



# MAIN STREET

## MARKETING NEWS

Q2 2020

WHERE SMALL MARKETING IDEAS CAN ADD BIG  
DOLLARS TO THE BOTTOM LINE

**T**hank you for all of you who have reached out to me telling me how much you've liked my newsletter. Normally I write 8 pages, but this issue is going to be expanded to 12 pages. The reasons is that we have been interviewing businesses all over the country who are doing well right now during COVID-19.

They are Main Street businesses like: auto repair, photography, pest control, dentists, boutiques, carpet cleaners and more. The biggest lesson we learned from these entrepreneurs was:

1. They had a list of their customer and prospects
2. They are communicating frequently with that list
3. Many are making phone calls

4. They quickly pivoted to delivering services online (there's a dentist who is now booking for Invisalign by looking at teeth online)
5. They're working on a new stream of income – think of boutiques who are now selling through Facebook Live like QVC.
6. They've all claimed their "Google my Business"
7. And they are relentless in asking for – and getting – 5 star reviews
8. They are part of a success-minded mastermind of do'ers – not doom'ers.
9. They don't just use one way to get a client – they use multiple ways – and do it relentlessly

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## Moms Bark the Darnedest Things

**H**uman mothers and canine mothers have a lot of shared frustrations and aspirations. They are also legendary for speaking in clichés.

But the timeless phrases that dogs use exhibit subtle differences. I've asked my friends to supply a few of their favorite mom sayings:

1. What do you mean you don't like it? How do you know you don't like it until you've rolled in it?



**MAC'S BLOG**

2. Were you raised in a barn? No, wait – that's just the new scented candle the humans dragged in from the mall. \*Sigh\* Never mind.
3. Someday when you live under your own master's roof, you can live by your own master's own rules. Huh. That sounded a lot more inspirational when it was still in my head.

>> turn to page 2

A little about MAC: Mac is Jason's 5-year old active Sheltie who loves veggies - green beans to be exact, but he eats all kinds of other vegetables too. He hangs out with Jason when he's working at Grandma Jackie's house with his other pal Zoe, who is a 76lb German shepherd. Mac thinks that he is just as big as Zoe, but he's actually a little dog with a lot of confidence. He loves to play soccer and run outside, especially if he can corral other dogs in the neighborhood. He also enjoys stealing and hiding socks. Mac wanted to write a blog post, and we didn't have the heart to say no. We take no responsibility for the goofy things he comes up with. He does love to receive letters, though.

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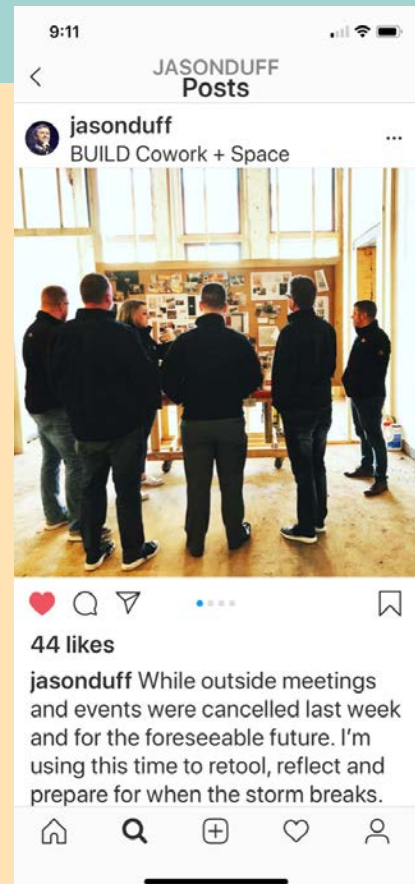
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## Mac's Blog .....from Page 1

4. Don't cry over spilled milk. We have the neighbor cat on **retainer**.
5. If all your **friends** were jumping off the sofa, does that mean you would have to jump off the sofa, too? Wait – I just checked the actuarial charts, and fatalities are surprisingly small. Carry on.
6. Don't make me turn this car around. The guy driving it will probably be ready to jump out and give someone a thrashing.
7. Be sure to pull clean underwear off the clothesline in case you're ever in an accident.
8. Shut the doggie door! Do you want to air condition the **whole neighborhood**? On second thought, if I could scare the mailman out of delivering the electric bill...
9. How do I know you did it? Let's say a little "birdy" told me. And don't get Johnny to use his B-B rifle on Mr. Robin!
10. You can't find it? Well, if you'd bury things where they **belong**, we wouldn't be having this conversation.

Happy Mother's Day to all my fans.



*Macgreggor is still on patrol on the Florida coast. Missing our dog but he's getting great care from his grandparents in Florida. Hoping he can return home soon.*

.....from Page 1

10. They're ramping up their marketing – not shutting it down
11. They don't work "in" their business. They work "on" it.
12. They've "systematized" everything
13. They know it's all about "the experience".
14. Make doing business with you easier and more convenient than ever before
15. They're using personality and humor in their promotions; people are craving both of these more than ever during a crisis

I'm going to introduce you to a few of these smart business owners with the hope that you'll be able to learn some things from them and to get ready for when we open back up.

In the meantime, stay safe,

*Jason Duff*



Jason Duff

April 18 at 10:00 AM · 🌐

"Arm people with intelligent, well-thought out data and information and let individuals make educated and smart decisions." We all can be apart of the solution in being smart and getting through this. - Jason Duff"



Small Nation

April 17 at 11:33 PM · 🌐

"When we're armed with intelligent, well-thought out data and information, we can make educated and smart decisions," Duff said, offering a proposed reopening d... See More



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**Lawmakers fear some Ohioans don't want to work**

In some cases, benefits should be denied, they say



# A few weeks ago I was part of an Ohio committee on Economics. Here's what I told that committee.

Thank you Chair, Vice Chair and members of Committee.

My name is Jason Duff and I am the Founder and CEO of Small Nation. Small Nation invests in places, spaces and dreams for small towns and entrepreneurs.

14 years ago, I started my business during the 2008 economic crisis in Bellefontaine, Ohio.

Bellefontaine is a town of 13,000 people in Logan County which is 60 miles northwest of Columbus. It is like many other important and valuable courthouse communities across Ohio. Twenty five miles from the nearest major interstate, and an hour from the closest metropolitan area. We have a strong reliance on agriculture, manufacturing and tourism. We are rural and depend on the vibrancy of our local economy and jobs to generate taxes which support local government, schools, and our community's health and social safety nets.

When I started, more than 80% of the downtown's storefronts were vacant. Blight, crime, arson and opioid abuse plagued our town. Working with our City, County and other local leaders, my team and I developed a vision and plan to restart the local economy and that began with finding unique ways to reduce unemployment by investing in people as well as places.

We started buying historic buildings, providing loans to entrepreneur's good ideas and arming these new businesses with ongoing coaching, mentorship and support.

In 7 years, my team and I have renovated more than 30 historic buildings, we have started and operate 4 downtown dine-in restaurants, two event centers and have welcomed more than 17 new specialty retail stores that include coffee shops, antique malls, photography studies and boutiques. 70% of the new businesses in Downtown Bellefontaine have been founded by people under the age of 40 and 80% of them are women.

With 17 million dollars in new private investment, 121 new downtown jobs, 5 weeks ago our town was touted as a model to others. We were Strong.

Today is very different. 80% of our small businesses have been mandated closed, many downtown businesses are on life support economically and unsure when and if they will be able to reopen.

After surveying more than 200 area small Ohio businesses, here's what we've found.

When asked:

How many businesses were required to lay-off employees? 60% respondents said yes.

When the questions was asked, do you feel if your business will recover in the next year? 57% said no.

What do you think of the probability that your business will fire bankruptcy in the next 6 months, 30% said yes.

The last few weeks have been some of the most emotionally, physically and mentally difficult days of my entire life. Most businesses owners I know will echo this. It has been crisis after crisis coming in waves and while the virus remains a threat to public health, the economic crisis to public health wave is still yet to come.

I have had lay off and furlough more than two thirds of our 67 restaurants employees, many whom are like family. I have not been able to pay my bills to area vendors who depend of me



paying them. I have worked with my bank to defer existing loans and apply for new loans to sustain my businesses and I have applied for the federal relief PPP and EIDL loans from the SBA for my businesses while helping as many other businesses be able to navigate a frustrating and confusing process. The only explanation of what it's been like - is war.

While the current economic crisis is real and impacts our community's health and safety, we remain **STRONG, RESILIENT, and READY** combat the spread of the virus.

In 2007, to re-start and build our local economy. It all began with restaurants.

By working with our local farmers markets, identifying and creating unique menus and experiences, Bellefontaine was put on the map as a destination for dining and it still will be when we return.

Restaurants are essential to our towns and communities and they need as much support and assistance to survive.

Even during this crisis, our local restaurants have persevered to provide much needed and important service to our community, donating meals to area hospitals and delivering to elderly at home. They are innovating fast to keep their employees and customers safe by providing to-go options, delivery and new online ordering capabilities.

We are preparing now for how to safely re-open by updating the layouts of our dining rooms and working with the State and local health departments to utilize best practices for sanitizing, air scrubbing and by wearing masks.

Restaurants also play a much larger role in the retail ecosystem by establishing the importance of place, generating walking traffic, promoting regional employment, and supporting new and desired housing opportunities, especially loft apartments and upper floor main street development.

### **Let's talk about Small & Independent Retailers.**

I refuse to call them, "Non-essential Businesses". It's not only wrong, it's offensive. Flower shops, boutiques, jewelry stores and fitness and wellness studios are **ESSENTIAL** businesses to our local towns and communities, especially right now. They are prepared to re-open safely. Many of them depend on transactions, even if it's just a few daily. I believe that our town's stores are far better prepared to manage safe social distancing practices and have a true vested interest in keeping their friends, families and communities safe, especially compared to their big box counterparts, which for many have been permitted to remain open.

### **Recommendations to the Committee:**

1. Develop a plan to educate local businesses and empower them with resources to safely reopen

Small and local business owners also understand risks. Many of them started their businesses knowing, calculating and solving problems around risks. Risks of the unknown, financial uncertainty and against the odds that 90% of small businesses don't survive the first five years. We need to give them a chance to join this fight in innovating, pivoting and helping their communities when they need it the most.

2. True up inequalities that favor large corporations over local community counterparts.

- a. The local shop that sells kids books, toys and puzzles should have the same opportunity to be open as Wal-Mart.

3. Start and re-open the communities who have done the best job – first.

I believe that a plan to re-open can be started and tested in Ohio's rural counties. By nature, our rural counties are designed and laid out for practicing social distancing. Why not start with the communities that have proven they listen, do their homework and have had low case counts. Let leaders and business owners work with their local health departments but creating a plan, policy and protocol for reopening.

Can you please allow the local health departments and business community to produce a plan. We trust you, we will work with you.

If you want proof of concept, let us prove it.

What works in Columbus is very different from Mercer, Auglaize and Logan County.

Can we look at this from a spatial standpoint. Not picking winners and losers but why we can open certain businesses from spatial and less population density and cases by community.

4. Provide additional relief to businesses and industries who need it the most.

- a. Defer liquor license payments
- b. Allow businesses to claim damages from their business interruption policies and lobby for a Federal backstop.
- c. Find ways to financially support the smallest of businesses and 1099 contractors who lack large employee head-counts.

We talk about our states being "laboratories of democracy" in our system of federalism – let the counties and regions be those laboratories now and have local control and planning for how to come out of this.

Let's continue to work together to get Ohio back open safely.



# What's Working right now in Business

At the time many businesses were required by law to be closed, or else had to drastically change their operations while the nation hunkered down in quarantine, we reached out to some business owners in all parts of the country to see what they're doing right now to keep their business going. These marketing heroes offered us the chance to learn from their ideas in order to help more businesses pivot and find a new way to stay alive in these stressful times.

## Here are some of their insights:

### Kevin Donlin – Top Marketing Advisor – Tips for Small Businesses to Recover Fast During and After Crisis

Kevin Donlin, a business owner from Minneapolis, has a lot of ideas for small business owners hurting during COVID-19. An ideas man, Kevin specializes in marketing and copyrighting strategies for small business. Kevin is the author and co-author of 5 books, including his latest, "Marketing Multipliers."



1. Over communicate with a relevant message to your prospects or clients and the world right now. Double check your ads, your offer, your message. So many offers - whether it's LinkedIn, Facebook, or my email inbox - could have been written 6 months ago (and probably were) They're just continuing to run the same old ads so you look tone deaf when you do this. And utterly incompetent. I can't trust you now when things are awful. Why would I give you my money later when things get better? So just be relevant with your message.
2. Send messages of encouragement and reassurance. People are scared. They need a strong leader. Become even more engaged on Social Media. DO NOT post anything negative or controversial.
3. Notice which messages are getting the most likes and comments in your social media. Make those an article in your printed newsletter to you customers, prospects, and referral sources. Also turn it into an online blog post, LinkedIn Post, and email.
4. I'm also not asking for money right now. I'm focused on giving. I turned that article, though, into a Facebook ad which added more people to my email list that I can sell to in the future. Now is the time to continue building your email (and physical) list.
5. Know which social media is where your ideal client spends the most time. In my case I sell to business owners. They spend more time on LinkedIn so most of my communication is there. Always being sure to be relevant.
6. Don't go "missing-in-action". Now more than any other time is the time to communicate MORE - not less. I've seen some business owners crawl into a hole and not communicate at all.
7. Retention is the new acquisition. Do whatever you can to retain the clients or customers you have now. There's a great book by Brian Kurtz called *Over Deliver*. I highly recommend this book. If I'm sitting eating a sandwich or walking my dog, I'm just thinking: *how can I over deliver to my current clients and the prospects who may one day become clients?*
8. Now is the time to ask your clients, customers or patients how you might be able to help them.
9. It's no longer a "build it and they will come". Now more than ever you have to sharpen your marketing skills.
10. Figure out ways to add additional services and products. Fine tune your upsell, downsells and



cross sells.

11. Identify your top 10 clients, customers or patients and send – in the mail – some personal gifts to let them know you're thinking of them.
12. Now is a good time to give something away for free – with NO strings attached.
13. If you're a business where your clients or patients would need emergency services (like a dentist) be sure to change your voice mail message to say you ARE open for emergencies.
14. Adapt. And this is a golden opportunity for all of us. Who are your clients? What are you selling? Where are you selling? Review everything but in this narrow sense, adapt means simply change your promotions, change your service offerings to work in today's environment.
15. Sell gift certificates NOW.

**"WE NEED CASH, AND WE  
NEED CASH QUICK. I DON'T WANT  
TO THROW IN THE TOWEL. I WANT  
TO STAY OPEN AS LONG AS WE CAN."**

**-ADAM RAMMEL, CO-OWNER OF BREWFONTAINE**

**THE  
WALL STREET  
JOURNAL.**

to create a movie. Every aspect of their business is systematized.

2. Disney is all about their mission to being the happiest place on earth to teaching their "traditions". In fact that's the first thing a new employee (called a cast member) has to learn about. It's their culture. What they do, how they do it, what they say. Local businesses also need to have their simple mission statement, code of ethics, what they stand for – their traditions. If they have some down time, now is the time to write these things out.
3. All of my marketing in my carpet cleaning business is on autopilot with the exception of things that I do that are current events, like this Corona virus. My cleaning reminder sequence is on autopilot. My new client follow-up is on autopilot – whether they come in from Google AdWords, direct mail I've sent out, print advertising I'm running, or any other lead generation source. I've systematized it all.
4. In my business I'm not pushing carpet cleaning right now. But I want to stay top of mind with my customers so I'm sending them emails every day with just fun things. Chances are they may be stuck in the house. They've got to be getting bored. So I've come up with three or four contests that we're doing right now to get them engaged and having fun:
  - a. I'm running a MTV Video Contest, where they can win free "whole house carpet cleaning". Clients or prospects can submit their own original music video with their kids or the grandkids or just themselves. We post that to my website and then the winner is going to be chosen by my kids.
  - b. The next contest that I'm going to do is a drawing contest with the same prize.
5. I've created a resource page on my website for educational and entertaining stuff to do with your family. It could be different websites where the families can go and do things together. I'm

## **Vance Morris – Disney Experience Coach – How to Create a Disney-Like Experience in Your Business**

Vance Morris spent 10 years as a director at Disney World where he learned the behind the scenes secret to the magic of Disney. He now teaches business owners to create a Disney-like experience in their business. Morris is author of the book "Systematic Magic, 7 Magic Keys to Disney Any Business." He runs the only Disney Service & Direct Response Marketing business on the planet. Morris also owns a carpet cleaning business in Florida and uses the Disney principles in his own business.

1. One of the biggest things I learned from Disney is that it's 100% run on systems. You can't have 85,000 employees, which is the number of employees they have just at the Orlando property, without having a system in place. And Disney has a system for everything. I mean, how to serve ice tea, how to change a bus tire, how

watching what Disney is doing and modeling after them.

6. I have created a "Referral Rolodex" of vendors/providers who I've personally vetted and used myself. I don't get any referral fee for these recommendations. It includes businesses like plumbers, roofers, dentists, gardeners, etc. I put this rolodex online and am always updating it. (my note: why not joint venture with a printing company you use and have printed copies of this "directory" and have each of these providers hand them out when they do work for someone)
7. Almost every business is a commodity these days. To stand out you need to create a **Disney-like experience**. In my carpet cleaning business I took a lot of time thinking and scripting an "experience" unlike any of my competitors. When my technician gets to a client's house, my guys will park the van in the street – not the driveway – just in case there was an oil leak. They're in a crisp, clean uniform because they carry an extra uniform with them in case they get dirty on the job beforehand. When they approach the door, they've got their magic rug under their one arm and they've got a gift and another arm. When they get up to the front porch. They lay down the rug, they stand on it, they knock on the door because friends knock salespeople ring the bell, and they take a couple of steps back to give that personal space and they wait for the client to answer the door. When Mrs. McGillicuddy answers the door, he introduces himself. I've even scripted the greeting: "Hi, my name is Steven with Chem Dry. I'm here to take care of your carpets. May I come in?" Before going into the home, he does an exaggerated wiping of his feet on the rug. He's putting on a "show". But that's not all. He has a little gift for the client. Now, when was the last time you had a home service provider, air conditioning guy, pest management, carpet cleaner, bring you a gift and give it to you before they do any service. I'm thinking probably not too many. So, and this gift is nothing huge. All it is, is a custom box I've created with a bag of cookies, a little bottle of carpet spot remover, and a note for me saying thank you very much for letting us into your home. The gift only cost me \$4.50. but it pays huge benefits. It starts a process called reciprocity. And the client starts to feel like well, he gave me something now I need to give something back. That's why we get so many referrals.
8. Every business should have multiple levels of services and packages. In my carpet business I have three levels. I've even named those levels. When I began giving the gift away, we saw more clients choosing our higher packages.

# Office Notes

## MAIN STREET MARKETING NEWS

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# Innovative IDEAS

Here's some creative ideas coming out of our conversations with business owners all over the country

Sam Morris is a carpet cleaner. He sent out an email in March with the subject line: **free toilet paper**. And that was very relevant when the first wave of panic buying toilet paper was going on and he made his brilliant offer. He said *Free roll of toilet paper with your next carpet cleaning job and we'll do a 19% discount in honor of COVID-19*. He got three jobs the next day and more coming in several days later. He adapted. He'd never done a free toilet paper offer before, but he adapted.

these days his business has exploded and he is having to hire tutors to keep up with the demand since he's transitioned to tutoring them online through a service like Zoom. He's even sending out postcards to wealthy communities with the headline: *How to Educate Your Children at Home Without Losing Your Sanity*. And his market has now expanded from where he can drive to the entire world.

A photographer came up with an idea to do "porch portraits." She would come to their house, stay at least 6 feet away while the family gathered on their porch and take their family photo. Those photos were being passed all around Facebook and she got a lot of business by adapting to our new lockdown reality.

"Let's talk about **SMALL & INDEPENDENT RETAILERS**. I refuse to call them 'non-essential businesses.' It's not only wrong, it's **OFFENSIVE.**"

JASON DUFF, FOUNDER & CEO, SMALL NATION

**SMALL  
NATION**

One mom who had home schooled her kids saw an immediate need for other parents to learn how to home school so she quickly put together an online course and is now selling her "how to homeschool" to parents all over the world.

A personal trainer out of Texas has always wanted to do more online stuff, because when he's coaching people one on one, he's trading time for money. He adapted by starting to provide zoom video workouts to his customers and he's even letting them share them right now. Another trainer went even a step farther and loaned all his gym equipment out to his students to take home so they had the equipment to use for their workout videos.

One insurance agent is a rock and roll fanatic. He has pictures of Jimmy Hendrix and the WHO all in his office. One of the mundane things that you have to do in order to be

in the insurance business is you have to answer the phone. And most people answer the phone "thank you for calling Dave's Allstate. How can I help you?" Very boring, very mundane. He had his employees answering the phone: "Thank you for calling Dave's Allstate the agency that loves rock and roll." Your prospects know you're dealing with somebody different and you've now separated yourself from all the other insurance agents in your town.

A former teacher – turned tutor to high net worth parents before COVID-19 - used to go to homes to tutor in person. With all the kids home

Most dental offices are closed except for emergencies. One dentist decided to go back through her records to see who she had done



*Your local restaurants need your support right now. They are innovating and doing everything to be smart and safe too.*



*Sophisticated, expansive, nostalgic and a place you will feel welcome and safe. We're working hard to put the finishing touches on this in the next few weeks and months.*



an Invisalign evaluation but had not gone ahead with getting them. She began calling these prospects offering them a significant discount if they would pay now and she would book them for July – August to get started. It gave her immediate cash flow and got her calendar booked up for when she could open again. She is now doing Invisalign zoom calls with great success.

Podcasting has now become the new “blogging”. It is much easier for some people to talk content than it is to write it. More now than ever local businesses have started their own podcast. With services like Repurpose.io and Auphonic.com creating and producing podcasts has never been easier. Getting the content transcribed using a free service like Otter.io makes it also easy to upload the content as a blog on local websites.

Several years ago QR codes were all the rage. The problem was people had to know they had to have special scanning software on their phone to make them work. Now smart phones’ cameras are designed to automatically read the QR codes. Local businesses are now beginning to use them again in their marketing. (note: check out all the QR codes throughout this newsletter)

Photographers usually shoot photos in their studio or on location. Not being an essential business, a photographer in the Seattle, WA area had to come up with a new way to stay busy during this time. He had already several years ago decided to create a 4 hour photography class that 4,000 people had taken – in his studio. It didn’t take much for him to pivot and make that class an online class. As a side note – even though he taught those 4,000 people how to take great pictures, half of them booked portrait setting with him as well. He got paid to sell to his prospects. So smart.

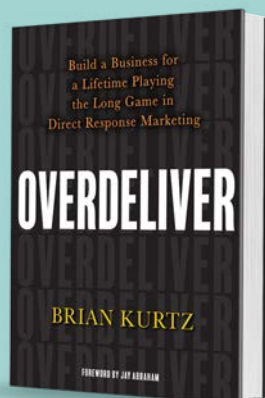
Think about all the other ways you can “get paid” other than in money.

- Can you get a flood of referrals? Testimonials? Online reviews?
- What about sending out press releases and get stories about what you’re doing right now in your business?
- Can you trade or barter your products or services for other products or services that you need?
- And most valuable of all during this time, can you build goodwill for yourself and your business, so that when the economy opens up again, people will go out of their way to do business with you instead of any of your competitors who gave in to fear and confusion and waiting and hoping for government relief instead of working hard and working smart, and being helpful, like you?



“Marketing isn’t everything... it’s the only thing. That might sound like I only care about selling and making money, but it’s just the opposite. When marketers understand what they’re doing at the deepest level and act with integrity and purpose, their work becomes a vehicle for bringing positive change into the lives of the people they serve.”

Brian Kurtz in his book *Over Deliver*



“Worry is the most popular form of suicide. Worry impairs appetite, disturbs sleep, spoils digestion, irritates disposition, warps character, weakens mind, stimulates disease and saps bodily health. It is the real cause of death in thousands of instances where some other disease is named in the death certificate. Worry is mental poison.”

William George Jordan

## Be Well: Tips and Tools to Calm the Chaos

Uncertain times. Unimaginable change. Upended routines. While these may be defining our lives right now ... there are tips and tools to help you find balance.

### **Just Breathe.**

One of the best ways to battle anxiety and stress is simple – just breathe. Like other relaxation techniques, slow, deep breathing gives you an anchor – your breath – to stay present in the moment. It can also help slow your heart rate and decrease blood pressure.

Experts suggest inhaling slowly through your nose to a count of three. Gently pause. Then slowly let your breath out to a count of five or six. Repeat a few times. To help, here’s a “breathe bubble” from the online resource Calm, provided from The Ohio State University’s Health Plan.

### **Find what works ... for you**

“Everyone responds to stress differently. One person might jump into action, while another turns to snacking or exercise,” says Stefanie Morrow, RN, director of wellness and health coaching at Ohio State’s Health Plan. So, relaxation

tips might help some, while others might embrace a new fitness plan to balance out their new normal routine. “Find what works best for you to stay healthy, hopeful and able to manage your response to the unknown.”

### **Hello sunshine!**

Head to the great outdoors to improve your mood and well-being. Getting some fresh air and sunshine can boost your energy and your spirits, even while you keep your distance from others. So go for a brisk walk or enjoy some fun with the kids in the backyard.

### **C’mon, get happy!**

Experts say our happiness can be influenced by our intentions. Getting in a positive frame of mind can become a habit, even in trying times. Ohio State’s Health Plan folks offer this link to [Project Happiness](#), where you can even sign up for a free “daily happiness vitamin.”

### **Get cookin’ ... with your kids**

Enlist your children’s help in the kitchen and have a little nutritious fun. Some simple ideas: make kabobs with squares of cheese, grapes and berries. Whip up a healthy smoothie. Or cut PB&J sandwiches into fun shapes with cookie cutters.





Insurance agent Gary Kinsey is known for “purple” but many don’t know the story behind the color. We caught up with Gary and asked him to share. Here’s what he told us:



**W**hen I purchased an independent insurance agency at Indian Lake, I quickly recognized that an insurance agency was a “customer-driven” business ..., not “product-driven”. Actually, it was God who explained this to me early-on when I was enjoying lunch in my car while overlooking the sights of Indian Lake. He told me, “You need to meet people here at Indian Lake - period. You’re in a “customer-driven” business. Potential customers need to know you! Get it???”. It must have sunk in because that was the last time I ever ate alone in the privacy of my car! You see, I had just been educated by a great teacher that people buy Big Mac hamburgers from McDonald’s Restaurants without caring who fries the burgers, or without giving a thought as to who owns the restaurant. It is the strictly the McDonald’s product they want, regardless of the store owners or employees. This is not the case in a “customer-driven” small business, an insurance agency, and in a smaller community. The customer frequently wants us, the owner

and the employees, as much as they want our product, sometimes even more so. As difficult as it was for me to meet people, I set out to do so. My background had been on the technical, corporate side of the business, and meeting people did not come easily ..., but it slowly started to happen. The only opening line I was comfortable using to meet people was simply this, “Are you from here?”. And from there, conversations developed.

Then came the next unexpected hurdle - a forgettable face!

I didn’t like hearing the reaction of someone I had previously met saying, “Have I met you before? A possible answer to being “forgettable” occurred to me while in a clothing store in Bellefontaine. I was wearing a purplish shirt and a young woman came up and said, “I really like the color of your shirt ... that’s your color!”. That single comment gave me a strategic “identity” idea, and it was the basis for choosing purple - after all, it “was my color!”. If people couldn’t remember my face, then might they remember the color of purple?

*As time went by, and I stuck with my purple clothing “identity strategy”, it began to take hold.*

*More and more people would remember me because of the purple color of my matching clothes. It even reached the point where men would ask me where I purchased my clothes. Many would express disappointment when I would occasionally wear a different color - it just wasn’t me.*

*Ok, but why a purple lawnmower? The motivation to paint my mower purple was the result of two (2) prior mower thefts from my office building in less than a year. The question: What can I possibly do to discourage the theft of my mowers?*

*The principle that crossed my mind was that if people could relate the purple color of my clothing to me, could a purple lawnmower also be “matched” to me?*

*Would everyone know the “purple” lawnmower was Gary’s and it wouldn’t get stolen?*

*The jury is still out on this strategy, but it’s now been over two years and nobody has yet laid a finger on my purple mower. And ..., I have more people asking when that mower is going to be back on the job this spring than you can imagine!*



Jason Duff

April 18 at 9:16 PM · 🌐

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