

NEWS UPDATE

Commercial Stamp Duty

We have a scheme available to companies who are contemplating purchasing a commercial property for a consideration in excess of £2.5million. The scheme applies to Freehold and Leasehold properties. If the property is leasehold then the lease must be capable of being assigned. The scheme will not work in cases where a new lease is being granted. The potential saving on a property costing £2.5million is £100,000. If you would like further details please contact Peter. The scheme will work on any value of a commercial property transaction but the minimum fee would be based on a transaction value of £2.5million.

Those infuriating Call Centres

Utility companies might be cheaper than the one you use, but do you really want the hassle of switching? It's similar with Internet Service Providers, sometimes it feels as if life is just too short to start chopping and changing the supplier of your Internet access. BT has recently played to this natural reluctance to change things by talking about customers who return to the fold, and how the grass isn't always greener. But, it would appear there is one thing guaranteed to make customers see red, and lead them to overcome their apathy and switch suppliers, and that's a bad experience with the supplier's call centre.

According to research carried out by Accenture in the US, 46 percent of consumers surveyed quit doing business with a company in at least one industry category over the last year. The biggest bone of contention was the automated phone service, with a mere 15 percent of the consumers indicating they were satisfied or very satisfied with these self-service options. By contrast, 6 out of 10 (61 percent) of those surveyed said they were satisfied or very satisfied with in-person services.

Respondents to the survey said they spent an average of seven minutes on a call. The biggest gripe was being kept on hold (72 percent objected to that), while 70 percent objected to being made to repeat information to multiple services representatives.

Poor customer service drives over half of consumers to take their business elsewhere, and virtually every industry loses business because service expectations weren't being met. If your customer service levels consistently **exceed** your customers' expectations then the effect on your bottom line will be explosive!

New methods of HMRC intimidation

Any time now you could receive a letter or phone call from the Inland Revenue asking you to answer a few questions, arrange a home visit or possibly agree to changes they have already made to your tax return. Some attempt will be made to ask you to look at your business expenses. This new initiative is termed an "Intervention". If you receive such a letter or phone call, let us know straight away and do not be drawn into agreeing anything over the phone. Usually a firm "I need time to think about this" would be the best response.

And finally, a contribution from Sarah (who is not an accountant.....!)

What do accountants do for fun? *Add up the telephone directory*

What do you call an accountant without a spreadsheet? *Lost!*

The accountant's prayer: *Lord, help me be more relaxed about insignificant details, starting tomorrow at 10.53:16 am, Eastern Daylight Saving Time*

(I'll let you know if I've still got a job in next month's issue!!)

Peter

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