

A Lesson From Big Al

"It's more important that they know what you do, than who you are." Those words came from "Big Al", owner/operator of "Big Al's Old Time Barbecue." In his second year as a restaurant entrepreneur, Big Al is having a new sign put up that will emphasize the words Barbecue and Catering. Al realized that too many people who drove by knew *who* the business was, but did not know exactly *what* it did. He also wants to promote and grow his profitable, yet under-utilized catering services.

Big Al's is realizing something that is likely true for many of our businesses: Our customers know our name, our location, our phone numbers, e-mail addresses - they know who we are; but they don't necessary know what we do. How about your business? Do your customers and potential customers know **WHAT** you do? Do you have specific products/services which are both profitable and below capacity? Have you heard someone say, "I didn't know you carried/did that!?" Here are some suggestions we can glean from Big Al's insight:



1. Change Signage – Do you want to tell people you are more than "ACME Seed Company?" Then **BECOME MORE** to them in your name. Like Big Al is doing, rework your signage, your logo, letterhead, e-mail signatures, delivery trucks, shipping documents, etc. *Become* "ACME Seed - Wholesale Seed, Chemicals, & Fertilizer," or whatever applies.

2. Rearrange – Storefront business know the value of positioning products. Move a product from the bottom shelf on a back isle to an eye-level position in a traffic isle and watch its sales numbers increase. Don't have a storefront? It's no different with your catalogues, price sheets, website, print media, and even packaging - all have some sort of organization and flow to them. In our culture, most read from left to right, top to bottom. Want to reposition a product or service on print or electronic media? Place it farther up and farther left. **Bold it.** Box it out. Make it **jump**. Maybe for some of us, it simply starts with including it in the print!

3. Intentionally Inform – For us, the largest part of our business is seed. Yet, we also have other complimentary products and services. For example, we sell bags and packaging supplies. This part of the business has grown so much we actually have an entire division. This division, called **Smith Packaging**, provides all sorts of bags and packaging supplies for seed, grain, feed, sand, soil, nuts, salt, sugar, to name a few. Open mouth, valve-pak, easy open, UV, anti-skid, twisted weave, polywoven, BOPP, totes, plain white, 1-color, 8 color, imported, domestic, and more! It's a whole division and product offering that we often forget to discuss with our core business customers!



PAPER bags
BOPP bags
BULK/TOTE bags
POLYWOVEN bags
POLY-E bags
BAGS BAGS BAGS

Smith Packaging
smithpackagingservices.com
541-369-2850

How about you? Do you have similar "hidden gems"? Here's an idea: Select one product, service, or business line and *intentionally* inform others about it over the next few months. Use newsletters, invoice stuffers, e-mail, websites, and old-fashioned word-of-mouth ways to communicate. Tell your sales staff to talk about it. Bring in a product rep to better inform your staff. Make some *intentional* calls and conversations specifically about it. *Intentionally* including talking about it while dialoguing with customers, especially related to orders. Follow Al's lead and make some intentional changes.

By the way, you can find Big Al's on the web at BigAlsOTBBQ.com. Or the next time you are passing through Greenville look for the big BARBECUE AND CATERING sign. The ribs and slaw are worth the drive!