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The Big 5-0

50 Years Old

I've made the turn. I was in denial before but I am done kidding myself, I am playing the back 9 of my life. Teenagers call me "mister," I have grey chest hair and I qualify to get an AARP card (I know this because they sent me one in advance of the blessed occasion). No other age achievement bothered me, but I have to admit that turning 50 (as of 9/8/10) at the very least has me introspective. When I imagined myself at age 50 when I was 21, I imagined a guy who would look and act a lot older than I feel I do today. That's the good news. The bad news is I imagined myself to be a scratch golfer (fat chance) and I thought I would know more than I do about life. I figured that by 50 I would have it all figured out.

It's not bad news, actually, to not have knowing the meaning of life checked off on my bucket list. I think it is the fact that I don't have most of the answers of life that keeps me feeling young.

I still have as much zest, if not more, to learn today as I have ever had. I get it. Wisdom is a lifetime achievement award that keeps on giving itself to you. Wisdom sneaks in over the years and you suddenly realize it one day when you say something really insightful and intelligent to someone, and realize it was you who said it.

So on turning 50, I feel there are really three ways to stay young at heart and young of mind:

1. Seek knowledge - never stop actively learning;
2. Share knowledge - never stop actively teaching; and
3. There's nothing wrong with being a goof. Babies start laughing when they're barely cognizant of their surroundings. I need no more proof that laughter is one of God's greatest gifts that we're expected to appreciate, and use.

Speaking of 50...

Let's keep with the 50's theme we have going and let's see if we can use the number 50 to improve our businesses. Here are 3 quick ways to use '50' to improve things in your business

- **50 Thank-yous** - Thank new customers, thank old customers, thank reliable vendors, thank referral sources, but do 50 thank-yous in the next year and I bet you'll be thanking them some more as a result. Mix it up - write some of those thank yous, do them in person or do it in some other creative way. This is a no-brainer, it's just that no one ever does it.
- **50 Surveys** - A great way to find out what your customers think is to survey them and ask. If you write a good survey, one that asks the right questions (not too many) about their experience dealing with you, it will only take 50 for you to really learn something meaningful about your business. Then take what you learn and use it to make your business better.
- **50 Prospects** - You may have far more than 50 prospects that you're trying to do business with but what if you trimmed that list down to a *Top 50* that you went all out for? By 'all out' I mean using every means available to you to land them as a customer. You can meet with them, call them, mail them, send them samples, make them an offer they can't refuse, etc. I mean an all out assault. It becomes much more affordable to try this when you make the list a manageable size. Is 50 the right size for you? It may not be but if you consider the true worth of just one new customer to you, you may find that you can be more effective with winning enough customers by having a more intense campaign with a smaller number of targets.

So 50 may not be so bad after all. Now 60 is something else entirely - I'll remain in denial about that one...for at least another 9 years or so.
See you next time.



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