

1ST ANNUAL STATE OF THE STATE LUNCHEON



State Assembly Member Cristina Garcia is pictured with Norwalk City Council Members, Artesia City Council Members and Board of Directors from both the Norwalk and the Artesia Chambers of Commerce.

Hearing from State Assembly Member Cristina Garcia at the 1st Annual "State of the State" Luncheon was both informative and refreshing. She shared with the many business and community leaders in attendance her views on where California stands right now both economically and towards businesses. Right now the State of California has a signed budget which will include paying off debt and placing 2.1 billion into reserves this fiscal year. By 2017, they expect to have over 5 billion in those reserves. This year alone the State will be able to pay off 12.4 billion in debt which places California in a much better financial situation.

Acknowledging that unemployment numbers are down and the State is in better financial shape, Garcia stated that it hasn't seemed to trickle down to small businesses yet. How to create a better situation for business owners is one of

the items she is focusing on right now. Working to bring more resources from the California Office of Business and Economic Development (GO-Biz) to her District is a top priority for Assembly Member Garcia. Coming from a family that were small business owners, she understands the stresses placed on businesses. Using her family history she is constantly asking herself "How is that small business going to deal with financial issues?" when she is making legislative decisions. She was pleased to announce that the Governor had signed legislation that will give small businesses another year to come into compliance with the Affordable Care Act.

Garcia shared that her priorities include investing in career training to make sure the working public has the basic skills needed to find employment. Through new grants for transfers from Community Colleges to Universities or resources

for technical schools training, it is important that our future workers have the skills necessary to enter into the workforce and make a decent living.

Beyond working toward a more educated workforce and small business assistance, Garcia has been working on building her relationships with other elected leaders and creating a stronger ethical culture in our state government. She is carrying a number of bills on ethics, which will cover anything from spending campaign funds to pay certain fines to providing whistleblower protection to legislative employees. Stating that "we are all human and sometimes we get it wrong," we still need to be accountable to our constituents.

Assembly Member Garcia was very open about her lack of experience in government and said that she "could do math all day long and be happy," but



Artesia Chamber President Parimal Shah and Norwalk Chamber President Toni Grijalva present State Assembly Member Cristina Garcia with a small "Thank You"



Pictured at the State of the State Luncheon are (left to right) Norwalk Chamber President Elect, Michael Batory of Walgreens, Cerritos College Trustee Bob Arthur, Norwalk Chamber President Toni Grijalva, Cerritos College, Miya Walker Cerritos College, Ali Taj, Artesia City Council Member.

that she believes in herself and asked the audience to invest in her. Attend events in the District, call her office to share problems and help create solutions were just a few suggestions Garcia made to help build a stronger District.

When questioned by the audience about funding for adult education or support

for the high speed rail project, Garcia answered with humor and honesty. The Norwalk Chamber of Commerce thanks Assembly Member Cristina Garcia for her participating in our "State of the State" Luncheon. We also thank her staff for their assistance in this event.

Thank you to the leaders

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



As Norwalk Chamber celebrates 91 years of serving the business community in the City of Norwalk, I want to assure you that Norwalk Chamber is dedicated to creating community partnerships with our public and private sectors in an effort to cooperatively identify and resolve local and regional issues. We are devoted to being the ultimate business resource for our members. Whether through networking, promotion or advocacy, we are committed to helping your business and communities thrive. I encourage you to become an active chamber member and take advantage of all that Norwalk Chamber has to offer.

We are happy to welcome a new Norwalk Chamber member: Dhaka Liquor, Rohit Bhattacharya.

On July 29th we held our Business Connections/Ambassador Meeting at Applebee's, Norwalk. These monthly events provide our chamber members with an excellent opportunity to network with other businesses while enjoying lunch at one of our local restaurants. Our next Business Connections/Ambassador Meeting will be on August 26 at Diana's Restaurant.

On July 3rd, we joined thousands of Norwalk residents and their families at the City of Norwalk Independence Day Celebration. On July 11, we partnered with Artesia Chamber of Commerce to host a State of the State Luncheon featuring Assemblymember Cristina Garcia. On July 16th we joined Cerritos College as they held their Ribbon Cutting/Dedication of their new Liberal Arts and Disabled Student Programs and Services Building. On July 17th we held our 3rd Annual 9-Hole Golf Tournament. Thank you to all of our event sponsors and all those who participated in these events. These events would not have been successful without your sponsorships and participation!

Coming up this month, our Women in Business Council will hold a workshop on Cyber Liability at the Norwalk Arts and Sports Complex in the Founders Room on August 13th. For more information about the Women in Business Council or to find out more about this and other upcoming Women in Business events, contact Christina Jones at Christina.Jones@hubinternational.com or at 714.739.3177, Ext. 204.

Please join us for an Evening Mixer at Golf n Stuff on August 14 from 5-7pm. On August 15, Congresswoman Linda Sanchez will hold her 12th Annual Senior Fair at Cerritos College. Admission is free and no RSVP is required. Our Annual State of the State Luncheon featuring Congresswoman Linda Sanchez is on August 21 at the Norwalk Arts and Sports Complex, Sproul Room from 11:30am-1pm, co-hosted with Artesia Chamber of Commerce. I hope you are able to participate in all or some of our chamber events this month. For more information or to register for these events, please go to our website at: www.NorwalkChamber.com or contact our chamber office at 562.864.7785.

I want to assure you that your Norwalk Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors, Ambassadors and Chamber Staff will continue to provide exemplary programs and services to help our local businesses succeed during these difficult economic times.

On behalf of my Norwalk Chamber Board of Directors and Ambassadors, and our Chamber Staff, I want to thank you for your chamber membership. We look forward to serving you, your business and our community in 2014-15!

Sincerely,

Toni Grijalva
2013-14 President
Norwalk Chamber of Commerce

Norwalk Chamber of Commerce
12040 Foster Road, Norwalk, CA 90650

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**Norwalk
Chamber of Commerce**

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**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
EDITOR, NCBC
VIVIAN HANSEN**
**STAFF WRITER
CAREN SPILSBURY**

**CALENDAR
OF EVENTS**

August 9

Norwalk Elks 13th Annual Car Show
13418 Clarkdale Avenue, Norwalk
12 noon to 4pm

August 13

**Women in Business Council
Luncheon Meeting**
Norwalk Arts & Sports Complex
13200 Clarkdale, Norwalk
Bring Your Own Lunch
NO FEE TO ATTEND
11:30am - 1pm

August 14

**After Hours Mixer
Golf n' Stuff**
10555 Firestone Blvd, Norwalk
NO FEE TO ATTEND
5:00pm - 7:00pm

August 19

**Norwalk Small Business Seminar
Strategies for Success in
Today's Economy**
Norwalk City Hall
City Council Chambers
8:30am to 2:30pm, Check in 8:00am
Register online at
www.boe.ca.gov/seminars

August 21

**"State of the Nation" with
Congresswoman Linda Sanchez**
Norwalk Arts & Sports Complex
13200 Clarkdale, Norwalk
11:30am to 1:00pm
\$25 members - \$30 non members

August 26

**"Business Connection Lunch"
Ambassador Meeting to follow**
Diana's Restaurant
11:45am

September 10

**Women in Business Council
"Meeting your Workforce Needs"**
11:30am to 1:00pm

NEW AND RENEWING MEMBERS

New Members

Dhaka Liquor and Retail
Rohit Bhattacharya
10944 Imperial Hwy
Norwalk CA 90650
562-465-0160
ghatta.ro@gmail.com

25 Years
TNT Fireworks
Rich LeGaspi
562-864-7464

4 Years
Starbucks
Amanda Correa
562-807-3715

18 Years
Sonoco
Leela Duggal
562-921-0881

3 Years
Keller Williams Realty
Adriana Apodaca

Renewing Members

The following companies and individuals renewed their membership with the Norwalk Chamber of Commerce and the services we provide are made possible by their support.

35 Years
Norwalk Auto Auction
Louis Rudich
562-864-7464

8 Years
State Farm Insurance - Beth Bettger
Beth Bettger
562-809-9500
www.bethbettger.com

7 Years
Norwalk Community Coordinating Council
Gordon Stefenhagen
www.ncccconline.us

**Please call Caren Spilsbury
for more information
on how to become a
Norwalk Chamber Member!
(562) 864-7785**

From the Membership Desk...

Why join your Chamber of Commerce? How is your business perceived by consumers when you are a member of the Chamber of Commerce? These questions and many like them can be answered by studies that have been done through the Shapiro Group. Research has shown the following:

- Most consumers (59%) think that being active in the local chamber of commerce is an effective business strategy overall. It is 29% more effective, however, for communicating to consumers that a company uses good business practices and 26% more effective for communicating that a business is reputable.

- If a company shows that it is highly involved in its local chamber (e.g., sits on the chamber board), consumers are 12% more likely to think that its products stack up better against its competition.

- When a consumer thinks that a company's products stack up better against the competition because the company is highly involved in its local chamber of commerce, it is because he or she infers that the company is trustworthy, involved in the community, and is an industry leader.

- When consumers know that a restaurant franchise is a member of the chamber of commerce, they are 40% more likely to eat at the franchise in the next few months.

- When consumers know that an insurance company is a member of the chamber of commerce, they are 43% more likely to consider buying insurance from it.

- When consumers know that a small business is a member of the chamber of commerce, they are 44% more likely to think favorably of it and 63% more likely to purchase goods or services from the company in the future.

Additionally joining the Norwalk Chamber of Commerce can help you CONNECT, GROW, SAVE AND LEARN. CONNECT to other business and community leaders through our monthly business connections luncheons, evening mixers and other events. GROW your business through the networking opportunities you have with the Chamber. SAVE with our Member to Member Discount program and LEARN by attending workshops and seminars

provided either free or low cost by the Norwalk Chamber of Commerce. For additional details about our upcoming events visit our Norwalk Chamber website at www.norwalkchamber.com or find us on Facebook!

We invite you to visit with other Chamber members at our next evening mixer on Thursday, August 14th. This event will be

a Golf n' Stuff located at 10555 Firestone Blvd, in Norwalk. From 5pm to 7pm come and meet other Chamber members and community leaders. Bring plenty of business cards and your desire to make business connections!

**MEMBERSHIP SERVICES DIRECTOR
CAREN SPILSBURY**

*The Norwalk Chamber of Commerce
Invites You to an AFTER HOURS MIXER*

Norwalk Chamber Mixers are a great way to reconnect and build new relationships.

Enjoy networking with other business owners and professionals!
THERE IS NO CHARGE TO ATTEND!



GOLF N' STUFF

10555 Firestone Blvd. Norwalk, 90650
Take advantage of this social opportunity to promote your business and learn about others!

BRING PLENTY OF BUSINESS CARDS

- Delicious Appetizers
- Prizes
- Soft Drinks
- No Host Bar

**Thursday August 14 - 2014
5:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.**

YES! I will attend the After Hours Mixer on August 14, 2014.

Name _____
Company _____
Address _____
Phone _____ Email _____

Please mail, fax, or email reservations to:
Norwalk Chamber of Commerce 12040 Foster Road | Norwalk, CA 90650
phone 562.864.7785 or fax 562.864.8539
email: info@norwalkchamber.com

AMBASSADORS CORNER

Our new Ambassador Chair for the Norwalk Chamber of Commerce is Karla Butler of Thompson Bookkeeping. Karla has been an active member of the Ambassador Corp since joining the Chamber. She is the owner of Thompson Bookkeeping here in Norwalk and also serves as a member of the Chamber Executive Committee serving as VP of Finance.

Norwalk Chamber Ambassadors have been hard at work this last month supporting Chamber events! At our Norwalk Chamber golf tournament, Ambassadors were selling opportunity tickets, greeting golfers and preparing a great dinner! Thank you to all of our Chamber Ambassadors who

attended and supported this great event: Lynda Fisher, Susan Arthur, Virginia Zuno, Teri Bazen, Richard Sneed, Rob Cazares, Joe Derthick, Gary Murphy, Julia Emerson and Karla Butler.

Interested in find out more about our Ambassadors? Attend our next monthly Business Connections Luncheon on Tuesday August 26th and stay for the Ambassador Meeting which will follow! Or contact the Norwalk Chamber directly and we can answer all of your questions about getting involved in the Ambassador Corp.



From L-R, At the State of the State Luncheon are Chamber Ambassadors Teri Bazen, Norwalk La Mirada Plumbing and Susan Arthur, Community Members; Newly appointed Ambassador Chair, Karla Butler of Thompson Bookkeeping.

Governor Signs Bill Easing Transition to Implementing Federal Health Care Law

Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr. has signed California Chamber of Commerce-supported legislation that will help small employers control their health care costs.

SB 1446 (DeSaulnier; D-Concord, Chapter 84) allows small employers that renewed their health coverage in 2013 to extend their pre-Affordable Care Act (ACA) health care policies through December 31, 2015.

In March 2014, President Barack Obama announced that, with state authorization, small businesses would be allowed to continue renewing pre-ACA health coverage through 2016, and for those plans to remain in force until fall 2017. The change to California law allows small employers in California to take advantage of the first year of the extension announced by the President.

The extended transitional period will give small employers more time to prepare to bear the costs associated with plans that fully comply with the ACA, minimizing the potentially negative impacts this new burden could have on the continuing economic recovery.

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Chamber of Commerce Committees

As a Norwalk Chamber member, you are invited to join any one of the committees you prefer. Committee involvement is a great networking opportunity and a wonderful way to give something back to your Chamber of Commerce. Be sure to call the Chamber to inquire about joining a committee. **Currently the active committees are:**

CHAMBER DEVELOPMENT

Chairperson: ROB CAZARES

The Chamber Development Committee is responsible for developing and supporting all of the Chamber business activities. These activities may include but are not limited to development of membership, business education, publication, technology and web support.

ADVOCACY/LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS

Chairperson: JULIA EMERSON

The Legislative Affairs Committee is responsible for overseeing the legislative committees of the Chamber and communicating and supporting legislative issues that represent the members pro business issues

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Chairperson: GORDON STEFENHAGEN

The Economic Development Committee is responsible for developing and supporting economic activities that positively affect the City of Norwalk, surrounding communities and the members of the Chamber, and to help create opportunities of economic dialogue and growth between the Chamber, the City and members

AMBASSADOR PROGRAM

Chairperson: KARLA BUTLER

Ambassador Committee members serve as official "hosts" at Chamber functions such as ribbon cutting events, grand openings, and breakfast and luncheon meetings. This committee is responsible for contacting new and existing members; inviting members to events, encouraging members to take advantage of Chamber benefits and gathering feedback from members on how the Chamber is doing. The Ambassadors also aim to support the Chamber's member retention.

SPECIAL PROJECTS & EVENTS COMMITTEE

Chairperson: SUSAN ARTHUR

This committee is responsible for planning and implementing member events such as breakfast and luncheon meetings; member recognition events; and annual special events including a Business Expo, Holiday Mixer, Golf Tournament and Installation. The main purpose of the Special Events committee is to support the Chamber's effort in providing opportunities for members to further develop business networks.

-Vivian Hansen

5 Strategic Time Management Tips for Entrepreneurs

Make better use of the time you spend on work-related activities.

BY MELINDA EMERSON, the Small Biz Lady

What small business owner wouldn't kill for an extra set of hands or more time? And yet for the 4 million small businesses that employ between one and four people, hiring help isn't always an option. Here are five strategic tips to help you get more out of your time, at least until human cloning is mainstream.

1. Find a Calendar System That Works for You

Some people swear by paper agenda books. Others thrive on an intricate system of Post-It notes stuck to their computers. Still others use digital calendars like Google Calendar.

The key here is: find what works for you. Don't try to force another system just because someone tells you it's better. You know what helps keep you organized (and if you don't, try some of the examples I just mentioned). Just have a system. Period. Otherwise you risk forgetting appointments and deadlines.

2. Make Your Email Work for You

We all get too many emails; there's no changing that. But we can change how we review and open our emails.

If you use Google Mail, you probably already know about the Primary, Social, and Promotions tabs. These are a lifesaver in that they keep those pesky sales promotions out of your Primary inbox and let you

focus on business. Then, when you're ready to take a look at Social or Promotions emails, just click over to another tab.

But you can go one step further in managing your email reading time. You can also set up Multiple Inboxes that sort through your mail based on keywords or who the email is from. So all your high-priority client emails might go into one Inbox, making it easy to see when there's something you need to respond to. Travel-related emails can go into another.

3. Find Software to Make Your Life Easier

I'm in favor of not reinventing the wheel. And with new software, apps, and tools coming onto the marketplace every day, there's no reason to. Here are just a few samples of the tools available that can save you massive amounts of time:

Google Drive: share documents with colleagues or clients for collaboration

SproutSocial: manage all your social media profiles from one place

LastPass: eliminate the time you spend trying to remember online passwords

4. Learn to Prioritize

The fact is, many of us aren't good at prioritizing our task list. As soon as something hits our inbox, we jump on it, when, in fact, we might need to be working on something more important. Each day, I try to do 5 things before 11am.

I end each workday by reviewing tomorrow's to-do list. Rank each item in order of priority. If, for example, you have a deadline to meet, that project should be at the top of the list. Once you get a sense of how long a given task will take you, it becomes easier to plan your workday. Anything I get done after 11am is a bonus. If you run your business off one of those never ending to-do lists, you will always feel like you never get anything done.

5. Schedule Blog Posts

If you're serious about using content marketing, blogging is a key part of the equation. But between managing client relationships, closing new sales, traveling to meetings and actually working, it's often a challenge to find time to write content. And so your business blog suffers.

Carve out a few hours a couple of times a month and write several posts at once. Then schedule them so they're published on a regular cadence, like every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. Having a regular schedule helps your readers know when to expect new content from you, and it means you won't be stressing to find time to write. While you can't magically give yourself more time or more arms, you can make better use of the time you do spend on work-related activities.

LABOR LAW CORNER

CalChamber Encouraging Outdoor Employers to Join Heat Illness Prevention Coalition

The California Chamber of Commerce is encouraging interested parties to join the Heat Illness Prevention Coalition as it prepares to voice concerns about draft revisions to California's unique heat illness prevention regulations. The coalition believes the proposal will hurt employers and won't create safer outdoor workplaces in California.

California adopted the first heat illness prevention regulation in the nation in 2005 and remains the only state to regulate the prevention of heat illness.

Draft Changes

The Division of Occupational Safety and Health (Cal/OSHA) submitted a draft version of proposed amendments to the heat illness prevention regulation to the Occupational Safety and Health Standards Board (Board) for rulemaking on May 28.

The draft proposal is online: <http://www.dir.ca.gov/dosh/doshreg/heatillprevent.html>

Public Comments

The coalition anticipates a public comment period

to open August 1 and the public hearing to occur in mid-September at the Cal/OSHA Standards Board. In the meantime, it is important that employers understand the potential impact of this proposal, and how it changes the current heat illness prevention regulation, Title 8, Section 3395.

The CalChamber is encouraging businesses to join the coalition to stay informed on action needed regarding the proposed changes.

In general, the coalition is concerned that the proposed changes are unnecessary, overly burdensome, and would be disruptive to employers already complying with the current requirements.

Coalition Concerns

Cal/OSHA has not shown the need for such far-reaching rules nor provided any evidence of necessity to justify the draft changes.

The proposal is unprecedented in its overly prescriptive approach rather than following Cal/OSHA's longstanding practice of

providing performance standards.

The coalition also questions whether the provisions are feasible, enforceable and clear enough for compliance.

Join Coalition

The coalition will continue to analyze the provisions of the proposal and draft public comments.

Readers who wish to join the coalition and support maintaining a reasonable approach to heat illness prevention in California can sign-up by emailing their contact information to heatillness@calchamber.com.

Associations and individual businesses of all sizes with outdoor employees are encouraged to join.

The Labor Law Helpline is a service to California Chamber of Commerce preferred and executive members. For expert explanations of labor laws and Cal/OSHA regulations, not legal counsel for specific situations, call (800) 348-2262 or submit your question at www.hrcalifornia.com.

NORWALK CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & THE CITY OF NORWALK

INVITE YOU TO ATTEND THE
**"STATE OF THE NATION"
 LUNCHEON ADDRESS**
 FEATURING...
**CONGRESSWOMAN
 LINDA SÁNCHEZ**

Date: Thursday, August 21, 2014 | Time: 11:30 am—1:00 pm



Norwalk Arts & Sports Complex—Sproul Room
 13200 Clarkdale, Norwalk 90650

Luncheon Per Person: \$25 Members/\$30 Non Members
 Table Sponsorships Available: Reserved Tables of (8) \$225.00

MAJOR SPONSOR
 Southern California Edison

**RESERVATION DEADLINE: Tuesday
 August 19th | No Tickets Sold At the Door**

For reservations:
Norwalk Chamber of Commerce
 12040 Foster Road | Norwalk, CA 90650
 phone 562.864.7785
 email: info@norwalkchamber.com

Or On-line at: norwalkchamberofcommerce.org

JEROME E. HORTON
 Chairman, California State Board of Equalization



In Collaboration with

LINDA SÁNCHEZ
 U.S. Congresswoman, 38th Congressional District

IAN C. CALDERON
 Assemblymember, 57th Assembly District

CITY OF NORWALK

NORWALK
 CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF BUSINESS
 AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (GO-Biz)

Invite you to attend a FREE

Norwalk Small Business Seminar

Strategies for Success in Today's Economy

Tuesday, August 19, 2014

8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. (check-in at 8:00 a.m.)

Norwalk City Hall
 City Council Chambers
 12700 Norwalk Boulevard
 Norwalk, CA 90650

FREE PARKING (With Validation)

Register online at www.boe.ca.gov/seminars
 or by calling 1-888-847-9652

This is a BOE-sponsored event.

Norwalk Chamber Annual Golf Tournament



1st Place Golf Team: Norwalk Realty, pictured left to right: Ernie Hernandez, Sal Ortiz, Dave Verhaaf, Margaret Verhaaf and Bill Kearns.



Putting Contest Winner, Jose Espinoza, Team Republic Services, with Norwalk Chamber President Toni Grijalva, Cerritos College.



2nd Place Golf Team: C R & R Inc, pictured left to right, Greg Jenkins, John Telesio, Dan Stepanian, Paul Hess and Norwalk Vice Mayor Leonard Shryock.



Winner of the "Most Athletic Award" Dr. Ruth Perez of Norwalk La Mirada USD, with Toni Grijalva, Norwalk Chamber President.



3rd Place Golf Team: Republic Services, pictured left to right: Carlos Espinoza, Jose Espinoza, Francella Aguilar, Gabby Munoz and Angel Sotelo.



Closest to the Pin winner, Ernie Hernandez, Team Norwalk Realty, pictured with Norwalk Chamber President Toni Grijalva, Cerritos College.

The Norwalk Chamber of Commerce hosted its 3rd Annual 9-Hole Golf Tournament on July 17th at the Norwalk Golf Center. This highly competitive tournament brought teams from all over the community together in an evening of fun and networking. The competition included top team awards, closest to the pin, a putting competition and the most athletic prize. This year's winners were:

Top Teams

**1st Place
Norwalk Realty**

**2nd Place
C R & R Inc.**

**3rd Place
Republic Services**

Closest to the Pin -- Ernie Hernandez, Team Norwalk Realty

Putting Contest -- Jose Espinoza, Team Republic Services

Most Athletic -- Dr. Ruth Perez, Team NLMUSD

We want to thank our Sponsors for this event. Without them it would not have been possible to hold such a great event.

Big Kahuna Sponsors:

Central Basin Water District – Bob Apodaca - Norwalk Realty – Gordon Stefenhagen

Fun in the Sun Sponsors:

Republic Services – Francella Aguilar – Outback Restaurant – Rob Cazares

King of the Grill Sponsor:

Walmart Norwalk – Lynda Fisher

Hang Ten Sponsor:

Thompson Bookkeeping – Karla Butler

Thank you also to the following t-sign displays: **C R & R Inc., All American Trophy** and **Walmart Norwalk**. Thank you Walmart for donating signage for the event. Thank you ServiceMASTER and Vickie Yahn for donating drinks. Thank you Norwalk La Mirada Plumbing, Teri Bazen for donating water. Special thanks to our Events Committee for making the golf tournament so successful - Michael Batory, Walgreen's, Susan Arthur, Lynda Fisher, Walmart, Toni Grijalva, Cerritos College, Teri Bazen, Norwalk La Mirada Plumbing and to all that sold opportunity tickets, Thank You!

How to Handle the Foreign Accent

by Nancy Friedman, the Telephone Doctor

It's more and more common to have a variety of customers whose native language isn't our own in our business world. These accents can be both international and domestic. How many times have you talked with someone simply from a different region of the United States and not been able to understand them?

Miscommunication is easy within any language and especially with those who have an accent where we have a bit of trouble understanding and they cannot understand us. Today, there's more business going global than ever before, so it's key to be ready to know how to deal with a foreign accent.

Oddly enough, sometimes it's us that have the foreign accent to others. To those from another country, we are the ones with the foreign accent. So these tips will go both ways and they're effective both on the phone and in person.

Here are the five key points to know to help you at your job (and your personal life as well) when working with someone who is difficult to understand – accent or not.

1. Don't Pretend to Understand. It is perfectly correct to gently explain you're having a little difficulty understanding them. Let's face it, if you have an accent, you know it. So it's not a surprise. One of the least effective things one could do when not understanding someone is to PRETEND to understand. Some folks nod or say, "OK" simply to move the conversation along. That's not doing anyone any good. It's perfectly OK to simply and gently say, "I apologize. I am having a little difficulty understanding you. If you could slow down just a little bit I'll be able to get it all correct for you."

That's the most important thing to the person with the accent; knowing you WANT to help and will get it right. They're aware you might be

having difficulty understanding. And nodding yes or pretending you understand won't help the situation at all.

Your tone of voice is international; universal. So keep it at a light and slower pace and yes, smiling is also universal. They'll hear your smile in any language.

The phrase mentioned above is most effective and a key phrase to learn. It's accepted warmly. I've had many a person from another country come up and thank me for sharing this technique with the audience. It apologizes, acknowledges, empathizes and creates credibility. It shows you want to help.

2. Don't RUSH. Rushing threatens customers. Often there's a tendency to want to really rush someone who speaks with an accent. Not a good idea at all. Rushing threatens the best of us, let alone someone who is not able to express themselves in our own style. Slow down. Take your time. Not to excess of course, but if you find yourself constantly saying "uh huh," over and over in rapid succession, you're probably rushing the person.

3. Don't Shout. Those with a foreign accent are NOT hard of hearing. Many a time we subconsciously speak louder or repeat the same word over and over, thinking that will help. It doesn't. People with accents normally hear very well. It's insulting to shout at them. Keep that smile on your face. It'll show you have the patience to help and keep trying to let them know 'you are there to help.' It

might take time, but it will help.

4. Don't Be Rude. No one really thinks they're rude. But if you've ever said to that person: "Hey, I can't understand you" or even a short, terse, "HUH?" you're considered rude. Again, go back to #1 and explain you're having a little difficulty understanding them. They'll often repeat it for you. If the situation is hopeless and you simply aren't getting anywhere, don't be embarrassed or afraid to call for help. Perhaps another person can better understand what the customer is saying. But remember, being shuffled from one person to another is frustrating to anyone – accent or not. It's as frustrating to them not being understood as it is to you.

5. Consider a Job Aid at Your Desk. If your job has you working with a large percentage of one accent, keep a few simple phrases in that language near you. Short phrases that would let the customer know you're trying. If you're in a Hispanic environment, phrases like, "Un momento por favor" (one moment please) will help. Even if we mispronounce it, they'll understand. Hopefully, there is someone in your area that is either fluent or well spoken in one particular language that can help you formulate an effective job aid.

And remember what we said earlier, our smiles are universal. Use it early and often, no matter who you're talking to!

Nancy Friedman, president of Telephone Doctor Customer Service Training,

Start Making Videos for Your Business Today

Have you noticed that some of the top posts served in search include videos?

Videos help you increase your searchrank up to 50X.

Have you ever noticed you spend more time on a website when there's a video to click? In that amount of time, your customers are getting to know you better, which improves your credibility, trust, and familiarity. Video helps increase engagement on your website by 5X. So how can you make a plan to help you start creating your own videos for your business? This simple business video production plan can help grow your business with a low cost marketing strategy that yields a high and measurable return.

1. Decide if you are comfortable making your own videos or if you prefer to hire help. The benefit of making your own business videos is that you will control the creative, branding, look, feel, and overall direction of the video content with an affordable budget and consistent schedule. The risk of making your own business videos is that you will probably need to invest a small amount of time and money in training yourself how to do it or take the time to train someone on your team, along with getting some basic equipment. If you're not sure how you feel about being on camera try Vsnap to record video and send it to yourself for free. (Recommended time: 5 minutes)

2. Set goals for your videos. The fancy term for this step is creating a video content strategy. Do you want your business videos to build brand exposure, educate your customers, recruit employees, or drive sales? All of these goals would lead you to create a very specific kind of video content strategy. To start out, create videos that provide an added layer of value for your potential customers so that they get to know, like, and trust you. Treat videos as an opportunity to win over the hearts of your customers. (5 minutes)

3. Research your competition. Do you know what kinds of business videos are already out there in your industry? Which ones are

working and why? Take the time to research your competitors' videos and choose the elements that you like or don't like. What qualities will you choose to emulate, and which qualities will you aim to avoid? List those elements out and use them as your guideline. (5 minutes)

4. Identify the kind of videos you will be making. Since you've already chosen the goals for these videos, you have a good idea of the kind of video you want to make. In general, a business video that is educational or provides thought leadership will do a great job of building up your brand and adding value, whereas if you're looking to promote an event or drive sales, you'll want to create a video that has a more specific structure and call to action. (5 minutes)

5. Create a schedule to make and release your videos. It is advisable to create a video release schedule and set aside a few hours to shoot multiple short videos on a single day. That way, you don't have to shoot all the time, and you can save up your videos to share with the world on an ongoing basis. (5 minutes)

6. Get the right equipment. You'll need a basic DSLR camera to obtain high image quality, and a lavaliere microphone or external microphone to either plug directly into the camera or into an external recording device. You can also use a webcam or cell phone, however with a higher end camera you will be investing in a higher production quality video that will lend you and your business valuable credibility. For lighting, find a great window or purchase a small light kit. Grab a tripod, and make sure you have batteries and SD cards to hold your footage. Finally, store your final footage on an external drive and edit on editing software. General price breakdowns for equipment:

- DSLR Camera (\$350 - \$750)
- External Drive (\$100)
- Lavaliere Microphone (\$25 - \$150)
- Computer for Editing (\$500-\$1,000)
- External Microphone (\$50 - \$100)
- Editing Software (to \$25/m try: WeVideo,

- Adobe Premiere Elements, iMovie
- Lights (\$150 - \$300)
- Tripod (\$50 - \$100)
- External Recording Device (\$230) - Optional

7. Setup a shoot day. Pick the day you're going to shoot your video. That will create a deadline to assure you write material so you stick to your plan and finish the videos. (5 minutes)

8. Write the scripts. You are the authority on your business; you already know what to say! Start small and simple. Bullet the points you want to make assure you cover to keep yourself on track. (60 minutes)

9. Shoot your videos. Since you picked the day to shoot, setup your lights, setup your sound, and wear clothing you are comfortable in — assure it fits your business. Have a friend or colleague help you focus and hit record. (60 minutes)

10. Edit and post your videos. Once you are happy with the take or takes that you shot, connect the parts you liked, pick music if desired, and add in a branded logo or animation sequence that you can import or have simply designed for you. After editing, you'll upload the video to your preferred video hosting service, and post it on your site by copying and pasting the embed code and voilà! You've just completed your first business video! (15 minutes)

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