

CARM Reflections

SERIES:
RAPPORT
The Human Connection

This Edition: “Emerging from behind a LABEL”

Hi,

This month we explore the topic of labelling and how labelling people can negatively impact on our communication... and therefore the importance of emerging from behind a label.

Labelling is a descriptive marker, which can be applied to us or by us and can relate to individuals or groups. Labels influence our first impressions of people or groups and more often than not pick out or focus on a particular negative characteristic about a person or group of people that creates the distinction between us and them. Labels can also evolve as a result of a customers' past experience with your organisation that has had a negative influence upon them and hence a label emerges. If a label is negative then it's usually destructive and if not overcome it can reaffirm negative perceptions in others about us or our organisation i.e. “the label is correct”.

We more often than not make a judgement or generalisation about people when we apply a label and here is an example of how one was negatively applied. A recent news report indicated that a “cyclist” was killed whilst riding with 2 other cyclists on one of Sydney’s motorways. This resulted in a plethora of public comment about the vices of “cyclists”... their behaviours on the road, their place within the traffic community etc. Then one voice came through and shone reality back into the face of this perception. **This discussion about “cyclists” forgot one very important aspect.** This recent tragic statistic on the road involved a young male person... father of 2 young children... etching out a life amongst the suburbs and simply doing some healthy exercise in a pursuit he enjoyed... cycling. A caller then importantly reminded us that the cyclist is a father, husband, brother, uncle and lifelong friend to others... with a raft of people who will be mourning their tragic loss. The raising of this issue that the cyclist was a “person” caused the previous mouths of criticism to quieten.

We more often than not make a judgement or generalisation about people when we apply a label.

Taking this lesson back to the workplace... when your customers have unpleasant thoughts of you, as people may have of a “cyclist”, it is perhaps influenced by a “label” which they may initially identify you with. The “label” may relate to your job role, your title, your employer, or the brand entity you represent or even the industry you are in.

The **important point** here is that without any **human connection**, people relate to **surreal identities** based on perceptions of what these represent. When you think of “cyclists”, some may immediately move to negative thoughts of “a group of people” that causes traffic congestion, slows you down when you are trying to go somewhere, something that is a traffic burden and shouldn’t be on the road... hence negative thoughts and behaviours towards them. Any dangerous driving around them is simply a motorist trying to navigate an inappropriate traffic hazard. If we thought of that cyclist as our father or brother going for a ride, we would take a lot more care as we drove around him. This reinforces the power and importance of “human connection” and the need to be seen as a person not a label.

Without any human connection, people relate to surreal identities based on perceptions of what these represent.

Emerging from the “label”

With this in mind, what are you doing to emerge as early as you can and as powerfully as you can as a “person” with your customers – particularly with the ones who have an issue with you. The ‘you’ being the “label” that helps them identify with what you represent?

Find a way to project yourself above all else as a person, as early as you can in your initial contact and be surprised by the difference.

Here’s something to compare to. Think of the customer service representative who presents defensively when you first raise a complaint. Picture the negative body language and verbal responses of this person. What do you see and hear... someone you like or dislike? How do you feel... comfortable or uncomfortable in their presence, are you influenced to accept what they are saying or more motivated to resist or even attack back? Do YOU see a person or the label you have given them?

Key points:

- If you want to succeed with people or customers, then focus on emerging from behind the label and be seen as a person as early as you can.
- A focus on Rapport when we communicate is about seeking to connect with people... “person to person” removing the influence of a label.

The **CARM Team**

To find out more about CARM Training and The CARM Approach, please visit our website:

www.carmtraining.com

**When outcomes
are critical**



If you know someone who would benefit from this email please forward this PDF to them.