



The Baron
Group, Inc.

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The Danger of Desperation

One of the themes expressed in the classic play and film, *Glengarry Glen Ross*, is about the nightmare of desperation. The movie tells a chilling story about real estate salespeople who will do almost anything to close a deal. It paints a most depressing image of the life of a commission driven salesperson.

That type of sales is 180° removed from what we are asked to do in today's world. Their approach, as demonstrated in the story, is the antithesis of consultative selling.

But that doesn't mean we don't have the tendency to get a bit desperate. Particularly in times like these. And that is a behavior we need to avoid regardless of how challenging things may be.

We talk often about being visible, not hiding behind email and keeping ourselves on the client's mind. But let's keep things in perspective. The last thing we want to do is give the impression that we are starting to panic. That can only work against us.

Our clients know what it's like out there. They are getting the phone calls, emails and mailings. Our competitors are pursuing them. The existing provider becomes the target. They understand how the current environment has and will impact us. And most are sensitive to our need to stay in contact.

But remember, positive behaviors in excess cross the line to become negative behaviors. Trying too hard can be interpreted as desperate. Sharing concerns can be misconstrued as whining. Complaining about the economy can be misinterpreted as pessimistic. And consistently seeking commitment and asking for the business can be looked at as being overly aggressive.

Be yourself. Maintain your objectivity. Demonstrate confidence. Present yourself as someone who is well aware of the challenges, yet is well prepared to take them on. Without showing off, demonstrate your awareness of the business environment and what's being done to turn things around. Without coming across as arrogant, don't lose sight that you work for an impressive organization. Without acting scared, let them know that you are cognizant of what the worst case scenarios may be.

But be yourself. Brighten up the client's day when you meet with them or speak with them. Continue to show your enthusiasm without seeming unrealistic. You can come across as empathetic without appearing sympathetic. And you can give the impression that you are enjoying yourself without being misinterpreted as naïve or disconnected.

The reality is that we never want to be perceived as desperate. Of course, we need our clients, but we don't want to give the impression that we'll do anything to get their business. We want to work with them, partner with them, become their strategic partners and provide them with great solutions. But we are who we are and we never want to lose sight of this. We are fortunate to do business with them. But at the same time, remember that it's a two way street. We add value to our relationships and everybody benefits when things go well.

A leading sales management consultant once said: "How we treat our customers during trying times will impact the way they treat us for years to come." Never forget that. Let's be sure to create the best possible impression as to who we are as individuals, and who our company is as an institution. Now, more than ever.