



Ask SCORE for Business Advice

"Ask SCORE" Column - Building Your Business on a Card Green Bay Press Gazette Sat., Sept. 12, 2009 by Tina Dettman-Bielefeldt

Jim Overly, co-owner of Cyber Works, impressed SCORE counselors when he spoke to the group about computer systems. Because it can be a technical subject for novices to grasp, he did his best to use understandable terms. As an expert, the technical side was easy; it was the human side that proved difficult. Then he was introduced to a greeting card program.

"About four years ago, one of my vendors took me to this website (www.sendoutcards.com) and I thought what a great way to say thank you to everyone who does business with me," Overly explained. "I was a techie and this put a softer side on me."

Send Out Cards is an on-line card and gift company that enables businesses and individuals to send real paper personalized cards through the U.S. Mail. One of the fastest growing companies in the United States in the past three years, INC magazine recently ranked it 158th with sales growth over 1,100 percent. It is a simple concept. A business buys a program, and can send custom cards to clients for 62 cents a card plus a stamp. There are thousands of options or cards can be customized. When Overly saw the program, he didn't hesitate.

He noted, "I was very transactional with my clients and not enough relational. I read a book called *Referral of a Lifetime* by Tim Templeton and joined a BNI group. I started employing the systems in this book and created better and stronger relationships with business owners, family and friends. Sending cards was a big part of that."

An added benefit was that Overly became a better listener. When he met with clients, he looked around their office and noted their interests. If a client said he was going to his son's baseball game on Friday night, Overly was sure to mention it in a follow-up thank you card. At each meeting, he asked for a business card and made notes on the back before driving away. The notes became information that allowed him to know and understand his clients better.

The Send Out Cards system also includes software for managing client information so that important dates aren't missed. Overly sends cards to thank clients, prospect, provide meeting reminders, send greetings, and let clients know they are valued. In just one year after starting the program, Cyber Works went from 7 to 13 full-time employees. He now has 16 employees and has started two other businesses.

Overly now promotes Send Out Cards to other businesses and has 250 businesses and individuals using the program. He also provides training, and is happy to share information with anyone.

"I don't do much advertising at all, and prefer to focus on talking to two new people each day and sending a card. I teach gratitude, appreciation, and acknowledgement. Do that and it will definitely help your business," Overly concluded.

If you'd like to learn more about the necessity of research, contact the Green Bay Chapter of SCORE. Visit www.greenbayscore.org or call Cindy Gokey at 920-496-8930 for information.

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