBD

Montgomery from Page 3

## Don't Just Satisfy Your Customers, Wow Them!

He identified three levels of what it takes to make a positive impact on customer satisfaction. These include the Musts, the Wants and the Wows.

### The Musts

The Musts are the basic expectations a customer has based on your type of business. For example if you own a hotel, your customer's fully expect there to be a bed in the room. Or if you own a massage spa, your customer's expect you to have masseuses.

The Musts can also be referred to as "dissatisfiers." By themselves they do not satisfy your customer (the person staying at your hotel or interested in getting a massage), however, their absence will cause dissatisfaction.

The Musts are assumptions or unspoken expectations your customer has about the service or product she is seeking from your company. Not providing a Must will damage the chance of getting a referral or repeat business.

### The Wants

The Wants are the qualities and attributes that will keep your business in the running, but they may not win you any customer satisfaction awards. Wants are higher level expectations and include any spoken customer expectations. Continuing with the hotel example, these could include better quality sheets and towels or early check-in times.

These can also be referred to as "satisfiers." The presence or absence of the Wants can either satisfy or dissatisfy your customer.

### The Wows

The Wows produce the highest levels of customer satisfaction and include the features and properties that make

In the case of Doubletree, I believe this chocolate cookie delighter has now become an unspoken Must. People checking in now expect to receive the cookie and would possibly be upset if no cookie was given.

To put your new business ahead of the pack and then to remain in the lead, you must provide your customers with the bests Wows, plenty of Wants and all the Musts.

The key to finding out your customers' three levels of need is to just ask or listen closely to their comments. Research your market and observe the best practices being done by your competitors or other businesses. Take some time to brainstorm

ways you can create a Wow experience for your customers based on your budget and resources.

*Tameka Montgomery is Executive Director of the Denver Metro Small Business Development Center, which has a team of business consultants that work with new and established small businesses to deal with challenges many businesses face. She can be reached at:*

(303) 620-8076

[tameka.montgomery@denversbdc.org](mailto:tameka.montgomery@denversbdc.org)

org

[www.denversbdc.org](http://www.denversbdc.org)

—NBD

The key to finding out your customers' three levels of need is to just ask or listen closely to their comments.

your business a leader in your market.

These expectations are called "delighters" because they go beyond what the customer might imagine or ask. The absence of delighters will not hurt your customers' satisfaction level, but their presence will definitely improve the customer's overall experience.

A great "delighter" that I like to reference is the Doubletree Hotel, which always gives you a great-tasting chocolate cookie when you check in. A delighter for a clothing store might be free tailoring.

Wows are the key to securing new customers by word of mouth. Be aware, however, that over time, unspoken Wows become spoken Wants and possibly unspoken Musts.