



On The Air With John Melley

A Window Into My Growing Corner of the Voice Over World

Special Issue!

September 2011

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Quotes

A man's health can be judged by which he takes two at a time—pills or stairs.

—Joan Welsh

Take care of your body. It's the only place you have to live.

—Jim Rohn

Special Issue!: Are You A Commodity?

Dear Friend,
Are You a Commodity?

I was recently at a Marketing Conference and during one of the sessions the presenter asked an interesting question. The question was: "Are you a commodity?" Nobody likes to think about themselves as a commodity, but then to rub it in further he asked 2 more questions that determined whether you/your business is a commodity or not. What were the two questions? What are the Top 5 services you provide to your clients? And... does your competition provide those same services? If the answer is yes, alas you are a commodity. (You should have heard the groans.)

Does that mean we are doomed to be equated with bushels of wheat, or barrels of oil? H-E-ck NO!

Let's first look at "Commodity". Simply put, it means something commonly found, or readily available. So, to avoid being a commodity, we have to differentiate ourselves from our competition.

Everyone's voice is different. Aside from that, how do we make what we DO different from other voice over/production talent? We've got to become scarce. We've got to do something no other voice talent is doing, or at least make ourselves scarce in our customers' eyes (and ears). You must be able to answer



John in the Studio With His Buddy, "MIKE"

the client's question: "Why should I use YOU instead of any of your competitors?"

Being able to answer this question is the key to unlocking the power of your voice over pricing and business. In marketing parlance this is what is called your Unique Selling Proposition, or USP. It's a tough question to answer and to be truthful your USP can, and probably *should* evolve over time. Mine is still a work in progress.

Once you define your USP, or you become "Unique" in the eyes of your customer, all kinds of marvelous things start to happen in your business. Your clients see you as the expert in your field—the "go to" person for voice over projects. They start to refer you to others who may need your services.

Since you are Unique, there is less resistance to your pricing. You can charge more.

Let's talk about positioning. Another one of the speakers at the above men-

Are You A Commodity? - Continued

tioned conference was a gentleman by the name of Nido Qubein. Nido was born in Lebanon and came to the United States as a young boy. He is now, among other things, the President of High Point University and Chairman of the Great Harvest Bread Company®.

Nido powerfully demonstrated the concept and importance of increasing “Perceived Value” with a simple 1 lb. bag of Hershey Kisses® and a 1 lb. box of Godiva® Chocolates.

He asked why two items with essentially the same ingredients and taste were so markedly different in price. A 1 lb. bag of Hershey Kisses® sells for about \$4.00. A 1 lb. box of Godiva® Chocolates sells for 10 times as much at about \$40.00.

He went on to say that you buy Hershey Kisses® to eat. You buy Godiva® to give as a gift. You put Hershey Kisses® in a bowl and give them away. Godiva® Chocolates are prized, hidden away in a cabinet and only shared with someone special. Why is this? Perceived value.

Don’t get me wrong. Hershey Kisses® are delicious. If they’re out, you can count on me grabbing about a half dozen and eating them. (That says something right there, doesn’t it? Would you “Grab a handful of Godiva® Chocolates?” You’d probably eat just 2... maybe 3 and think you were really splurging. You want to make them last.)

Look at the packaging. Hershey Kisses® come in a clear plastic bag and are stacked in piles on store shelves, or piled in a large bin in the candy aisle and you just pick it up and toss it in your basket, or shopping cart.

Godiva® Chocolates are packaged with each piece having their own little section molded in the tray, neatly layered within a gold foil box; a satin ribbon and bow on top with the Godiva® logo embossed on the lid. They are “displayed” in fancy cases with elegant lighting. You are probably waited on by someone who may help you select the chocolates you’re buying. You feel special just going to buy them and giving them.

One chocolate’s “presentation” and buying “experience” is totally different from the other.

You can create your own “Godiva Zone” in which you live and operate. You do it with the words you use, the way you treat your clients, how you look after them, how you dress, speak on the phone, how you write your emails, your letterhead, demo packaging, the experience they have with you in the studio. **Your** “Presentation.”

Another example Nido gave were the differences between Disney® vs. Six Flags® or Universal Studios®. Disney® beats its competitors hands-down. How? Attention to detail and creating a WOW! Experience for the guests of their park.

Did you know the lamp posts along Main Street USA at Disney® are painted *every* single day? They are painted at a specific time so they dry just in time for the park to open so they have the highest shine for people to see as they first enter the park. They take into account the humidity level every single day to determine the exact time they should start to paint them so they dry in time. *That’s* attention to detail.

Most nights of the year Disney® is open to Midnight and people stay there all day, cryin’ kids and all. They don’t want to miss a thing and they don’t want to leave.

Nido told us to ask ourselves: “Would someone buy a ticket to ‘my park’?” If they did buy a ticket, “How long would they stay?”

Other questions you need to ask yourself are: “How can I be the kind of person people want to give? How can I be a box of Godiva® Chocolates? How can I get them to say ‘That’s the person I want to do all my voice over work’?”

How can you create a “WOW!” experience for your clients so that you don’t just have clients, but raving fans? How can you “Make yourself scarce?”

John Melley is a Nationally recognized Voice Over Talent, having performed voice over for Irving Oil, Hewlett Packard, United Technologies Corporation and countless others. He is also in demand as a marketing consultant for business owners, specializing in coaching voice talent to grow their businesses. He believes a rising tide lifts all ships and helping other voice talent benefits the entire voice over profession. If you would like to learn more about John’s availability for helping you grow your voice over business, Please email Mike@JohnMelley.com