

THE UN-COMFORT ZONE

By Robert Wilson

Keeping The Ball Rolling



I know an advertising agency owner who never fully takes a vacation. He takes his family to fairly exotic locations, but never so alien that they are outside the reach of modern communication. In other words, he is never further than a cell phone call or email away. He checks in with the office several times a day – much to the chagrin of his family who want him to be fully engaged in the holiday at hand. So, he ends up sneaking off under the guise of visiting the restroom, or going to the bar for a cocktail, in order to connect with his staff, a client or a prospect. His wife and kids aren't fooled; they just sigh and accept the inevitable. I used to think he was a control freak – someone who couldn't let go and let someone else take over – until I came to understand the concept of Momentum.

In science, Momentum is equal to Mass times Velocity. Or just think of Indiana Jones in *Raiders of the Lost Ark* running as fast as he can out of the tunnel while that huge stone ball rolls faster and faster after him. In business, Momentum is the point at which success begins to come easily. Business veterans jokingly refer to it as having, "paid my dues." In short, Momentum is an accumulation of acquired knowledge, skill, experience and connections. And, those who understand it... also know it can be fragile and easily lost.

Sales professionals who have achieved Momentum will tell you that you must pursue a number of activities to generate sales leads: phone calls, emails, sales letters, networking events, etc. You keep it up building dozens, then hundreds of leads at a time. Then to convert those leads to sales you keep following up on each of them in a timely fashion. Meanwhile, you are still maintaining all the activities that continue to generate leads. So between generating leads, following up on leads, then turning leads into sales, you begin to feel like the guy in the circus

who spins plates on top of poles – rushing from one plate to the next to keep them spinning.

No wonder these folks hate to take vacations – it breaks the Momentum they've spent months or years creating and they know it takes time to get it going again.

Years ago when I first started giving speeches, a seasoned professional speaker advised me, "It took me ten years to quit sweating cash flow, but even so, it is still all about non-stop marketing." In other words: maintaining Momentum.

For a growing company, Momentum is the point where you have done enough advertising, marketing, public relations, networking, customer service, and so forth that business begins to flow. It is the point where you are garnering the precious and often elusive word-of-mouth referrals. Momentum is about building a reputation. Acquiring it, however, doesn't mean you can taper off on your efforts... but it does mean that your efforts will become easier.

The best thing about Momentum is that once you get it, motivation becomes

self-perpetuating. Momentum is energizing. It keeps you on your toes. And, the rewards come quickly and regularly.

I have found this to be true in all pursuits. Even when I am writing fiction there is always a certain point in a novel that it takes on a life of its own and demands my daily attention, energy and focus until it is complete. Unfortunately, nothing quite puts the brakes on Momentum like finishing a book, or completing any other major task. The trick to avoid losing that Momentum is to begin another book or another task before you complete the first one. Then you just shift your energy over to the next project that is already under way.

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