

OCTOBER, 2011

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The Heart of This Amazing Place by Roger Breisch

Publisher's Note: *The thoughts and ideas in this piece, and on pages 5-8 have not been formally endorsed by the Chamber Board. I take sole responsibility for them and their implications.*

Lest there be any doubt, I love this place. From the moment we arrived, Judi and I felt welcomed. In the intervening 22 years Batavia has been the crucible in which I have been melted and reformed...fertile soil in which to plant ideas...and an intricate laboratory in which to experiment with what it means to enter my senior years.

One feels most welcome when their voice is heard and honored. In that way, no one could feel more welcomed than I. Through many invitations to speak, hundreds of volunteer opportunities, and thousands of printed words, this community has listened with generosity beyond imagination.

In the issue you now hold in your hands, I am hopeful an additional small, emerging voice might be heard. It is my voice—I take full responsibility for all it implies—but it is not a new

voice. I cannot take credit for any value it might contain. The ideas are a distillation of wisdom I have heard from hundreds of people who have been willing to talk with me about the future of this enclave we call Batavia. More specifically, these thoughts relate to the heart of this amazing place, where the founders discovered that the power and majesty of the Fox River could give them life as surely and reliably as blood flows through each and every one of us.

I am hopeful that the city leaders will see that what I envision in these pages honors the work they have done through their tireless planning and their current efforts to bring life back to the streets we traverse.

Gestalt is a word we use to refer to the "essence or shape of an entity's complete form." The *Gestalt* effect allows the human brain to see more than the sum of the parts. You see the curves and shapes upon which your eyes now gaze as letters, words and sentences that convey meaning. It allows us to see a collec-

tion of organs as a human being, and an independent series of events as a human life with history and significance.

So now I ponder the Gestalt of the heart and soul of this community. Is there a way to envision the essence or shape of our downtown's complete form?

Beginning on page 5, I imagine the needs of a community 100 years hence. On pages 6 & 7 I have described—pictorially and in words—the foundations on which the *Gestalt* of our downtown might be envisioned and built.

We have no choice but to journey into the future. My hope is that we imagine it together.

Inside This Issue

This issue of *Batavia Business* focuses on the heart of Batavia. It contains a distillation of many ideas regarding the **Future of the Downtown**, and how those ideas might form a more holistic view for the future.

In addition, please review our **Legislative Updates** on page 4,

Learn how to **Create Offers Prospects Can't Refuse** on page 10.

Gather many other useful tips and trends in the **Business Intelligence Report** on pages 9 & 11.

Citizen of the Year and Ole Nominations Sought

The Chamber is seeking nominations for Citizen of the Year—Batavians who have made significant contributions to the community (due December 1), and institutions that have invested in the city's economic and aesthetic future (due November 1). See more information at www.bataviachamber.org/awards.asp.

OCTOBER 2011

Monthly Thought
from Lisa Patterson,
Retreat Massage

“Saying, Meditation is just breathing, is like saying Astronomy is just twinkle, twinkle little star.”

Mark Thornton

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2	3 BWIB Council (Panera) 11:30a City Council 7:30p	4 Networking (Holmstad Town Center) 8:00a	5 Business Development Group (City Hall) 7:30a	6	7	8
9 Batavia High School Dedication 2:00p	10 Legislative Affairs Comm. (Panera) 7:30a	11 BWIB Lunch (Eagle Brook CC) 11:30a	12 Multi-Chamber Progressive Lunch (Villa Olivia) 11:30a	13	14 Exec. Comm. (Chamber) 7:45a Education/Events Comm. (Panera) Noon	15
16	17 City Council 7:30p	18 Networking (Holmstad Town Center) 8:00a	19	20 "30 Under 30" Dinner (Prairie Landing) 6:00p	21	22 BatFest
23	24	25	26 Chamber Board Meeting (School District) 7:30a	27 Harvest Celebration BAH (Interiors for Business) 5:00p to 7:00p	28	29



Scan here to register for an event through your smartphone

Events Not To Be Missed

Mon, Oct 10, 7:30a—Chamber Legislative Affairs Committee. Join us as we continue our conversations about how the voice of business can play an increasing role in Batavia, Springfield and Washington, DC. We meet at Panera Bread.

Tue, Oct 11, 11:30a—BWIB Lunch "Negotiating from a Woman's Advantage." Don't miss Catherine Lee of CDL & Associates. Catherine



has addressed groups in the emerging markets of Asia, Latin America, Europe and Canada since 1990. Her range of audiences spans the Ministers of the Chinese government to Polish American women in business. The appeal of her stories, humor and insights transcend cultures, ages, and experience, motivating attendees to learn and to act. Her presentation will incorporate her vast experience to hone in

on Western cultural influence on women, the strengths and drawbacks of women in business, and the gap of negotiating skills of women in leadership/business. Eagle Brook Country Club (RSVP, \$25)

Wed, Oct 12, 11:30a—Joint Chamber Progressive Lunch at Villa Olivia. Participate in a popular and unique networking luncheon with the Bartlett, Batavia, Hanover Park, St. Charles and Western DuPage Chambers of Commerce. Guests will introduce themselves over salad, move on to another group of professionals for the main entrée and satisfy their sweet tooth while meeting a third group of potential business partners. Don't miss this opportunity to meet professionals outside the Batavia Chamber! RSVP by Noon on September 30. (\$25 members)

Thu, Oct 20, 6:00p—Fox Valley "30 Under 30" Recognition Dinner. Join the Batavia, Geneva and St. Charles Chambers of Commerce as we recognize the next generation of business leaders--30 professionals under 30 years of age--in the Fox Valley. (RSVP, \$40). Prairie Landing Golf Club, 2325 Longest Drive, West Chicago.

Thu, Oct 27, 5:00p to 7:00p—Harvest Celebration Business After Hours. Get ready for the biggest and best Harvest Celebration ever! The Chamber, along with five members will be at a new, beautiful, location...the Challenge Properties on North River Street. Join Masus Financial Group, The Challenge Properties, Interiors for Business, Arends, and Batavia MainStreet. We will enjoy an evening of great food, sumptuous wine from Gibby's Wine Den and a chance to make many new friends and renew old relationships. 409 N. River Street.

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Welcome New Members

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Batavia Chamber Legislative Updates

Of Leases & Land...Batavia Updates by Roger Breisch

Crime-Free Housing Ordinance is Passed

On September 19, the Batavia City Council approved an ordinance that regulates the licensing and operation of apartment buildings with 10 or more units. The program, as proposed, is a two-year pilot program.

The purpose of the legislation is to educate owners of their rights and responsibilities related to

criminal activity. In order to be licensed, owners must attend a training seminar and add an addendum to their leases that will permit the termination of the lease and eviction of tenants involved in criminal activity.

Batavia Grows by 470 Acres

After more than two years of negotiations with Moose International, the City of Batavia approved the annexation of 470

acres of land along Randall Road between Main Street and Mooseheart Road. The parcels have a variety of zoning including multi-family medium density, single-family high density, general commercial and mixed use. A sensitive piece of property along the Mill Creek tributary was zoned park and open space with a number of further restrictions to protect the natural habitat.



Chamber's Donohue: Obama's Jobs Focus Is Wrong

Thomas Donohue, CEO of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, says that while President Barack Obama's jobs proposal contains some ideas that American business supports, it falls short.

"It focuses too much on government spending and temporary tax breaks and too little on the trade, energy, tax, regulatory and entitlement reforms that will jolt our economy and job market back to life," Donohue writes in The Wall Street Journal.

"Instead of temporary tax breaks and more spending, we need permanent tax incentives,

development of our energy resources, and entitlement reform."

Donohue notes that the proposed payroll tax cut would likely offer a measure of relief for some small and medium-size businesses, but one-year, one-time tax changes will not create new jobs in significant numbers — and unfortunately, neither will the plan as a whole.

"It fails to adequately address the fundamental challenge facing our economy — too little growth — or the business reality that keeps companies from expanding payrolls — too few customers,"

says Donohue.

The administration won't cut one dime of spending to offset the \$447 billion cost of the jobs bill, Donohue points out.

"Instead, successful small businesses, productive industries and those Americans most capable of investing in growth will foot the bill through major tax increases," he says. "Any jobs that might have been supported by other measures in the plan would be more than wiped out by these tax hikes."

"This doesn't make economic sense."



Happenings in Springfield by Sean Sebold, Sebold Capital Management

Fall veto session begins on October 25, so nothing can be done on the legislative front until then. That, however, does not stop the administrative functions of Springfield from doing their work.

Illinois State Toll Authority Toll Increase

We told you last month about the Illinois State Toll Highway Authority increasing their tolls by 87%. The Authority's Deputy Chief of Engineering, Rocco Zuccherro, was out selling the program to local business. Noting that a large majority of those individuals that attended the community outreach meetings supported the increase, Mr. Zuccherro was puzzled when local

business owners were not supportive of the increase. The annual budget of the Authority is roughly \$700 million, and the number of miles of road the Authority maintains and operates is at 286; prior to the increase the cost to maintain and operate 1 mile of Toll Road in Illinois is roughly \$2.5 million per year.

Illinois Hospital Charity Care

Three Illinois hospitals were handed a large tax bill by the Illinois Department of Revenue in August. Northwestern Memorial Hospital's Prentice Women's Center, Edward Hospital and Decatur Memorial Hospital lost their property tax exemption. At

issue, was the Illinois Supreme Court ruling that Provena Covenant Medical Center in Urbana hadn't provided enough charity care to qualify for the tax exemption. This ruling set the stage for the Department of Revenue to go after more tax-exempt hospitals in Illinois. The hospitals are crying foul as there are no standards or guidelines in current law telling them how much "charity care" they must provide to maintain their tax-exempt status. In 2006, Attorney General Lisa Madigan suggested that they must provide 8% of their operating costs to charity care. Hospital leaders said that would put them out of business.



Scan here to email your legislators on your smartphone

Imagine!—Batavia in the Year 2112

by Roger Breisch

"Some men see things as they are and say why—I dream things that never were and say why not."

George Bernard Shaw

Imagine, for a moment, what we might dream for Batavia as a community 100 years hence. What if we were to sketch the ideal community of the year 2112, and compare Batavia as we know it today to that vision? What foundations might we have in place on which to build? What bricks might we build onto those foundations today so future leaders might have an even more robust roadmap?

I wrote recently about the inspiration I found in the 400-year construction of a cathedral in France. My visit there left me in awe of those who set in motion a vision for a 400-year journey and those who participated, mostly anonymously in bringing it to fruition.

In this issue I am not nearly so bold as to attempt a blueprint—an immutable plan—for the future that others should follow without deviation. I am not wise, nor arrogant, enough for such fantasy.

What I do have the arrogance to ponder is an open, moldable, organic vision...to suggest images the city's future stewards might use as guideposts for their journey from our future into theirs.

Evaluating progress

A distinction I wish to highlight from the outset is the divide between quantitative and qualitative worldviews; things we can measure versus those we feel—those that matter to our heads versus those that matter to our hearts. For now, I have no desire that these ideas rely on 5-year plans and strategies, 90-day goals or 2-week action plans for validity.

Even for near-term projects and initiatives, I refrain from quantitative metrics as my guide. When I speak of a future for my children and grandchildren, I feel compelled to focus on the qualities of that future that can open them to their full potential as humans.

Moving forward

There are two ways for humanity to move from its past, through its present and into its future. One is a focus on problems that need solutions. The other is through the use of vision to imagine what does not yet exist and strive to bring it into reality.

Problem solving asks us to focus on the past and realities; visioning turns on a view of the future and possibilities. The former identifies the negative with an eye toward what is wrong; the latter opens the possibility for turning capacities and assets into a creative new future. The former can keep us trapped in the boxes defined by the problems of the past; the latter invites us to step beyond boundaries that are, at best, imaginary.

Humanity's movement from its to-days into its tomorrows require us to base plans and goals on *both* the problems of the past and visions for the future. But because problem solving can keep us mired in the negative, I want to deal with those first.

Another reason to begin with challenges is from the work of Edward O. Wilson, environmentalist and Professor Emeritus from Harvard. Wilson calls the 21st century the bottleneck humanity must struggle through if the species is to survive. If Wilson is right, dealing with these challenges is a prerequisite to the very existence of human communities of the 22nd century.

The challenges we face

Facing and solving problems forces us down the alleys and byways we fear to walk, as if we might get mugged along the way. While conversations about these issues are growing in number, they still take place in hushed tones. Perhaps, if we speak the problems quietly enough, we can acknowledge them, pretend they really don't exist, and avoid making hard choices.

Here are some of today's challenges that will impact future communities.

The wasteful ways humans in developed countries support their lives is unsustainable. Why, I wonder, do we strive so hard to find fulfillment through acquisition? When will we finally learn that our humanity is discovered, not by engagement with the latest technological trinket, but through an intimate relationship with others. The community of the future must offer it citizens this latter kind of fulfillment, rather than through possessions that eventually isolate us from one another.

The energy component in each item we buy and consume is out of proportion to its value. Every aspect—from sourcing of raw materials, through production and delivery—is unsustainable. Are we headed for a future in which every

single item we desire will be found online and delivered individually to our homes by an overnight delivery truck? It's convenient, but insane. Even if we find a replacement for oil that allows sourcing conveniences from great distances, I have little doubt that those too will eventually be found to be unsustainable. The community of the future must encourage us to source our lives more locally and modestly.

Our wealth has distanced us from life itself. The philosopher Jacob Needleman, always asked his students to think of a problem they faced, and imagine a sum of money sufficient to "solve" the problem. The students could always think of a sum, and a plan it would purchase. Ironically, what the money bought was frequently an escape from the problems they faced, not a solution.

A real life, one that offers deep and profound wisdom is often very raw. Money is an elixir that artificially smoothes the rough edges and isolates us from the human condition. We use our money to remove the elderly and infirmed from our midst so the landscape is not sullied by those who remind us that being human is a fragile occupation. We prefer to write a check so someone else can deal with the fragility of human life when it breaks. The community of the future must invite our elders, and the infirmed, to return. It must enable us to relearn all the wisdom their lives have to offer.

Too many lives are lived in quiet desperation. In separating ourselves from life, we separate ourselves from each other. One need only spend a few hours on a suicide hotline, or look at the rate of suicide, especially among teens, to understand that something is terribly amiss. The community of the future must offer citizens who are desperate, a place of refuge.

I fear we have lost the ability to solve community problems as a community. Do we feel so lost and forgotten as individuals, that we need to scream to be heard and seen? Are anonymous complaints in the newspaper the best way for us to address our collective challenges? In the community of the future we must remember how to talk with one another honestly, openly and with respect and integrity.

(Continued on page 8)

Imagine!—The Foundations by Roger Breisch

The masons of the 18th century could never have completed the great cathedrals if the proper foundations were not laid centuries earlier. If we are to imagine a magnificent community 100 years hence, our greatest contribution—our only role—is in laying a foundation upon which future generations can build. Like the masons, we can only lay a few bricks toward a vision, the fruition of which, even our great grandchildren might not experience.

The broad vision presented on pages 5 and 8, suggests structural aspects the community's foundation must contain. On this page and the one preceding, I attempt to show that Batavia is in a unique position to begin construction. The combination of our natural landscape, coupled with the plans already in place, present us with a more interesting and robust foundation than most communities enjoy.

However, unlike a cathedral's foundation which, once placed, is immutable, ours is best understood organically. This diagram is *only* meant to illustrate the focal points from which Batavia's current amazing capacities and assets could grow and flourish—it is *not* meant to identify geographical anchors that restrict the vision. While we have a focal point for the arts and culture at Water Street Studios, other cultural gardens, such as our current dance academies, can and should be planted in other parts of the downtown. Similarly, places for us to meet and break bread together will prosper beyond Restaurant Row, and commercial establishments will grow outside the First Street corridor.

There is much unsaid in these descriptions. Residential, for example, will develop throughout the entire downtown. And there is tremendous need for connection from both the east and the west to better connect them to the heart of the community—to more easily traverse what have been referred to as the moats (Batavia Avenue and the Fox River). Here are the foundational pieces upon which we might envision the *Gestalt* of our future.

A Place to Gather and Discuss our History & Future

Community Space

The Depot Museum and City Hall act as bookends for a space for community gathering and conversation about our past and future. The Depot Museum has plans to expand, which would allow the community to better understand it's past.

What other foundational pieces might be envisioned? Should we consider more indoor space for community meetings, dialogues and gatherings? Could this be a focal point for Batavia's legendary volunteerism? Could organizations that serve our less fortunate be housed here?

Long term, should the north dam fail and not get rebuilt, could we think creatively about what will then be the empty Depot Pond? In what ways could it be repurposed to add dramatically to the community?

A Place to Re-create our Lives

The Recreation Area

Mayor Schielke has long been a proponent of building upon the phenomenal natural resources that extend for miles south of the heart of our community. I have seen plans for a recreational center at the south end of Shumway that would open onto the Fox River; a far more logical place than wedged onto Island Avenue. This could be a focal point—a portal—for the community to spend time in the re-creation of their lives.

A Place to Create a Living with Meaning

The Commercial District

Page 6 is intentionally silent on the near-term future of Wilson Street. There is no doubt it will remain an important commercial corridor, but perhaps not the focal point right now. With the current logistics of that corridor—pockmarked by parking lots and driveways—this plan suggests the Wilson Street corridor be incorporated more dramatically in the next generation of buildings, 30 or 40 years hence. There is much more potential to straighten First Street and begin fresh with a bold new plan for a place where meaningful careers can be created.

Perhaps the most controversial part of the vision is the critical need for more connection throughout the community. Much like a human suffering from arteriosclerosis, without open pathways for the community to flow, death is at the doorstep. Straightening First Street and building a bridge to further connect the East side to the heart of the community is essential.

A Place to Break Bread

Restaurant Row

The city's current streetscape plan allows for a flexible area that makes North River Street perfect for the community to gather and break bread. MainStreet's Block Party on the Sunday before Labor Day is an example of how this area could be used throughout the summer not just for parties, but as a casual weekend place to be nourished with neighbors and friends.

While the area is connected to the rest of the downtown by Wilson Street and the pedestrian bridge, other ways of connection—visual as well as physical—should be pursued. Longer term ideas that emerged from the Citizen's Streetscape Committee would be perfect, such as opening up more of the river's edge.

A Place for the Arts and Culture

The Arts District

How might we expand on the phenomenal success of Water Street Studios so it no longer exists in isolation? Could there be space for the performing arts...a place for music? Would the community support a small performance theater—perfect for The Albright Theatre—that would complement the beautiful new Batavia Fine Arts Centre at the High School?

As this is adjacent to the First Street corridor, could commercial enterprise expand in this area with stores that support the arts...or spaces for instruction in all the arts?

A Place to Grow Intellectually & Spiritually

Batavia University?

If I had a wish for our community, it would be a place for learning, and a place to explore the role of humanity on this Earth and more broadly in the Universe. I would love to envision Batavia University. Not necessarily a brick and mortar place at which we bestow certificates and degrees, but a place of deep inquiry into the wisdom of the ages.

We certainly have many wonderful places of Christian heritage along Batavia Avenue to serve as a beginning, but having studied so many other spiritual traditions, I long for a more diverse inquiry.

As a place of knowledge, the Batavia Library might serve as a focal point for intellectual learning and inquiry. Libraries, and the Batavia Library is no exception, are exploring their role as places to access the vastness of human wisdom.

Imagine! (continued)

(Continued from page 5)

This has not been a complete list of the challenges we face, but for now it is enough.

Now we can return to, harkening to the words of George Bernard Shaw, dreaming of things that never were and asking "Why not?"

A life well-lived

We create community, and communities, in turn, create us. Because of this interplay between individual and community life, it's impossible to talk about vision for community without first examining the qualities of a human life that allow us to say, as we bid farewell to a loved one, that theirs was a life well-lived.

It has been said that a well-lived life is admirable at its core, and enviable around the edges. Such a life, in my view, has the following characteristics.

A well-lived life is improvisational; not one that follows a path identified at an early age and lived in a prescribed manner. The Spanish poet Antonio Machado once said, "Wanderer, I do not walk the path, I lay the path as I walk." The pianist Michael Jones, whose life is as improvisational as his beautiful music, once told me "We create our life as we live it, step by step."

*A well-lived life is one in which he who lived, grew both intellectually and spiritually—*listened carefully to the wisdom of those who came before, and added to the examination, preservation and expansion of that wisdom.

A well-lived life is one that can immerse itself in the arts. Those who create great literature, sculpture, drama, dance, music and other forms of art, help us see the human journey in new and powerful ways. They rip us open to the great joy and the deep pain of humanity; help us peer deeply into, and give us a raw view of life we might otherwise miss.

A well-lived life is one of generosity, during which she who lived gave more than she consumed...contributed to our collective growth as a human species. A well-lived life is, paradoxically, one in which we have given so much we have come to understand we could have given so much more.

A well-lived life is not measured by the size of our stock portfolio. We must create enough wealth for survival, but real life requires modest sums of

money...or numbers of things. The people I have come to most admire have great wealth, but only a few have money.

The 22nd century community

Where does all this meandering leave us? In some ways, it leaves me feeling lost and overwhelmed. Nonetheless, if we massage these ideas carefully, many characteristics of the 22nd century community emerge.

Geographical communities are collections of people who, for whatever reason, find themselves as neighbors. What turns a collection of neighbors into a community is the ability to speak with one other with respect and integrity. They move *together* into the future gracefully and with elegance. When respect, integrity, grace and elegance are in short supply, a community of neighbors will find ways to rediscover them.

We are, by our very nature, social animals; we cannot truly be human if we are not deeply connected with others. One gauge of community strength is its social capital—how connected are its citizens to one another both widely and deeply. How well are they able to communicate with honesty and a sense of inquiry. How able are they to gather, inquire into and discuss their individual and collective futures? A successful community is one in which the individual and the collective grow together.

Here are some very useful "places" that will allow the community of the future to thrive.

Places to Create a Living with Meaning. The 22nd century community must offer its citizens opportunities to create professional lives of meaning and fulfillment. There must be places of employment that will support us and our families in modest ways, but ways that help us to know that our work has true value.

Places to Gather and Discuss our History & Future. We need venues for visionary conversations about our journey together—who we are, where we have been and the dreams we have for our individual and collective futures. Perhaps we should consider a return to a symbolic tribal fire, sharing the stories of who we have been with our youth in a way that is compelling; becoming an integral part of who we grow to be as adults.

Places to Re-create Our Lives. A critical aspect of any life well-lived is to find a place for deep personal reflection, a place of re-creation. Few places are more profound than those in which we allow Mother Nature to speak to us about the ways in which we fit into the grander plan that surely must exist for this planet.

Places for the Arts & Culture. We need to find venues where we can interact with those who can touch us with their art—places where we can explore, through artistic creativity, what it means to be human.

Places to Grow Intellectually & Spiritually. One of the great gifts of being human is our ability not only to know, but to reflect on our knowing. If we neglect those moments of deep reflection, we fail to learn from our learning and the wisdom of others. What have we come to know about this place called Earth, and what is our understanding of the eternal—that which is beyond the here and now. Is there a deep meaning to our lives, or are we merely a statistical accident in the Universe? This question, I am certain will still be with us in 2112.

Places to Break Bread. No community is complete without places, beyond our homes and kitchens in which to collectively break bread and build social capital. Food is essential to human existence and learning to share it along with our hopes and dreams is vital to community.

Getting Batavia to the year 2112

So now, finally, I come to the future of Batavia. If you look at pages 6 & 7, you will see that this community is unique—few other cities have a heart with as much capacity to propel them into the 22nd century.

My hope in creating this treatise is to encourage us to think holistically about our future with a vision that is open, moldable and organic. There truly is a *Gestalt* to our downtown if we begin to plan the "essence or shape of the entity's complete form."

The hope for communities of the 22nd century is to restore the value of each and every human life within the context of the global environment. If we begin today to create a place these words have only just begun to envision, it will be a place of the future...a place where humans have always longed to lived. Just *Imagine!*

BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE REPORT

NEWSwatch...News & Trends Affecting Today's Business

Smartphone users frustrated by websites. While mobile users love the idea of accessing the Web via smartphone, many are unsatisfied with websites that aren't optimized for the mobile experience.

According to a new survey from Modapt, Inc. and Morrissey & Company, more than 86% of respondents found their mobile browsing experience to be either "okay" or "frustrating." Navigating websites (40%) and slow downloads (40%) are the biggest challenges among smartphone users, followed by information that's hard to read or find (20%).

These challenges could provide a competitive advantage to businesses with mobile-friendly sites because smartphone users rely on their devices most for finding information about businesses (31%) and destinations (30%). Visiting social media sites is the biggest draw for roughly 20% of mobile audiences.

Furthermore, while nearly 40% of respondents said their employer relied on its website for business transactions, on average respondents said their employer's website looked "okay" or worse on a mobile device. Source: Modapt.com, August 10, 2011

Relaxed shoppers spend more. Want to get your customers to spend more? Relax them first. That's the finding from a series of experiments by researchers from universities in the United States, Singapore and Hong Kong. When shoppers are relaxed they will put a higher value on items, by as much as 10%.

The effect was observed across a large variety of products in other studies. Not only did relaxed participants believe that relaxing, luxury products and services such as a spa treatment or a cruise were worth more, they also thought that exciting products and services (such as bungee-jumping sessions) and indulgent products and services (for example, an ice cream sundae) were worth more as well.

"The study reveals a psychological reaction to the biology of being relaxed: Your system thinks there is no threat in the environment. As a result, you tend to perceive various things as more desirable," said one of the researchers, Michel Tuan Pham, a professor of business and marketing at Columbia Business School.

Can these lessons be applied to websites? Stores create relaxing atmospheres by stroking the senses with lighting, audio and soothing smells, but websites should focus more on not stressing out their customers. For example, unlike a brick-and-mortar store, don't play relaxing music on your website. Also, make sure your site loads quickly and keep the design clean, simple and easy to navigate. Sources: Businessnewsdaily.com, July 29, 2011; Bizreport.com, August 15, 2011

(Continued on page 11)

The Batavia Chamber purchases the rights to reprint excerpts from the *Business Intelligence Report*. We welcome your comments.

IDEAwatch...Tips for Growing Your Business

Build credibility at networking events by attending with a satisfied client, suggests Ford Harding, author of *Rain Making: Attract New Clients No Matter What Your Field*. "They will introduce you to their contacts in a very favorable fashion, and therefore you will get the implied endorsement of this individual at the event," he says. Source: www.openforum.com

Offer employee perks without breaking the bank. For example, a warehouse club membership will help their paychecks go further. The same goes for movie tickets and restaurant coupons. Afternoon socials, ball-game tickets and company picnics aren't new ideas, but they are often forgotten. Of course, these days flex-time and telecommuting opportunities are always appreciated. They won't cost you a dime, and they can build loyalty by showing employees you care about their families and obligations outside of the workplace. Source: www.allbusiness.com

Get feedback on your next business idea by using pay-per-click ads. That's what Rami Weiss, co-founder of Boomerater.com, did before launching his site. First, he created

a simple landing page that explained his plans, suggested topics and included a contact form inviting feedback. Next, he bought pay-per-click ads on Google for more than 100 search terms to draw traffic. The result was that nearly 3,000 Web surfers offered feedback, which included suggestions for online forums and columns with expert advice. They were also the first to sign up for the new website since they already felt that they helped create it. Source: www.entrepreneur.com

While case studies from happy clients are a great way to prove your worth, getting clients to agree to let you tell their success stories can often be like pulling teeth. Rather than seeing any benefits for themselves, they only perceive competitive, legal and branding risks. To refocus their concerns, nurture the relationship early and wait until the client is in a position to endorse you. Demonstrate your company's commitment to its clients by writing the case study to glorify them, not you. Communicate your plan and objectives to the decision maker before you write the case study. If necessary, be willing to give over editorial control to make the client

comfortable. By positioning your clients as leaders, you're more likely to win them over. Source: www.marketingprofs.com

Keep your team focused on results with this tactic shared by Mark Pincus, founder of Zynga. It was developed at Intel and used at Google. Here's how it works: Everyone in the company has one objective and three measurable key results—not 10, just the three that matter most. "If you achieve two of the three, you achieve your overall objective, and if you achieve all three, you've really killed it," says Pincus. On Monday morning, have everyone write down their three priorities for the week, and then on Friday mark down the results—using a red marker for missed results, yellow for close and green for accomplished. Source: www.nytimes.com

Are "urgent" requests from customers disrupting your day? Don't assume urgent means right now. Talk with your customer about what he wants to accomplish and when it's really needed. His interpretation of "immediately" may be different than yours. Sometimes a client wants you to commit right

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Create an Offer Prospects Can't Refuse

by Stacy Karacostas

Do you know what the two most important parts of any marketing or advertising piece are? The first one is easy — the headline. But the second one is tougher. Unless you've studied copywriting, you'd be hard-pressed to guess. Yet it can make or break your entire promotion. The second most important part of your marketing piece is the offer.

Think about it. If you want tons of sales, you really do have to make people an offer they can't refuse. Because even the most powerful call to action won't work unless your offer is practically irresistible.

Let's look at a few examples

Which one is the better offer?

Offer A – Sign up for our free newsletter; *Offer B* – Sign up to receive your free copy of “The 7 Deadliest Small Business Marketing Sins...Are You Guilty?” and have bright ideas for building your business sent to your inbox each week.

Offer A – Call 867-5309 for your complimentary consultation; *Offer B* – Be one of the first 10 businesses to call 867-5309 and receive a no-cost “Smart Business Tax Strategies Review” (a \$500 value) that shows exactly how you can save up to \$5,000 on your federal taxes.

Offer A – Just click on the button below to buy your very own Garden Mole today; *Offer B* – Try the Garden Mole for Free. If you're thrilled with the results, keep it and we'll bill your credit card. If not, just send it back within 30 days and you won't be charged a penny.

Anatomy of an offer they can't refuse

Regardless of what you're selling — and even if you're giving something

away — there are four things that go into creating a highly effective offer. If your offer doesn't have any one of these, chances are it's not going to generate the results you're after.

1. You need to offer something your client wants, not just something you think they need (or something that's easy for you). Keep in mind, of course, that what people want and what they need are rarely the same thing.

2. Prospects must to be able to understand, right away, why they would want it (This is that “What's In It For Me?” or WIIFM factor us marketers talk about all the time). After all, if there's no clear benefit to them, why would they bother taking the time or spending the money?

That's why just offering a free consult or a free newsletter isn't very effective anymore. We're all far too busy to go for those generic offers. You need to promise something more compelling (See #1.).

Besides, these days most people think “free consult” means “time-sucking sales pitch” anyway. So that offer is pretty much a waste of space.

3. It has to have more value than risk. Part of this is price. But this is also where bonuses, free reports, cost comparisons, free trials and money-back guarantees come in. They all either add value or reduce the risk. And they're all part of the offer.

4. They need a good reason to take action now. People are super busy. So if they don't take action right now, they're likely to procrastinate and then forget all about your offer. That means you need to give folks incentive to act immediately. Think limited availability, limited time offer, early bird rates, special bonuses, em-

phasizing why waiting would be worse, etc.

Just make sure if you do a promotion with limited availability or a limited time offer that it's true. If you don't stick to the promise made in your offer your credibility will go out the window. And the next time you say you only have five available, it'll be like the little boy who cried wolf.

Classic example of a highly effective offer

Remember the old Ginsu knives commercials? Those knives seemed like a pretty good deal all on their own...But wait, there's more. For one low price you also get the knife holder, the sharpener, the instachopper and the kitchen sink.

And, if you act right now, they'll even throw in a special salad spinner as a special bonus. As if that wasn't enough to convince you, they also included a money-back guarantee.

Talk about a lot of value for little risk and a good reason to act now. If you were in the market for a new set of knives, how could you resist?

So next time you get ready to promote a product or service, don't just stick your contact info in there and hope for the best. Make 'em an offer they can't refuse!

Practical Marketing Expert Stacy Karacostas specializes in taking the stress, struggle and confusion out of growing your small business. She's the author of Putting Your Business on the Road to Success, The Small Business Website Bible and more than 200 articles on marketing, copywriting, sales and success. For more information, visit www.SuccessStream.com.

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away to a plan of action, but doesn't need more than that in the short term. Explain what you will do and your intended timeline to be sure that meets his needs. Also, be prepared to say no. At times, you need to discern between a true crisis and a cry of wolf. Source: www.hbr.org

Improve email deliverability by

deleting subscribers. If your email response rates have been falling over the past year or so, it could be that your messages are ending up in the recipients' spam folders. That's because email service providers are assigning sender scores based on all positive and negative interactions with your messages—and no interaction is considered a negative interaction. One

way to improve your score is to remove unresponsive subscribers. This was once considered extreme since they might convert some day, but these days they could be causing more harm than good. Before deleting them completely, pick those who haven't responded in the last six months and conduct a win-back or re-engagement

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Targeting wealthy consumers online. Today's affluent consumers are fully embracing digital media and engaging with the advertising found there. A new study released by the Interactive Advertising Bureau details the usage and attitudes of these wealthy consumers, those who live in homes and have at least \$100,000 in household income. They constitute 21% of U.S. households and represent 70% of consumer wealth. They spend an average of 20% more time online weekly, compared to the general population.

Virtually all affluent consumers are online. Many own tablets and e-readers. In fact, the numbers of owners have increased by 50% just over the past six months. Still more good news for advertisers: more affluents view and recall seeing digital ads than their less-wealthy counterparts.

Almost 80% of these wealthy consumers say their very lives have become "intertwined with technology" over the past 10 years. However, they are also more likely to say that their lives have become "more complicated" (59%) and "more stressful" (58%), as opposed to "more fun" (47%) or "easier" (33%). Source: *Herman Trend Alert*, August 17, 2011

Why now is the time to seek investors. Need funding for your business? Thanks to a special tax break created by the Small Business Jobs Act of 2010, now's the time to seek a cash infusion from a private investor. There's a catch though: The window to use the break closes on Dec. 31, and the opportunity might never come around again.

Here are the details: An individual—an investor, a current owner, an employee—who acquires qualified small business stock and holds it for more than five years pays no tax on gain. Say you are starting a technology business now and find an angel investor. As long as you close the deal before the end of the year and the investor hangs on until 2016 (after holding the stock for more than five years), the investor can sell and pay zero tax on his or her profits.

From an entrepreneur's perspective, this tax break is a great incentive to tout when seeking equity financing, whether it's for starting a business or expanding one. From an investor's perspective, what could be better than no tax on profits?

Since the break applies only to stock, investors in limited liability companies and other unincorporated businesses cannot enjoy zero tax on their profits. Even corporations are subject to certain qualifications in order to entitle stockholders to the 100% exclusion on gain. Check with your accountant to see if your company qualifies. Source: *The Wall Street Journal*, August 1, 2011

Anger kills creativity, but sarcasm boosts it. Will getting angry at employees motivate them? It depends on what they are working on. In the *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Ella Miron-Spektor and colleagues demonstrate how simply observing an angry outburst in a work context can hinder creative thinking. The researchers ran three studies asking 375 engineering students to imagine being a customer service agent. The primary task, a written problem, was preceded by an observation stage where they listened to a recorded conversation between another service agent and a customer who was either neutral or overtly hostile. Participants in the angry condition performed better at the assessed problem when it was analytic and closed in scope, but worse at insight problems requiring creative thinking.

Another study added a further condition that presented a recorded exchange that was sarcastic rather than overtly hostile, using withering phrases like "Your service is 'fast as a turtle'." Participants in this condition actually performed the best on the creative problem.

Therefore, measured, appropriate anger may provide needed focus, but sending people into firefighting mode is likely to hamper creativity. Instead, consider getting the message across with a little sarcastic humor. Source: *BPS Occupational Digest*, July 28, 2011

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campaign. As a last-ditch effort, tell them they are being removed and ask them to opt in again. Source: www.marketingsherpa.com

Want to entertain an important client? Going to the most expensive restaurant in town isn't always the best idea for memorability or for your wallet. During sales visits try to clue into his or her hobbies and then plan entertainment around your discoveries, e.g., he may prefer a hunting trip to the ubiquitous day on the golf course. Source: www.salesandmarketing.com

Is your office dragging by 2:30? People are the most productive mid-morning only to crash in the early afternoon, according to research. You may want to schedule brainstorming sessions or meetings in the morning. If afternoon meetings are necessary, remember to keep them short and sweet or allow for breaks. Avoid leaving challenging projects until the end of the day, reserving the afternoon for less intense work, such as checking email. A light lunch and nutritious afternoon snack will also help. Still not awake? Adding physical activity—stretching, light calisthenics or even a few yoga positions—can also help keep the energy level up. Source: www.hreonline.com



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