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...from the editor

Keeping the Commitment



Photo by Elizabeth Gingerich

Promises, guarantees, assurances ... are these statements genuine indicators of performance or merely ploys to arrest the intelligence of a person long enough to conclude the sale? Certainly, if a business is to market successfully, favorable word of mouth is critical. One negative experience will not only lead to poor inter-consumer communications, but ostensibly generate unwelcome — and sometimes devastating — chatter on the Internet.

Hopefully, the business owner or marketer will refrain from misrepresentations, not just to ward off potential negative repercussions and possible litigation, but to truly take pride in the service rendered or the product produced. The threat of an agency fine from the FCC or a warning from the FDA for rule noncompliance and potential individual or class action litigation would certainly create incentives to refrain from misleading the public. This is the behavior that has been mandated by law.



But as everyone knows, what is legal is not always what is ethical.

The former accounting firm of Arthur Anderson was ultimately acquitted of felony charges of fraud when it created numerous subsidiaries and partnerships into which Enron debt was funneled. Regardless of the legality of these actions, thousands of Enron pensioners and other stockholders lost their savings to pander to the unbridled greed of the few.

It is the business owner or service provider who combines legal compliance with customer commitment, product integrity, and sound internal, supply, and distribution chain relationships who can ultimately be referred to as an ethical business leader. Serve the customers with full disclosure. Put their needs first. Create a necessary and sustainable product or service.

While there is no guarantee that profits will result from the implementation of these objectives, dignity is preserved and oftentimes welcome surprises ensue.

— Elizabeth F. R. Gingerich, Ed.