



FOCUS!

The practical e-zine to help you succeed

THE POWER OF FOCUS INC. Life-changing training programs for the business world. We deliver results that stick!

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Volume 4, Issue 2

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When You Buy Something, is it Simple or Complicated? *–by Les Hewitt*

I was booked on a flight to Toronto recently. As I fly fairly often, I've enjoyed using the electronic check-in system at the airport. Push a few buttons, confirm your seat number and hey presto—your boarding card appears. **Simple!**

Saves all that time lining up when you have no luggage to check.

This time however, my seat selection didn't appear on the screen and in the appropriate box on the boarding card I received, it said, **Gate.**

Arriving at the gate there's a big line up of people getting ready to board, so I approached the ticket agent to request my seat number. He informs me I'm on a standby seat selection and he'll call me later as the plane is full.

My immediate thought is, will I get on the flight as the word "standby" usually infers you only have a percentage chance of boarding.

As I wait for his call, several other people make similar requests and receive the same information. The word "standby" produces reactions that vary from moderate concern to outright panic! "I bought a ticket, do you mean I might not get on this flight? —I **must** get on it!

The ticket agent weathers the storm of protest as best he can, and when I inquire why this has occurred, he lowers his voice, avoids eye contact, and whispers in the hope that nobody else will hear, "It's all marketing!"

Simple just went to complicated!!

It turns out that when my ticket was booked and because I was fortunate to get a good price that day, I should have paid an extra twenty dollars (each way, may I add), to secure my seat. Otherwise you were shunted to the end of the line, threatened with the "S" word, and left wondering if you'd make the flight.

The "new marketing" means if you don't read the fine print you'll probably end up with more stress, a really bad seat (row 30 middle, for example) and no place to stow your overhead luggage. "We might have to put it in the belly below," I was told in no uncertain terms.

Do you remember the days (pre 9/11), when you just showed up, checked in, were given a seat by a friendly agent and you were on your way. Usually very simple! Now the game is, how can we squeeze more money out of everyone, ten dollars here, twenty dollars there, **before** you can have what used to be normal customer service. And the airline industry is only one of many who are going to great lengths to complicate our lives. But of course this gives you a wonderful opportunity, doesn't it?

What if you reviewed your various business practices and asked one good question. And here it is: **How can we deliver our product or service in the simplest way possible so our customers enjoy a consistently good experience?**

