

National Institute  
of Restoration, Inc.

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# OnSite

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## MARKETING MATTERS

### Follow-ups cinch the sale

One of the toughest jobs in the construction industry is following up with customers who have made inquiries. The follow-up is absolutely essential if you are to grow your business.

Are you following up the right way? Here are some reminders that may be helpful:

- **Send a thank-you note.** Handwritten is best but a typed letter or email will do. If you send an email, be sure you personalize it with the person's name and a good subject line. Realize, also, there is a good chance the email may never be seen.
- **Send the prospect an article** from a magazine or website that relates to a topic they might find interesting such as retrofitting a house with energy-saving upgrades.
- **Be sure to include literature from your company.** If they have asked for information, the more quickly you send it, the more you'll show them that you are responsive.



FOLLOW-UP CALLS NEED NOT BE LONG BUT THEY SHOULD BE PROMPT.

- **Use a variety of follow-up methods.** Vary your follow-ups by using phone calls, faxes, letters and even personal visits if appropriate. Take advantage of voice mail and tell the person how much you appreciate their interest. But be personable and sincere so you won't sound like one of those computer-generated sales calls.
- **Ask if you're still being considered for the job.** Don't assume your prospect has selected someone else if they have not said so. Your follow-up will demonstrate that you are willing to go the extra mile.

## HIGHLIGHTS

- Nuts & bolts
- 2008 Executive Leadership Conference

### NIR helps you boost your business

From networking to education to marketing assistance, the NIR supports restoration specialists. **434.973.4200**

## When you have to fly

Business travelers have become accustomed to delays and long waits when they have to fly. If there is a trip on your agenda, here are some pointers you might want to know.

- **Plan to make good use of your time** at the airport because you're going to be spending more of it there. Have a plan for what work you will do if (when) your flight is delayed.
- **Buy tickets with credit cards.** Even though airlines are encouraging customers to use debit cards or other options for payment, don't do it. A credit card is your best protection for a refund should you have a dispute or your airline abruptly stop flying.
- **Plan carefully.** Change fees are rising from \$100 to \$150 on a few airlines and the practice will probably be adopted widely.
- **Expect to spend weekends out of town.** The Saturday-night-stay requirement, which had disappeared in recent weeks, is coming back.
- **Smile.** Use your best amount of patience. Being irritable or complaining will not get you to your destination any quicker and you'll just add to the general grumpiness of the traveling public.

As one travel publisher put it, "Air travel is now becoming a game of strategies and tactics for both the customers and the airlines."

## MANAGEMENT ISSUES

### Preparing for a disaster

People in the insurance restoration business should be better at preparing for disasters than their peers in other businesses. But you may be in the majority of falling into the trap that it cannot happen to you.

If you are not backing up your files, you are playing Russian Roulette with your business. A recent survey reveals, that a third of all respondents say they back up their data rarely if at all. And statistics tell us that 70 percent of small businesses that suffer a major data loss will go out of business within a year.

Consider this checklist:

- **Back up your data remotely.** There are online services such as Carbonite that will back up a computer continuously for a small annual fee. That way, if your computer is destroyed, you can simply replace the computer and download all your files from your back-up site.
- **Keep important documents in a fire-proof safe.** Don't take chances with irreplaceable documents by keeping your only copies in a fire drawer.



- **Keep your virus programs up-to-date** to protect against worms and viruses.
- **Create a plan** and review it regularly to keep your business running should something happen. Assign roles and responsibilities to your employees.

HP and SCORE have created free "Wellness Workshops" around the country to help small businesses prepare for unanticipated disasters.



## SURVIVE AND THRIVE IN A CHANGING INDUSTRY

### Conference topics:

#### May 14 - Featured Workshop – Project Management

- Techniques for scheduling, estimating, crew management, communicating with clients and getting your price.

#### May 15-16 – General Sessions and Roundtable Discussions:

- Mastering the fundamentals to keep your business strong.
- Influencing others the right way.
- Planning for growth.
- Diversifying your business.
- Handling the unique challenges in a large commercial loss.
- Investing your energy in your best prospects.
- Promoting your business by telling your story.



**There is still  
time**

*to register for the  
Executive  
Leadership Conference.*

**Call NIR TODAY!  
434.973.4200**

### Headline speakers & Roundtable leaders

**Duwayne Keller** – Duwayne E. Keller & Associates, Inc. Building a Future in Challenging Times.

**Eugene Peterson** – Advice and Consult, Inc. – Learn persuasion principles backed by 50 years of research.

**Martin Woods**, Woods Restoration Services – Dealing with a huge water loss in a short time frame.

**Robert Martin**, RMR Consulting – Changes in the claims industry that you must know.

Managing and Understanding Overhead – **Walter L. Lumpp & Steve King**

Strategic Marketing 20/80 Principle – **Dave Finchum**  
Business Diversification – **Alan Green**

Growing Your Company – **Duwayne Keller**

The Sales/Estimating Process – **Bob Hage & Walter Lumpp**

Large Commercial Losses – **Pat Lewis & Others**

Telling Your Story to Build Your Business – **Patricia McArver**

Understanding Xactimate – **Eugene Peterson**

### Should you email or call?

Email consumes a huge amount of time in the workplace. If you want to do your part to limit the time wasted on email, consider these points:

Email should be used to **deliver information, not opinions.**

Email works most efficiently when you use it to **tell several people the same information.**

**Keep emails short.** Use a stopwatch. If your email takes longer than 20 seconds to read (not including the attachment), don't send it. It's inefficient. Call instead.

Watch what you say and think before you hit the send button.

Do your part to tame the email monster.

## NUTS AND BOLTS

### Are you good at thinking on your feet?



People who are quick to think on their feet often seem to respond intelligently to questions with no effort at all. The truth is, however, that those who are good at speaking off the cuff spend a great deal of time in preparation in order to give you that illusion.

What can you do to improve your ability to respond quickly with seemingly little effort? Here are some tips from Frank Carillo, president of a strategic communications consulting firm in New Jersey.

**Recognize the question type.** If the question can be answered by Yes/No or giving simple information, don't go off into attempts at persuasion or editorializing.

Often people are looking for a simple answer or information. Don't assume that their question means you are doing something wrong and over-respond.

**Play intellectual games.** Practice word association games or free association exercises to help you think on your feet. Such games are plentiful on the internet.

**Repeat, rephrase or restructure the question.** This technique gives you some time to think. Or you can turn the question into something you want to answer by redirecting it to an area you can handle. You can redirect the question by saying something such as,

"Thank you for that question. As a matter of fact, the question we get most often is similar. People want to know ....." That lets you answer a part of the original question you want to answer.

**Admit when you don't know something.** But don't stop there. Turn the question around by saying, "I don't know the answer to that question but what I do know is...."

**Practice.** Practice in front of an audience and encourage them to ask you tough questions. That helps you prepare for anything...even seeming like you can think on your feet effortlessly.

DISCLAIMER: This material has been compiled by National Institute of Restoration, Inc. for the use and convenience of representatives of the insurance industry. While its use should be helpful, it should not be relied upon without additional consultation with National Institute of Restoration, Inc.

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