



Never Rocket Science

- Al E. Bavry, Advisor, Kimal Lumber

As I age...Yup, I figured it out...We don't grow younger! Anyway, I'd like to talk about one of those one-liners you hear now and then: "It ain't Rocket Science!" More than ever it dawns on me, that in the much more complex world we live in now, compared to when I was younger, is that some "basics" remain remarkably true. But the problem (the way I see it), is that now we have these incredible tools at our disposal...to solve, analyze, dissect almost anything...even beginning to use some artificial intelligence to "help" us make some decisions ...have started to replace the "basics." A lot of this is happening without "People" involved.

In the ever-growing Techno World, many of the "basics" that we grew up with have been leaving us. For example, I remember, growing up on the farm...One (of many) rule was simple...And it was explained this way: "Your word is your bond." Other expressions... "If so-and-so makes a promise/commitment, you can take it to the bank." Or, "You do what you say...say what you do." In those days, the tenets of good behavior were accountable because in a small farming community we all knew each other and saw each other face-to-face. It was a powerful "monitor" because if you did or said something to harm your reputation, it would be discovered and gossiped about by everyone around. In some ways, this can be very annoying, of course, but on the other hand, if you don't interact (physically) with people socially at all, what happens then?

I think of how it goes now, just within the last decade. I'll be emailing someone about something important--expecting an answer within a reasonable amount of time. Or I might even go to the point where I say something like, "Can I get an answer by tomorrow?" And four days later, after two more emails from me, I'm still waiting for that answer. Or, with voicemail, the very detailed voice message I leave for someone...To realize four days later, no response whatsoever! And when I finally get to speak to that person, for real, maybe a hint of... "Now you're really bugging me!" It seems that even if someone emails and says they'll get back to me on a certain day, odds are that the "promise" *isn't* taken seriously as they don't email back. It doesn't seem to matter that much these days, to "do what you say." Why do I have the suspicion it's because it's easier to "let it ride," when we're all basically nameless and faceless on the Web, shielded by the distance inherent in Techno-land?

So here's a very recent personal experience... I called my doctor's office the other day to have a consultation...Starts with (no human receptionist by the way, that's way old-fashioned) a recorded message: "If this is a medical emergency, hang up and dial 911!" After that is a long list of... "If you know your party's number you may dial it now" ...or a lengthy list of options. I finally got to one that sounded like it might go live...but no... I had to leave a voice message with the "commitment" to "Leave your number and we'll return your call." By now, I was frustrated to the point of chewing nails...But I dutifully left the message. (*Two days* later, I got a short return call.) After that first call to my doctor, I remembered another doctor that I knew, who still had a private practice. I thought, what the heck, and I dialed *his* number...Strangest thing happened! On the second ring, a professional, non-recorded voice answered. I was so excited to land a real person I could hardly contain myself.

I guess I got a little “chatty” and halfway through my short dissertation with the lady, she said, “Does Monday at eight o’clock work for an appointment with the doctor?” I did that little thing in the air with a lever...like “Ka-Ching”...I had just talked to a real person, got a real appointment, and now I can see a private doctor, not one of many docs. Wow! Hardly gets any better than that...

So, the thing I’m talking about is so simple we’re missing it far too much of the time. Think how simple it was that the doctor’s receptionist who answered the phone, for real, just threw a customer into ecstasy! Using real people instead of recordings and voicemails pays for itself many times over. And I feel we have to begin to treat every phone call...every voice mail, every email, every kind of message...almost as if it’s going to be the last one we will ever get. And every time we “make a commitment” of any kind, think something like: It may be the last thing I do...So, I’m going to do it right!

Maybe this pandemic has had something to do with this current protocol of not engaging people as we used to, but I feel it’s been going on for a long time, and it’s getting progressively worse. Said another way, and I’ll end with this: Human relations are anything but human anymore. So these days, to take up the “human element” again, what a new-found powerful tool to have in your arsenal. For if you’re a real, breathing, honorable person, you will be held accountable. You will keep your word...Keep your commitment...Do what you say...Say what you do. Be the person that becomes recognized as that one who everyone agrees, “When so-and-so says something, you can count on it and take it to the bank.”

Once again, it ain’t Rocket Science...Communicate back...As you never had before...In every way. Good selling.