

Your Business Matters

November 2020

Thanksgiving Misadventures

From a Different Time and Place

In recent years, our Thanksgiving tradition has probably looked a lot like those of other families. We have a delicious Thanksgiving meal, watch the parade and football, and spend time together as a family. By all accounts, it's a pretty normal, relaxing holiday — but that's not always what Thanksgiving used to look like for me.

When I was a teenager, my friend's father, Mr. Marquart, would take me and his son, Ken, deer hunting in Upstate New York for Thanksgiving weekend. And while deer hunting was the reason for the trip, it certainly isn't what I remember most about those Thanksgivings; it was everything that happened around it.

We would go hunting near a small town called South Otselic. To get to there from where we lived on Long Island, we had to drive through New York City — Queens and the South Bronx in particular. On the Wednesday before Thanksgiving, it would take about six hours. By the time we got up there, it was 1 or 2 a.m. and freezing cold. We'd stay at an old "cabin" that was heated by a kerosene heater that never got warm until Sunday, when we left.

We were up and at it long before sunrise most mornings. Mr. Marquart — who never seemed to need any sleep — would have breakfast ready sometime around



5 a.m. Soon afterward, I'd find myself sitting out in the woods (still freezing cold) falling fast asleep. With the hours we were keeping, coffee was an absolute necessity. Often, Mr. Marquart didn't bring milk or sugar. So, I learned to drink my coffee black.

I still don't know how they let two 15-year-old boys wander into the woods with guns to shoot stuff, but I guess the '70s was a different time. Often, Ken and I were assigned to "push" deer toward Mr. Marquart and his friends — that meant walking toward other people shooting in our direction. For some reason, this always meant Ken and I were walking long distances uphill while they sat drinking coffee from a Thermos waiting for deer to come to them.

We found all sorts of misadventures and ways to tempt our fates in those woods. One time, Mr. Marquart told us to go burn the garbage in the large hole behind the cabin (different time, remember?). It was taking too long for the garbage to burn, so we decided it would be a great idea to douse it with a lot of gasoline. Standing next to the garbage inside the hole, Ken lit a match. Instantaneously, a huge fireball knocked us out of the hole. A moment later, Mr. Marquart came running from the house yelling, "Are you alright?!" But once he saw we were unharmed, he let lose a tirade, the gist of which was that we were pretty stupid.

Another year, we lit the stove in the cabin before realizing that a bird had



built a nest in the chimney. There weren't any carbon monoxide detectors in those days, so it wasn't until the cabin filled with smoke that we realized there was a problem.

On yet another occasion, I watched a guy named Rudy, who (the night before) proudly proclaimed he was an experienced and proficient hunter, fall down a hillside and straight into a freezing creek. He was dressed like Rambo (before Rambo existed), which I guess he thought enhanced his image. Even though he was shivering and clearly miserable, he wouldn't go back for dry clothes, lest his reputation take a hit. Looking back, it's a miracle any of us survived those Thanksgiving trips.

I'm thankful for those trips with Mr. Marquart and my friend Ken. Ken and I are friends to this day. I hope that all of you have Thanksgiving plans you're looking forward to! Happy Thanksgiving.

- Ed Alexander

The Power of Direct Mail



In a Digitally Focused World

In an ever-growing digital landscape, one disruptor in advertising and marketing stands out: direct mail. That's right — classic print and paper mailers shipped directly to your customers' doors are pushing beyond the noise to give consumers an outlet they actually pay attention to.

It may be brash to endorse direct mail marketing on a newsletter that we *directly mail to you*, but your reading of this article should be proof enough: Direct mail works, and you need to try it. If you're still not convinced, allow us to explain why this is a secret we just have to share.

In a world where most of us work and attend meetings, classes, family gatherings, church meetings, and other get-togethers through our screens, don't you want to be the voice that stands out and appears in their mailbox instead? We have screen fatigue, and people likely aren't paying too much attention to the advertisements they have been seeing for months. In business, you have to change and develop new marketing tools. Experimenting with direct mail or special offers may cost you some money, but the returns could be well worth the investment and time spent in developing the route. As an entrepreneur, though, the only risks you can take are calculated ones. You have to be sure there will be some reward, no matter how small.



Direct mail marketing is nothing new, yet it has been proven to work time and time again. Why? When you boil it down, direct mail marketing works because it's based on an idea that has always stood the test of time in business: the power of relationships.

In order to reel consumers into your brand, you need to reach them in diverse ways. Enter direct mail marketing. It disrupts the noise from your digital platforms while connecting with people in a real, personal way. Today's consumer takes months before making a purchase. When your voice has been consistent, loud, and diverse, you're more likely to stand out. And today's target millennial audience is

also looking at print and direct mail before making a purchase. In fact, more millennials learn of products through direct mail, even in a digitally focused world.

The digital world is still very influential. We may be tired of staring at our screens, yet we find ourselves pulled to social media, streaming services, and blogs even after we log off work. Businesses need to have a diverse online presence, whether that's on social media, a blog, or your website, but you don't have to adhere to one platform over the other. In fact, it's best if you use direct mail to disrupt your online campaigns and use your online campaigns to disrupt your paper marketing.



Relationship marketing that directly targets your consumer works every time. Direct mail has always disrupted the flow of standard marketing, and if you're focusing your efforts solely on the digital platform because of the pandemic, then you're making a big mistake. Direct mail is one of the easiest ways to connect with your consumers and stand out while doing it.

Want to learn how we produce our direct mail campaign? Just ask!

'Dare to Lead'

With Brené Brown's Bestselling Book

How many leaders do you know who will admit to their mistakes openly and honestly to their team? How many leaders have you heard ask their team for direction? How many leaders are willing to step aside so someone else can shine?

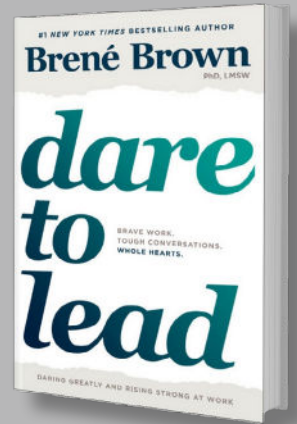
Chances are if you know that leader — or if you are that leader — then you understand the future of leadership, according to author, researcher, and teacher Brené Brown, Ph.D., author of "Dare to Lead: Brave Work. Tough Conversations. Whole Hearts." In this book, Brown details her seven years researching and gaining a better understanding of leadership. She interviewed business leaders at both small and large companies, asking questions that revealed what great leadership looks like. Together with her research team, she learned why certain workspaces thrive and grow while others, with seemingly just as powerful of ideas, wither and die. And it all boiled down to one thing, Brown says: courage.

In "Dare to Lead," Brown examines the four pillars of courageous leadership and how business leaders today can practice and perfect it. Brown teaches the four pillars through her consulting work and has seen radical changes in organizations that practice courageous leadership. Brown offers examples — from well-known CEOs and

within her own business — to walk readers through real-life applications of courage and how to create stronger teams through vulnerability.

Brown exposes how business cultures that don't practice vulnerability are ineffective as a result. She theorizes that often, these workspaces are filled with fear, uncertainty, and scarcity. To remove these negative traits, Brown offers leaders a road map to build their courage while practicing vulnerability and creating happier work environments.

Brown has spent the past two decades researching and breaking down emotional concepts into tangible goals for her readers and followers. She is the owner of The Daring Way, a consulting firm that helps businesses develop vulnerability in leadership and the workplace. She is also the host of the podcast "Unlocking Us" and has one of the most-watched videos of all time, "The Power of Vulnerability." You can learn more about Brown's work and find "Dare to Lead" at BreneBrown.com.



HAVE A Laugh



How a Thanksgiving Dinner Mix-Up Led to the TV Dinner

The year was 1953. That fall, the frozen food company C.A. Swanson & Sons drastically overestimated how many Americans would want a turkey as the centerpiece of their Thanksgiving spread, leaving them with about 260 tons of extra turkey packed into 10 refrigerated railroad cars.



Swanson salesman Gerry Thomas had a winning idea. He suggested they package up the remaining turkey with a few sides as frozen dinners that would be ready to eat after being thawed. The twist? They would be served in compartmentalized aluminum trays, much like airplane meals, which were the inspiration for Thomas' idea. Additionally, they would be marketed as "TV dinners," with their packaging designed to look like a television set.

As the TV rose in prominence in American living rooms, the TV dinner's popularity increased exponentially. Swanson sold nearly 10 million of them during the first year of production. By 1959, Americans spent half a billion dollars gobbling up TV dinners.

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Inside *This Edition*



1. Misadventures From Thanksgivings Past
2. Want to Stand Out in a Digital World?
Focus Offline
3. Researcher Brené Brown Helps Leaders Find
Their Vulnerability — and Succeed

How a Thanksgiving Dinner Mix-Up Led to
the TV Dinner
4. Filmmakers' 3 Tips for Video Calls
That Don't Suck

Mastering the Video Sales Call

With Filmmaker Expertise

As we continue to adapt to a half-digital, half-physical world, one thing is certain: This is our new normal. And in the business world, you adapt or you die. While in-person sales meetings and lunches will never be a thing of the past, mastering the video sales call to present yourself, your company, and your product is vital. After all, you want the most memorable part of your call to be the product you're pitching — not your cluttered background or the tinny sound.

To appear like a pro, try these three tips from filmmakers to make your video calls the envy of your competition.

Tip No. 1: Use what you have.

While moviemakers, vloggers, and podcasters have advanced equipment to make them look and sound great, you can provide a professional video call without blowing your budget. Start with lighting. Shine a lamp toward the wall facing you, and turn on

a light behind you to softly illuminate your face while creating background light for depth. Good sound quality can be just as simple to achieve. Rather than rely on your computer or laptop's microphone system, plug in your AirPods or headphones. These items have built-in microphones that better capture your voice due to their proximity to your face.

Tip No. 2: Get the camera angle right.

Aesthetically speaking, one of the worst angles for a camera is pointed upward at the subject being filmed. However, you're often looking down at your laptop or monitor's camera. Instead, stack your laptop on books or risers for meetings, or purchase a separate camera to mount at eye level or just above you. This is a much more flattering and commanding angle.

Tip No. 3: Look again.

In the moments leading up to a video call, remember to do two



things. For starters, quickly scan the background behind you. Will your prospective clients see anything unflattering or unduly distracting? A simple background, like a plain wall or a bookshelf, is great for bringing attention to you and not what's happening in the background. And before you join that meeting, rehearse looking into the camera as you speak, not at the screen itself. That will create eye contact for those in the meeting.

You don't have to be an Oscar-winning filmmaker to master these techniques. All it takes is a little practice to upgrade your video sales call.