

# Back To The Basics

It never seems to fail us.

**T**he basics; Communication; Calling new prospects; Staying in touch with old clients. They get us rolling but often we get rolling so fast that we forget to focus on what got us there in the first place. Now, however, we find ourselves in a period in which we have time to go back to the basics.

The changing market that is being shaped by the weakening economy provides us with the opportunity to reflect on what works. We think we remember. We think we can revert back to the basics. But do we remember and can we just pick up where we left off? Just thinking that times seem to be leveling out, feeling like we may be at the bottom, and hoping that business will turn up will not be enough. We have to start the engine of recovery ourselves and not just leave it to the prospects or clients. Instead, we have to nudge them a bit with the basics.

I sometimes take out a pad and pen, write the basics down like a checklist, and start moving down the list. The days of listing a plane on the market on day one and then having an LOI by sunset are over. It will be the old process we know and will recall that will get the plane sold. So let me share my checklist with you...

First, it is critical to identify the market you feel is important to work. That seems simple - how could you possibly forget that. But just picking up the phone and making calls does not get you a high score on some big score card in the sky. Just being active will not bring activity. Being focused and smart about the actions will bring success. I made the mistake early in my career of trying to be everything to everybody, which is just impossible, so take time and look back over your past successes.

Just recently, I looked back over the last five years and reflected on what type of equipment I had sold and to what industry segments I was most visible. This reflection reminded me of 'The Who?' part of the marketing equation. Then I thought back to remember what methods of communication worked best within that segment of activity, which gave me 'The How?'

As much as I like to think I can just pick up the phone and call the chairman of some Fortune 100 company and say, "Hey - it's Jay. How's the plane?" I seldom go that path. I look to the segment that I am targeting based on past successes or skill sets and create a list of touch-points; those people that can pick up the phone and create meaningful access to the decision maker. Is it the lender, the attorney, the insurance provider, the flight department? I work all the touch-points, even with advertising.

There is no way I could consistently advertise in a meaningful way in the publications that the "C" level people read for leisure reading. I cannot afford regular full-page branding ads in Fortune or Time magazine. I can afford full-page branding ads in the magazines their touch-points read. Once you have identified the target, then comes the chance for meaningful communication. Now pick up the phone and create the activity.

I cannot imagine any high net worth individual or company today who is not looking closely at their respective portfolios or cost centers. The aircraft, regardless of its size, is front and center. These people and companies are re-evaluating everything today. A well-placed, well-intentioned call or communiqué could be a real value add for them at this time, not the standard, "Is your plane for sale?" I feel a more valuable, targeted call would just be to help them shape the market forces and inform them of changes.

There will be plenty of time to ask for a listing. So instead of just aiming for a listing, first be an information resource. When the call is over, leave them with a clear message that when they need a market update and if they have specific questions later that may be helpful for their current and future plans, you are the one to call. If the only thing you leave them with is that they got 16 calls today from brokers looking for a listing two things will happen. First and foremost, they will get tired of hearing from brokers and dealers. Second, they will sweep you out with what they consider to be a day of wasted calls.

You may leave the office feeling that you were very active today. You made 100 calls.



But the best way to leave the office today is to say, "I had several very meaningful conversations." Remember, it is not the quantity, but the quality that counts.

For example, I had a very good, respectable broker friend say to me just the other day, "I am dialing for dollars." I asked him what that meant and he said, "You know, making as many calls as I can trying to find some business." I didn't call him back several days later to check his success, but my sense is he probably only netted a sore dialing finger from the high volume of calls.

So let's review the basics list. Find your focus, build your touch-point list, and create the dialogue in your mind based on what would be important as a leave-behind in the mind of your call's recipient. Then make the calls. Do it every day. Don't base the day's success on how many people you could dial, but instead on how informed you left the people with whom you spoke. Again, it is not the quantity of the day, but the quality of the day upon which the near-term future success will be founded.

As the above picture of me shows, I have been focused on the basics all my life!

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