

The Red Letter



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I Give You My Words

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Hear the Footprints

I tell stories. They’re about products, organizations, services, causes. Some are short, some are big; they last 30 seconds or 2,000 words. In all I strive to do one thing: sell by making prospects hear the footprints. But before I get to that, here’s a little story...

When I was a wee piker, we had a great Christmas tradition. Each of us kids received presents stacked under our tall, festive tree in the living room. But we also received Santa gifts. They were from my parents, too, but we didn’t know it. My folks would enlist a friend to deliver the gifts right about the time we’d finish opening presents. “Santa” would make a racket of the “Arose-Such-A-Clatter” variety, and we would run out hoping to catch a glimpse. One year I saw his fresh footprints in the snow. The clatter and footprints, presents and candy canes all jumbled my excited head. When I ran back inside I blurted, “Santa! I heard his footprints!”

No one hears footprints, but here’s the thing. To sell anything, we have to enable prospects to do just that. We need to tell stories that give them a positive image of us, something to get excited about. (Look at St. Nick. Even after millions of tellings, his story still elicits excitement and remains so...believable.) Make an impression in your prospects’ minds, a footprint, and when they think about buying in your category, *you will be the first thing they hear.*

Tell your story in as many different venues that make sense. Tell it well and, like a moment touched with Christmas magic, they’ll hear your footprint.

To All a Good Word

It’s been a great year, absolutely filled with good words. This holiday season, I’d like to pass some of my favorites along to you:

Sleigh bells, snowmen, hot chocolate, ice skating party, presents, together, invitation, mistletoe, ribbons, bows, decorations, family, friends, popcorn balls, carols, homemade fudge, peanut brittle, choirs, angels, wings, cookies, milk, lights, ice cycles, new, hugs, kisses, fireplace, pageant, elves, Grinch, mixed nuts, toys, kids, warmth, generosity, giving, caring, love, nativity, noel, holding hands, nice, good, reindeer, rooftop, chimney, bowl full of jelly, red nose, games, toasts, cheer, turkey and sweet potatoes.

Merry Christmas to all, and to all a good word!

We are here to add what we can to life, not to get what we can from it. – William Osler

The Good Word

Not That There’s Anything Wrong With That

In a tip of the hat to *Seinfeld* following the release of the first three seasons on DVD, this month’s topic is “that.”

I must admit, I have a problem with “that.” Not the one tackled

on the show, but the “that” overused irresponsibly in the wonderful world or words. Consider this sentence:

I understand that you are unhappy with the service that we provided.

Take out the unnecessary “thats”:

I understand you are unhappy with the service we provided.

Much better. We’ve enhanced communication power without changing the meaning an iota.

With words, less is always more, fewer is always better. Anytime you use “that,” stop and try the sentence without. Not that there’s anything wrong with “that,” but I’d lose “that” if I were you.