



Opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the author and do not reflect positions of organizations with which he is affiliated.

Herbster, WI, November 9<sup>th</sup> – Volume 3: Number 45 [Back Issues](#)

*“When someone tells me there is only one way to do things, it always lights a fire under my butt. My instinct is, 'I'm going to prove you wrong.' ”*

**-Picabo Street-**

**MEETINGS and EVENTS:**

Links will provide additional information. Dates for recent additions are in **bold**.

<i>What</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Where</i>
<a href="#">BCEDC Board Meeting</a>	Nov. 12 <sup>th</sup>	10:00 am	Washburn Library
<a href="#">Wisconsin Early Stage Symposium</a>	Nov. 14-15	All Day	Madison
<a href="#">Agriculture Businesses</a>	Nov. 28 <sup>th</sup>	9:00 – 4:00 PM	Madison
<a href="#">Innovation Master Class</a>	<b>Dec. 5-6</b>	All Day	Madison
<a href="#">BCEDC Board Meeting</a>	Dec. 10 <sup>th</sup>	10:00 am	TBA

## FONEY FONE FREEDOM

Automated telephone and FAX sales solicitations are the height of obnoxiousness.

Whew! I didn't think I could write that in polite language.

The other day (Wednesday) while working in my Herbster office I received an autodialed and recorded solicitation that pleaded for me to not hang up. The message was about how I could save on credit card processing. Since I don't use credit cards to receive business payments, I would have normally just hung up the phone with expletive added. However, since this was about the fifth or sixth such call in a couple of weeks, I thought I would play along and see if I could reach a live operator and deliver a message of my own that I didn't want to receive any further calls.

No such luck.

When I asked the very human-like digitally controlled message, “Are you live?” my voice must have telegraphed some hostility. The automated call hung up on me.

That's a turnabout.

That's the height of high tech technology.

Dang!

That should teach me to be nice to machines.

Will it?

I doubt it!

In fact – consistent with the late **Aristotle Onassis'** dictum “Don't get mad, get even,” I'm starting to think – seriously – that congressional action is needed to abridge the freedom of speech of these machines. What constitutional right guarantees a corporation that they can interrupt my conduct of business with their commercial messages? (**Senator Kohl, Senator Feingold, Representative Obey**, are you listening? You could be my hero! Oh! But I might not receive my “personal” call from **Bill Clinton** next fall) If a representative of these corporations came to my door and were undeterred by a “NO SOLICITING” sign and persisted on my property, I could have them arrested for trespass. I don't, and probably would not, do that because there is something I respect about a sales person who personally makes cold calls to drum up business. I've found over the years that a few minutes of courteous listening and exchange is not overbearing and sometimes I learn something useful. Maybe I'm a little more sympathetic because I've done a bit of cold calling myself during my college years. Years back as a faculty member, I listened to a lot of textbook sales people and generally appreciated the information – and the samples – they provided.

What I didn't appreciate, and didn't tolerate, were the parasites who came along cold and wanted to purchase the samples for resale. I can't say that I never sold a sample because maybe I did early on, but in later years my policy was to give the samples away to students who needed something free either to avoid financial calamity or to learn from a source different from that the adopted text was providing. A few faculty colleagues outside the field of biology also received a book or two.

Sales people are critically important to our economy; an essential part of the marketing mix. Not only do sales people pitch the benefits of products and services; they listen to objections and provide an essential feedback loop energizing refinements to the products and services offered. One company I hold in high admiration, **3M**, relies on its sales force to inform its research and foster profitable innovation.

FAX messages are nearly as obnoxious as phone solicitations. The companies that send these out by the thousands should be arrested for stealing paper that I have provided in my FAX machine. There is no known method to control these paper thieves. I can't choose whether to print their messages about penny stocks, cruises or Caribbean vacations. This is stuff that has the unmistakable consistency and odor of droppings that need to be cleaned up on dude ranches and Kentucky bluegrass farms.

There is probably a thin thread keeping cell phone owners from receiving this crap, too. Whatever that thread is, it needs to be wrapped around every other technically enabled

commercial solicitation that doesn't respect my right to accept or reject the message. Print ads in newspapers and magazines, billboards, television and radio all have the virtue that I can choose to not purchase or turn on the message medium. Not so with phone solicitation. Certainly not so when phone abuse is automated.

We need a break!

Maybe the break should be hiring people and training them to be good, live sales people.

## **LIGHTER SIDE:**

As with most jokes the original author is unknown. Whoever you are; "Thanks!" Names, when added, are intended to tease the innocent.

You Might Be a Salesperson if...

- when you bought a new house you called your fellow alumni and offered to name a room after them, if they'll help with the down payment.
- your favorite stories begin "Bob Jones, VP of marketing, sat at his desk and stared out his window..."
- when you give your son his birthday present, you must say that it has an "unprecedented performance".
- when you describe a product as "maintenance-free" you mean that it is impossible to fix it.
- you refer to dating as test marketing.

Take care and have a great weekend!

/BRUCE

© Bruce Lindgren 2007.

*TGIF is distributed as both HTML and TEXT versions. The HTML version has graphics, formatted text and clickable hyperlinks. To receive the HTML version, your e-mail client must be set to accept HTML. [PDF versions are now available.](#)*

*TGIF is distributed each Friday. Subscriptions for TGIF are free and may be obtained by contacting Bruce Lindgren at [bflind@cheqnet.net](mailto:bflind@cheqnet.net). You may UNSUBSCRIBE by sending an email to [bflind@cheqnet.net](mailto:bflind@cheqnet.net) with "UNSUBSCRIBE" in the subject line.*

*IF you have not subscribed and YOU ARE RECEIVING TGIF FOR THE **FIRST TIME**, your address has been placed in a temporary distribution list to receive a few issues without subscription.*

*Bruce Lindgren is Principal of [B.Lindgren CONSULTING](#). The consulting practice serves small business, local government, school districts and non-profits providing support for research, grant development, technical writing, marketing support and project management. Bruce brings his background in biological sciences, education, small business and media technology to generate and implement ideas contributing solutions to mission critical challenges.*

*In addition Bruce maintains the following affiliations:*

[Bayfield County Economic Development Corporation](#), (BCEDC) Director

[Inland Sea Society](#), (ISS) *Director*

[Lake Superior Binational Forum](#), (LSBF) *US Delegation Co-Chair*

[Raindrop Garden Gallery](#), (RGG) *Co-owner*

[IDEA Consortium LLC](#), *Owner*

[Chequamegon Institute, Inc.](#) *Initial Registered Agent*

[Coalition for Eco-Industrial Development](#), (CEID) *Work Group Member*

[Northwest Wisconsin Workforce Investment Board](#), (WIB) *Member*

*The encircled fractal triangle represents an integrated cluster of seven ideas – economics, ecology, equity, ethics, experience, education and energy – that may be considered a core for sustainability studies. Bruce is available to present illustrated lectures and facilitate discussions about role of education in Industrial Ecology, Sustainable Development and the Sustainability Revolution.*