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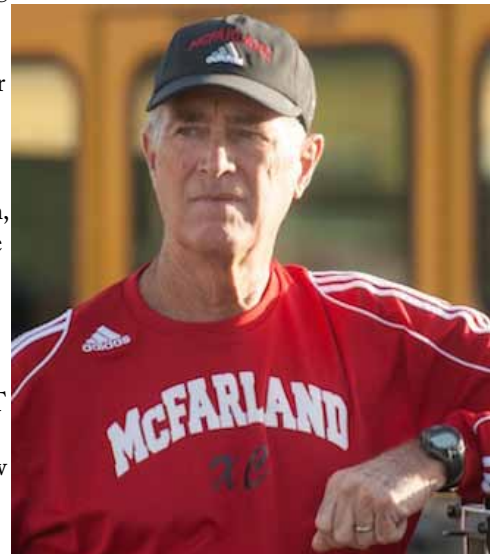
Annual Trade Show at Foxwoods Resort & Casino Provides Valuable Connections!

by Rich Tuttle, Chairman of the NETSA Trade show Committee, NETSA President/Vice President

PLAN NOW AND GET REGISTERED!

NETSA's Annual Trade Show and Convention is the premier event for tire and automotive industry owners and employees. It highlights the latest industry trends and technology, as well as provides networking with like-minded professionals. This fabulous one on one opportunity furnishes attendees with a diverse forum of over 50 vendors to view and assess what is necessary to plan and manage successful businesses.

The Trade Show Committee has put together another spectacular event that will be held at Foxwoods Resort and Casino in Mashantucket, CT, April 6th and April 7th, 2018, and it will prove to be action packed and exciting. Rich Tuttle (chair) and his committee have worked earnestly to make this a MUST ATTEND EVENT for all people in the Tire and Service business in New England and beyond.



Jim White, 2018 Keynote Speaker

WHY ATTEND THE TRADE SHOW AND CONVENTION?

Saturday at noon, our annual Business Meeting and Luncheon will feature Keynote Speaker Jim White, coach and educator and subject of the Disney movie McFarland, USA. With Jim's dedication and guidance, his teams went on to win a total of nine State Championships, the only school to hold that distinction. Through his hard work and dedication Jim fulfilled his desire to inspire his teams to reach for personal and career goals they never

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Irving Katz



Irving Katz founded Nu-Tread Tire in 1933, 2018 is the company's 85th year of operation. Irving's parents were both immigrants from Lithuania, however, he was born in Boston in 1908. Although as a young man he worked as a house painter during the day, he was most industrious and attended Suffolk Law School at night. He passed the bar exam on his first try and began the practice of law in Boston and the surrounding areas. Since this was the beginning of the Great Depression, he, as well as everyone else, was struggling to make a living. As a young lawyer he did collection work for Mohawk Rubber Sales and for one of its principals at the time, Max Stone. Irving acquired some retread equipment on a collection case for Mohawk and started a recap shop in East Boston. He soon brought his younger brother into the start-up business. He continued his law practice, but as time went on he got more and more involved in the tire business. Irving eventually gave up his law practice and referred his clients to other lawyers. He developed a very successful retread business, and along with Merchants Tire, was one of the largest in the Boston area. At that time there were many retreaders because their product was in high demand. Irving was a pioneer and had an exceptional entrepreneurial spirit. For many years he was an active member of NEAITD (now known as NETSA) and served for a time as its treasurer. He was also a member of NTDRA (now known as TIA) for many years, and was very active in that organization, attending their national conventions almost every year.

With other local businessmen he founded the Winthrop Kiwanis Club. For a time, Irving served as president of the New England Zionist Organization, which represented all the New England states. He was a Navy

veteran, who served in Panama during World War II, and developed a love for the ocean. Later in life he became involved in the United States Power Squadron (a nonprofit educational organization) and taught celestial navigation to its members. He was a founder of the New Temple Tifereth Israel Synagogue in Winthrop and was a very well-respected businessman in East Boston, Winthrop, and the surrounding communities. Irving was a very active member of the Winthrop Yacht Club for many years and served, for a time, as a director. He enjoyed boating as well as fishing, often supplying the fish for family dinners.

He was very conscientious about education and was very proud that both his sons were college graduates. His older son David, after being an engineer and college professor, became a dentist. His younger son Bob, followed in his dad's footsteps, taking over the business in 1982. Bob was inducted into NETSA's Hall of Fame in 2017. Irving was devoted to his family and was a loving husband and father. He was loved very much by his family, and he missed a great deal. ■

Jack Kelley



I was born on July 30, 1944. I have been married to my wife Cindy for fifty-two years. We have been blessed with two daughters, Lisa who is married to Irv, and Kristen who is married to Dan. We are fortunate to have four grandchildren.

I worked in the tire business for forty-two years at Tom Lyons Tire of Waltham, Massachusetts, and I am presently employed at Sullivan Tire. I am still enjoying my work.

I have been a member of NETSA's Board of Directors since 1994, which has allowed me to serve on several committees, and work with many NETSA

members. I have enjoyed this work. I have also served as President of the Waltham Jaycees, and I am currently a board member for Rockport Illumination Night.

Our oldest grandson Ryan has been the recipient of a NETSA Scholarship twice, and I am proud to say he will graduate from the University of Maine, Orono in May.

I would sincerely like to thank the NETSA Board of Directors for this honor, and for all the hard work they do.



Larry Lesieur



I was born on December 13, 1961 in Nashua, the son of Roland M. and the late Eleanor F. Lesieur. I was educated in various Catholic Schools, graduating from Bishop Guertin High School in 1979. In 1983 I graduated from the Whittemore School of Business at the University of New Hampshire in Durham and in 1990 I graduated from Suffolk University Law School in Boston after attending part time at night for four years. I was very pleased to have passed the New Hampshire bar exam on my first try as only about 50% passed the test the first time that year. My specialty was antitrust law, which didn't have much demand around here. I would have had to move to Washington D.C. which really didn't appeal to me at the time. I practiced a little but quickly realized that I would have to decide what career path to follow. Since

I'd rather be in a room full of tire dealers than a room full of lawyers anytime I stayed with the tire business. Nevertheless, I learned a lot by going to law school and enjoyed the experience and Boston very much. The first thing they said in law school was to listen, something most lawyers seem to forget.

Maynard and Lesieur was started by my grandfather Leo H. Lesieur on June 1st, 1928. I joined the business part time in 1977 pumping gas and studding tires. I started full time in June of 1983 working with my father Roland. Over the years we grew quite a bit and I have many siblings that still work here today as well as many nieces and nephews. Currently I work at the warehouse and do most of our ordering. I joined the NETSA Board in 1997 replacing my father and served as President for a couple of years after being Secretary and Treasurer of the organization for many years. I am still on the Board and currently chair the Scholarship and Bylaws Committees. In addition, I also served on the Greater Nashua Chamber of Commerce's Legislative Committee for many years and was on the Board of Directors of Horsepower (now Pony Farm) in Temple New Hampshire for a couple of years. Horsepower is a therapeutic riding facility that works with children and veterans with emotional and/or physical issues.

While I am still working, my plans are to at least semi retire in the near future. A lifetime of working 5 ½ days a week and vacation for only a couple of weeks a year seems to be the norm in our business but I'm ready for a break. I am hoping to eventually buy a place in the Bar Harbor Maine area so that I can hike and bike in Acadia National Park as well as stay close to my beloved Stonington Maine area during the summer. I would like to thank the members of NETSA, the Board of Directors, my family and our employees for this great honor. My father Roland received his award during the inaugural year along with Mr. Sullivan in 2008 and it is my privilege to accept this award on behalf of the entire Lesieur family. Thank you.



**In recognition of their outstanding
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to the Tire & Service Industry in New England**





A Time of Change

You might be wondering why I am writing this article. Well, I am NETSA's acting President. As most of you have heard by now, Dick Cole our past Executive Director retired January 31 of this year. Tony DeSimone who was our President, became our new Executive

Director January 1st, which makes me acting President. In this position I have been working with Dick and Tony on the transition, working on the 2018 trade show at Foxwoods April 6th and 7th, and all other NETSA business. I will continue in this capacity until the trade show, when new officers will be elected.

As you all know things continually change in this industry. Sometimes it is hard to keep up with what is going on. Just when you think you have gotten a handle on it, you realize you were wrong. Being informed can only help your business grow and become more profitable. Not knowing could put you out of business.

That is why, more than ever, you need to be a member of NETSA. I am not saying we have all the answers or we see everything. But not a lot gets by us. We have board members



from all over New England. We meet five times a year to discuss what is going on in our industry, what is new, what has changed, and how we can fix the issues, while helping to inform our members. If your state legislature is considering laws that may hurt our members' businesses, we get involved.

That is why, more than ever, you should attend the 2018 Trade Show at Foxwoods, April 6th and 7th. I have talked about changes, this year's show is going to be bigger and better than the 2017 show. We have added more space, which means more booths, more exhibitors, more information and yes more fun.

We will have three informational seminars, and this year there will be two panel discussions instead of one. Why two? Panel discussions are very popular and attendees get more information that benefits them. With all the changes and new information out there, two were needed. Some of you may say you can not afford to go or do not have the time. All I am saying is that you cannot afford not to go. The trade show can provide you with tools and information necessary to succeed in this industry.

That is all for now.
See you all at Foxwoods.

Rich Tuttle

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“Mo’ money, Mo’ problems” is a song by the Notorious B.I.G. that, as defined by the Urban Dictionary, means more money would lead to more problems for the one that possesses the money. Hence making money the problem. The song or song title can be heard or is referenced in pop culture from sporting events to Dancing with the Stars.

However, in the world of 401k’s, having “mo’ money”, in this case plan assets, actually leads to fewer problems. Large 401k plans, those with assets totaling \$10mm or more, enjoy more efficient plan administration, better investment options that are in alignment with their employee demographic, greater employee participation and less liability for the plan fiduciary. Oh, and the total plan cost is less..... much less.

How can this be?

More Efficient Plan administration

Large plans have committees to manage the plan. They have Retirement Plan committees made up of a variety of employees who take on the added responsibility of becoming a fiduciary to the plan. The committee members are charged with making prudent decisions on behalf of participants and documenting those decisions, choices regarding plan administration, service provider due diligence and investment selection & monitoring. The largest plans further divide these fiduciary responsibilities, creating separate Administration and Investment Committees to handle the day-to-day operation of the plan and provide a system of checks and balances. Small businesses just don’t have the resources. Even with some help from a member of their team, whether the CFO or an HR person, the plan doesn’t receive as much attention as it should to maximize the benefit and protect whomever is the named fiduciary of the plan.

Better investment options

Many 401k service providers purport to be advisers on the plan, especially when it comes to the investments. Does your investment service provider provide investment advice or merely recommendations? Does it matter? It does for the plan fiduciary, but not so much for the big name firm giving the recommendation. If there were better investment options available, why were those better options not offered to participants? The DOL or your employees might want to know. Don’t look to the big name firm providing the recommendation for the answer. Recommendations = your decision, not theirs. They’re not a fiduciary to the plan, but you are. Was the investment decision documented? Does the plan have an Investment Policy Statement and is it being followed? If an investment adviser provided actual investment advice, there will be a prudent, documented process. See more efficient plan administration above. Does your company have a participant directed plan?

The ERISA §404(c) exception

If you have a participant directed 401k plan and don’t want to be liable for investment losses suffered by plan participants who self-direct their investments, plan sponsors must comply with the requirements for investment selection, plan administration, and plan & investment disclosures before they are exempt from fiduciary liability for losses under ERISA §404(c). One major requirement under the safe harbor is that the plan must offer a broad range of investment options. Participants must also be able to make changes to their investments at least quarterly and allow participants to become informed about and to direct their investments. Providing enough information about the investments being offered is an often overlooked requirement of the 404(c) exception and without an education component, plan sponsors may not have the liability protection that 404(c) seeks to provide. Plan sponsors should make sure their plan participants have access to sufficient information about each investment option so that they can make informed investment decisions. See DOL Interpretive Bulletin 96-1 for more information

Small Plan, No problems

Employees of small businesses who have access to a 401(k), often pay three times as much as workers at larger companies, if not more. Should an employee have to pay more because they work for a small business? Why should employees, usually the business owner and management team, with the largest account balances pay more because the investments offered in the plan have undisclosed



fees? Wouldn’t all plan participants prefer lower-cost investments, especially if they’re available with lower risk, higher returns or both? Small businesses don’t have the resources their larger competitors do, but that doesn’t mean they can’t have a competitive 401k plan that is a true benefit. An underutilized 401k plan doesn’t benefit anyone and a plan on “auto-pilot” can create significant problems for the plan fiduciary. Independent, small business-friendly service providers can help maximize your 401k benefit, by improving plan administration, providing fiduciary investment advice and increasing participation. Oh.....and by lowering total plan costs too.

See you at the Show!



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When interviewed shortly after the successful sale of his tire and auto service business, Steven Weber exhibited a combination of relief, pride, and sheer happiness in the tone of his voice. Over the span of five years in which I worked with him and his wife, their emotions ran the gamut from initially being nervous, fearful, and feeling guilty about selling and leaving long-term employees with a new boss, to concern about how they would spend

all their free time once a sale had been completed, to, finally, contentment and delight in being able to sleep-in for a change without stressing over business matters.

A Thriving Business from Modest Beginnings

At only twenty years old, Steven and Sandra Weber decided to get into the automotive service business in 1979. The couple operated S & S Sunoco in south suburban Buffalo, NY, with Steven repairing vehicles and Sandra pumping gasoline. Two years later they took over a closed two-bay Esso station nearby and changed the name to S & S Service.

“Those early years were really a tough struggle for a long time,” continued Steven. “I remember my wife and I actually once digging in the car seats for change so we could buy bologna for a sandwich. Whew... those were tough times. But what a great opportunity the aftermarket offered us! To own your own business and your own destiny is the American dream.” In 1995, they constructed a beautiful and functional new building on the same lot, directly behind the old building, which was then demolished.

A 5-Year Journey

Steven Weber made his first contact with me after he read one of my articles and went to my web site and requested the guide “10 Mistakes to Avoid When Selling Your Business.” My notes from the initial conversation with Steve on December 7, 2012 reflected that he and Sandy had done well financially and built a retirement nest egg, but was apprehensive about what he would do with his life if he didn't have the

“We didn't know if we were ready to sell yet and we were just feeling out what the process would be.”

business to go to each day. I periodically reviewed the financial statements for S & S Service, which were always clean and positive, and we discussed the results of the Sellability Score after they completed the on-line questionnaires.

Steven said, “Five years ago I was just touching base with Art and kicking some ideas back and forth. We didn't know if we were ready to sell yet and we were just feeling out what the process would be. In the years since, much interaction and many discussions occurred as we made the journey from initial interest to the final close. When I finally realized that, without listing the business for sale nobody ever approached us or was banging our door down to buy the place, I called him this year to tell

him I think I'm ready. He was coincidentally going to be in my area, so we arranged to meet. My wife and I had a 4-hour conversation with him and we were really impressed by the plan he laid out.”

The combination of being a type-A personality and building my business literally from scratch made for a very highly charged, emotional period in making the decision to sell and then pondering all the steps of the process,” said Steven. “Five years ago I didn't even know where to start and now after two months since our transition from shop owners to retired shop owners, I don't know how I ever had the time to do all the things I'm doing. I just went back to the shop to get the mail today and I sat in the waiting room for a while and thought how glad I was that I didn't have to deal with this anymore.” Steve continued, “But the bottom-line is that I feel like I've added about ten years to my life with all the stress of owning a business off my shoulders. I'm just ecstatic that it's done.”

Not being able to come to grips with understandable fears actually keeps some shop owners from selling. But after a successful, mutually beneficial sale, Steven now sees that his fears were unfounded and hopes that other shop owners can learn from his story.

He also said, “It was my business, my baby. I grew it from nothing. A major concern with me were my long-term employees. I had two guys with me over thirty years, a third for 27 years, and I recognize



that it's very unusual to have employees for that long. What will happen to these guys? It was so important to me that something was in place for them before I made the final decision. Fortunately that all worked out better than expected when the buyer, Pep Boys, gave them all raises and tenure with the company. They were all so happy. What a relief!”

“The sales process took its twists and turns that really required an expert,” continued Steven. “I had always thought that I wanted to sell both the business and the real estate together, but the final deal involved full price cash payment for the business assets and a long-term lease of the property to a substantial national chain. I took that to my attorney for review and he told me I would be out of my mind to NOT sign the contract because it was such a good deal. It provided us with an ongoing annuity for our retirement that we had previously never considered. That is an opportunity that I am 100% sure would never have come along without Art, so he more than justified his fees.”

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Hello everyone, and welcome to my initial message as your Executive Director. I am very excited and honored to be serving you in that capacity. This is also my first time publishing the Road Runner, so if you are reading this, I guess I did well. It has been a busy and hectic first few months as the 2018 Scholarship program, Road Runner, and the 2018 NETSA Trade Show and Convention all come together in March and April. I am forever grateful for the help and

guidance shown to me by Dick Cole and Rich Tuttle.

The Association has initiated several changes in our daily operations. We now have a new toll-free phone number **1-855-638-7248** and fax number **1-855-NETSA4U**, and a new mailing address **3 Lefevre Drive, Kingston, NH 03848**. We have also secured our own storage facility to house all our equipment and files. The Website and Publications Committee, chaired by Mark Rochefort has been busy updating our website **NETSA.ORG** and our New England Tire and Service Association Facebook page. I encourage you to visit both for updated information about the association.

I am excited about the upcoming Trade Show. It continues to be one of the best Trade Shows in the country, and this year will again be a premier event. Rich Tuttle and his committee have gone to great lengths to make the 2018 Trade Show & Convention an exciting and informative event. They have three great Saturday morning seminars planned discussing relative and timely topics that you will not want to miss.

This year the Keynote speaker will be Jim White, former cross-country head coach at McFarland High School. Coach White was the subject of the Disney movie McFarland USA starring Kevin Costner. The Coach will headline our annual luncheon meeting and election of officers.

The Hall of Fame Committee chaired by Jim Melvin Jr. put forward an outstanding slate of nominations for this year's selection. We are pleased to announce we will be inducting Jack Kelley (Tom Lyons/ Sullivan Tire) Larry Lesieur (Maynard and Lesieur) and Irving Katz – deceased (Nu-Tread Tire & Auto Service). The Induction Ceremony will take place Saturday evening April 7, 2018 at our Annual Hall of Fame Dinner which officially closes the 2018 NETSA Trade Show & Convention. We look forward to seeing many of you there to honor these three outstanding members of NETSA and our industry.

The Legislative Committee continues to work hard to represent our members on matters that affect our industry.

New
Hampshire – HB1561
"Relative to the
use of recycled tire
rubber at village,

town, municipal, and school playgrounds." was heard on January 31, 2018. This bill would have banned the use of recycled tire rubber in all recreational playing surfaces in New Hampshire. NETSA's position on this bill was that it was premature since no actual scientific evidence supports the claim that recycled tire products, used in this capacity, presents a health hazard to children or adults. NETSA presented written testimony as well as actual testimony supporting tabling this bill until studies currently under way will be concluded late this year. This bill remains in committee.

Connecticut – We are monitoring a proposal in the Governor's Budget that would levy a \$3.00 fee(tax) on all new passenger and light truck tires to reduce the state's transportation budget. We feel this unfairly targets our tire industry without contributing a great deal to reducing the burden on the transportation budget. We will continue to watch this proposal.

Well, that is all for now. I am looking forward to the Spring and my first Trade Show as your Executive Director. Please feel free to contact me with any suggestions or ideas for the coming year.

Tony DeSimone

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2. Copy by manual input
3. Auto create 1-16 sensors

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- Sensor position relearn

(4) Sensor programming options

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2. Copy by manual input
3. Auto create 1-16 sensors
4. Copy by OBDII

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Tradeshow... Continued from pg. 1

Saturday 8AM to 9AM: "Lubrication Could Be A Slippery Slope" Moderator: Gene Wilder Jr., Wilder Brothers Tire Pros and a Panel of Distinguished Industry Experts. Is the traditional oil change or coolant service dead? There are nuances to the question that dealers need to be aware of. Our panel will discuss the complexity of the changes taking place in the industry.

Saturday 9:10 to 10:10: "How to Optimize Your Customer's Journey in 2018" Presented by Aaron Roach, Net Driven. The customer journey maps out how and why people buy things, which should be considered when formulating business and sales strategies. Once you understand the journey you can use this knowledge to improve your marketing efforts.

Saturday 10:15 to 11:15: "Do You Know Who Your Competitors Are?" Moderator: Mark Rochefort, Vermont Tire and a Distinguished Panel. In this day and age, you have more competitors than ever before, from your traditional competition, to companies that seem to be vapor, with nothing more than an online price. Join some of New England's top independent tire dealers for a comprehensive

look into your newest and biggest competitors and how to counter their threats.

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Saturday evening features a Wine and Cheese Reception followed by our Hall of Fame Dinner. This will also include a Scholarship Auction including many sought after items.

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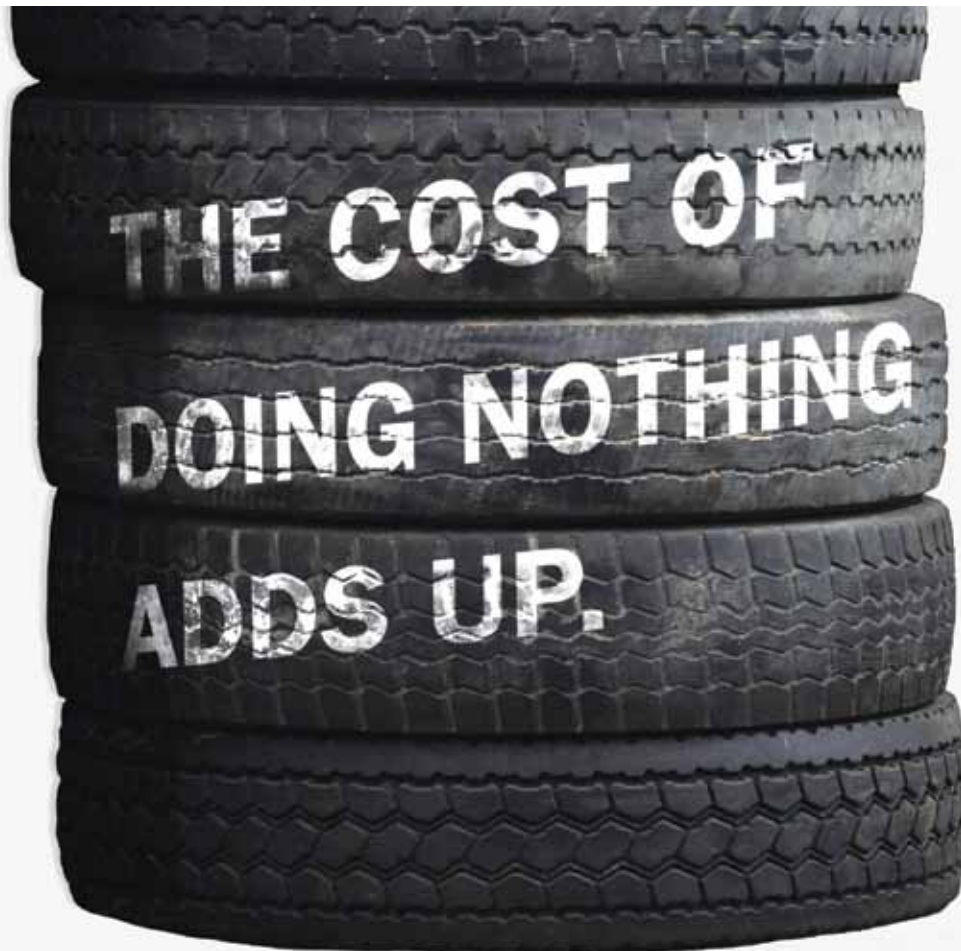
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Technology and the Internet have changed many aspects of our everyday lives. One specific example is online shopping and website browsing. Consumers follow a thought process when considering a purchase or requesting more information about a product or service from an online shop website. With the growth of the Internet, part of this process has become more extreme. Knowing how to win a consumer over in the key stages of their buying thought process online is a great leap towards increasing sales and quote requests online.

First off, make sure your message is clear. This ease in consumers understanding what you're offering is parallel to the likelihood that they will buy from you or request price or product information. According to ConversionXL, this human tendency to prefer familiar and easy to understand offers and concepts is called cognitive fluency. It makes sense, doesn't it? Why would humans prefer to buy things that confuse them? We want to know what we are spending our hard earned money on, why it fulfills our need, and how it will benefit us!

Technically speaking, there are many variations of the consumer buying process. Today, we are going to use this six stage process to describe how to win consumers over online. The stages are: the consumer recognizes a problem, begins to search for information throughout different online shop websites, evaluates options and alternatives, makes a purchase decision or price-quote request, purchases what they requested information on or decided on, and lastly, evaluates their product/service post-purchase.

Sounds familiar, huh? Well, that's probably because you can remember doing this at least a dozen times (if not more). Now you're going to think about this from your customer's view while searching for tires or services on your website. Let's begin.

What's the problem?

First things first, any consumer that begins to search for tires or automotive services online has a problem. Problems can be small or large, needed immediately or can wait a while, expensive or relatively inexpensive but they all have one thing in common--every human has them. No matter how technologically advanced we become, we still have basic human needs.

Need to clean your teeth? Buy a toothbrush. Have a headache? Buy some aspirin. Had a tire blowout? Buy a new tire.

So, let's think about this automotive-wise...What is the problem? They need new tires or services! The solution? That is where your business, its responsive website and local directories come into play in the next step.

In need of more information!

If a consumer turns to a search engine for more information on tire sales, you NEED to make sure your website appears. The majority of the time, they will choose within the five top search results or within the ads above or to the side of the results.

Local directories are just as important. They make your business look professional, reliable, legitimate and with the current times of online browsing. During this stage of the buying process, your business can move onto the next stage or be left in the dust.

How do you make sure your business doesn't bite the dust on this potential sale? Make sure you are in local directories, make sure your website ranks well with SEO, start a PPC campaign, or even mention tire or service information on your social media accounts from time to time so they rank better, too! For more information on how Net Driven TurboClick can help you visit our website.

Most consumers do a vast amount of online research when making a more expensive purchase like new tires or auto parts/service. It's not surprising that 71% of enterprise purchase decisions in the United States start with search engine research and browsing.

Once the consumer gets to your website, you have officially made it to stage

three. Now you can relax, right? Nope, don't sit back with a cup of hot Joe just yet. You have not locked in this sale 100%. There are other options on the Internet (millions, actually) so don't think this consumer is going to stick with you if your website doesn't make the cut. Luckily, we have a good feeling about this!

Are there alternatives?

This stage is crucial. You want to make sure the consumer is satisfied with the look, feel, and interactivity of your website. Perks like your advanced tire catalog, tire fitment guide and diagnostic center will help move you way above the competition.

A consumer wants easy information and fast. Making them take the extra step to call and talk about what is wrong with their vehicle in comparison to completely an online diagnosis can ruin the chance of converting this consumer. According to Groove, the #1 most important factor in a customer's loyalty to a business or brand is reducing their effort to gain more information or find what they are looking for.

Video content is also HUGE when it comes to purchasing decisions and rising above competing alternatives. 73% of consumers said they are more likely to buy a product or request pricing information after watching a video explaining a product or service.

On top of that 69% of marketing professionals our video in their strategies, while 31% are planning to do so. Net Driven Drivecast helps to make sure consumers love their browsing experience on your website with video content and helps increase the likelihood that WILL request a quote from you business AND complete the sale.

Responsive, check. Social media, check. Video content, check. Interactivity, check. You've reached stage four!

Decisions, Decisions.

The time has come--the purchase decision. You received the quote request from your website by the consumer in this scenario. Now, what? Respond, as timely as you possibly can! A good system of lead management helps to make sure you respond to all your tire or service quote leads in a timely fashion. The sooner you acknowledge and answer their request, the more likely it is that they will make a purchase with you!

The trick is to let them know you will offer any information or guidance they need, but don't be too pushy! You can pretty much guarantee that not one single customer gets that warm and fuzzy feeling inside from being followed around by a salesperson non-stop when they are browsing in person. The same goes for online! Don't be a bother, be of assistance!

Cha-Ching. Purchase Made.

Congratulations! This consumer has just made a purchase with your business. You've converted this lead and completed a sale. The consumer thought process is over, which means your job is complete. Nope! Not so fast--Don't forget customer satisfaction!

Satisfied? Dissatisfied?

It's important to keep in mind what consumers think after a purchase has been made. With pricier purchases like tires or automotive parts, a follow-up isn't necessary but it's definitely a nice gesture! Give your new customer a call about a week after their products or services have been purchased. Ask how everything is working, is their vehicle riding smooth, etc. If they aren't 100% satisfied, offer guidance or ask them to stop in for you to take a look. Their satisfaction begins with your helpful online shop website and continues well after the sale closes. The more you show you care, the more they will lean toward your business for their next auto related purchase or problem. Lock in future sales and returning customers by thinking like they do and assuring their satisfaction!

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As I write this column in February it is the usual February for us, very slow. We have cut back some hours for the month but as busy as it was through the end of 2017, 2018 so far has been terrible. It is so hard to gear your business for the slow periods. Let someone go and you probably won't

find anyone to replace them later. I'm curious what all of you do with your help in February to keep them happy and your business alive. Of course, we only sell tires, so I suspect that since most of you do at least light mechanical work that you have ways to bring people in for oil changes, inspections, etc....

The wholesale end of the tire business continues to evolve. First Gene Bova sold Motostar Tire to K & M Tire and then Michelin bought 50% of Sumitomo Rubber and has started a joint venture which will merge TCI and Carroll Tire into a new entity, NTW. I never saw that coming. It's stunning. It will be interesting to see if companies like Yokohama Tire and Continental Tire will continue to sell the new entity. ATD has forced the hand of many wholesale distributors to add additional brands to their lineup. Today's tire dealers want good service, a competitive price, and one stop brand shopping. Manufacturers have got to figure out how they want their products to be distributed in the market and who they want to distribute them.

Of course, the 700-pound gorilla in the room is Amazon. Their goal is to eliminate all tire dealers as anything but tire installers. As they make deals with distributors to deliver tires for them, Amazon will make money. The distributor may cover his costs. And you will get nothing. Amazon will tell you that you can have the service business, at least until they sell the car parts direct to the consumer and you are an installer there too. I know people who sell on Amazon. They take a lot, and you make virtually nothing. My nephew quoted a guy on an accessory recently and the Amazon price to the customer was way cheaper than what we could buy it for wholesale. Needless to say, we didn't get that sale. Several things need to happen. First, anything selling on the internet should be subject to the same sales tax as the brick and mortar businesses must charge in their state. Why are we protecting internet companies? Do they really need the help at this point? Of course not. Ridiculously unfair. Second, manufacturers need to apply their new internet selling rules to everyone. Several of our manufacturers now prohibit us from selling on Amazon and EBAY, as well as selling to several large individual distributors and the clubs that do business here in New England. We aren't the problem. That new selling policy better apply to all of us including the big distributors and dealers, primarily because the only people selling these guys are the manufacturers, large tire dealers, and distributors. Third, if a manufacturer or distributor does elect to sell Amazon at prices that make us noncompetitive, we should drop or minimize selling that brand. It is time for the independent tire dealer to stand up and be counted. We need to be profitable to survive. Manufacturers, do you

want your products to be sold or do you just want us to be order takers who make no money selling your products? It will also be interesting to see how the Tire Rack fares against Amazon. Right now, they are way ahead of them. Maybe Amazon will buy them out just to get rid of them. Hopefully the antitrust attorneys would take notice, but I doubt it. It will be interesting to see how the tire business evolves in the next few years. I wonder if I'll still be in the business long enough to see how this all plays out.

On a more positive note, the annual NETSA trade show will be held the weekend of April 6th-April 8th this year. It promises to have some excellent seminars, an interesting speaker at the luncheon, a great trade show, and lastly the great reception and annual Hall of Fame dinner and auction to support our scholarship fund. Congratulations to Jack Kelley and Irving Katz for being voted into our Hall of Fame this year. Well deserved. Oh yeah, they voted me in too but come anyway. I promise to keep my speech to a minimum since we are now going to be inducted after the auction takes place.

Speaking of the scholarships, we are offering at least 18 of the \$2,000 variety this year. You should have gotten the info mailed to you, but it is also available at www.netsa.org, as well as information on the trade show. The deadline to apply for a scholarship has been moved up to April 2nd this year so that we can help high school seniors get recognized at their awards ceremonies. Contact our Executive Director Tony DeSimone at 1-855-638-7248 for more information on the scholarships or the trade show. See you there. We'll see if my moustache and beard come off by then.

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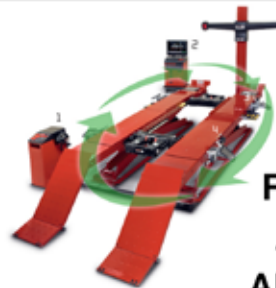
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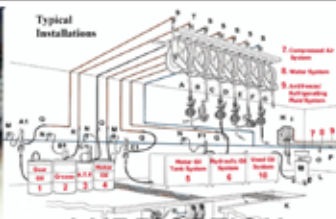
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I want to talk about how to tell when you might need a family business consultant. The reason this comes up is because we get lots of calls here, lots of calls and emails, well over 100 a year from family businesses around the world, that they think they might need help. Some, frankly, we don't think they need help. They call and they say, "I've got this challenge, or this issue," and we just give them a couple of tips and say, "Oh, you know, you really don't have, it doesn't sound like you guys have a lot of problems. It sounds like things are running pretty well. You just might need a little tweak here or there." We sort of give them some tips, and maybe provide them a resource, and turn it into a do-it-yourself, or a DIY project. Differentiate that from the people that do need help. There are some people that call that obviously and clearly need help. I came up with four quick little diagnostics, self-diagnostics that you can do that will maybe give you more clarity about whether or not you actually need the services of a family business consultant.

The first thing is communication is broken down. How do you know communication has broken down? Well, there's a whole series of things, issues, that will tell you if communication's broken down. You're avoiding each other. You're not talking. You're trying to find reasons to skip business meetings or family meetings or both, because it's gotten uncomfortable. People walk out of meetings. People storm out of meetings. I always wondered why they think that's a good negotiation technique. It happens, right? People get in meetings and they get frustrated and they just get at their wit's end and they leave the meeting. I don't know how anything gets solved that way, but that's something that people do.

Eye contact is a big thing. If in your family business, you're just finding it hard to look your brothers and sisters and mom and dad right in the baby blues and engage with them, that's a real key sign. I think that's one of my key indicators, when people are looking at the facilitator, or looking around the room, or looking at anything except the other people with whom they're supposed to be engaging directly, that's a huge indicator. Trust is broken down, and I guess maybe these are all subsets of the same issue. Trust is broken down. I say I'm going to do something, and your first reaction is to roll your eyes and say, "Oh my gosh, here he goes again, promising something he has no intention of following through." Shouting, fighting. We've had an amazing number of instances of physical violence in our family businesses over the years. It's not an epidemic, but enough occasions for me to know that it's not as isolated as people would have you believe.

Interrupting other people, not showing other people respect in conversations or in meetings. Talking over them, disregarding them, looking at your phone while someone else is talking. That lack of respect in interpersonal communications is an issue. Power plays where people draw lines in the sand and they say, "If we don't do this," or "If you do that, by God I'm quitting," or, "I'm taking my men and I'm going to go start a new division." All that kind of stuff. Power plays are a real problem in family businesses.

Then, I think maybe one of the biggest ones besides eye contact is decisions stop getting made, and now nothing gets done. Because of the lack of communication and the lack of coherence among the family members, you kind of start to bog down, and the same problems begin to repeat themselves. There's no positive solutions. There's no clear pathway to getting out of this continuous, frustrating loop that you find yourselves in. Second challenge after communication is, you're not getting any new advice from your traditional advisors to help you get going in the right direction. For most family businesses, the first place they turn is their CPA when they have questions. Then, of course, there's the cohort of traditional advisors, there's the CPA, lawyer, insurance people, bankers, investment people, that kind of stuff. Once you get to a point where you've got challenges, and maybe it's communication, and you find that your traditional advisors aren't providing the pathway you need to break through, then you probably need to go to a little bit more specialized advisor, and get a little bit different kind of counsel.

Huge one, your good employees begin to leave the company. Because of whatever, because of the poor communication, or the lack of decision making, or the lack of a clear direction or stagnation, whatever it is, when you see your top employees leave the company, that ought to be a warning bell that you, holy moly, you better do something and you better do it quick. That is, you can see a death spiral coming from that. Great, you've got family people, with whom you don't necessarily get along very well. Now your good people begin to leave, they're not family. Oh my. That is a real potential issue.

Finally, dread. A sense of dread. I've literally heard this said before. Guy said, "When I come to the office in the morning, if my dad's Cadillac is sitting in the parking lot, I just want to leave." In fact, on many occasions he would. He would go to the country club and hit golf balls, knowing that his dad was going to leave at 12 noon to play golf, and he could go in and get his work done from 12 to 7 or 12 to 8 or whatever it was. Literally, dread. The situation with his dad had become so poor that he actually dreaded being under the same roof with the guy. Long story there, but that was a real, palpable, emotional sense of foreboding that he had about interacting with his father at the business.

If those four conditions exist in your family business, you probably need some more specialized help. If, on the other hand, you're not experiencing those four conditions, you probably don't. There's DIY opportunities, there's books you can read, there's self-help articles, and of course, you've got your traditional advisors that any family business can call on. Hopefully, that gives you some clarity about when you do and when you might not need a specialist.

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News In Brief



Nu-Tread Tire and Auto Service has closed its doors after a long and distinguished 85 years of operation. Bob Katz announced the sale of the property to a land developer on January 31, 2018. The business was started by the late Irving Katz who will join Bob as a New England Tire & Service Association Hall of Fame inductee on Saturday April 7, 2018. Bob is pictured here with State Senator Joseph Boncore and Boston Traffic Commissioner, Gena Fiandaca representing Boston's Mayoral Office, proclaiming January 31 as Bob Katz Day in Boston and honoring the owner with a Nu-Tread Tire Street sign. Bob was thankful to the many customers,

vendors, and suppliers with whom he did business over the last 36 years. Congratulations to the Katz Family.

Sadly we report on the following;

John DeSimone, resident of West Hartford and owner of Modern Tire, passed away on Jan. 12, 2018. John started working as an auto mechanic and eventually purchased Modern Tire of West Hartford in 1981. The longtime owner of Modern Tire of West Hartford was a pillar of the community and longtime NETSA member. He will be missed.



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