

Legit or spam?

Not a week goes by that I don't get several unsolicited emails from people/businesses who think I need financing, or a direct marketing list, or help with my website, or (just got this today) think I may want voice over talent (!). Almost all these emails are personalized to me, or at least to my website (as in "Dear Deborahbrody.com"). Some get my name from my website (presumably after doing a search) and some from LinkedIn. Others, I don't have the foggiest idea of where or how they found me (or even why they are contacting me). Very few seem to know much about my business, and none are companies I have done business with in the past. In short, lots of businesses reach out via email to try to drum up sales or generate cash.

Is it legit, is it spam, or is it a scam?

But how many of these are legit, and how many are scammers/spammers? Where do we draw the line between an honest attempt to generate a lead based on internet research, and spam? There are probably a few indicators of spam/scams:

- 1) Using the same pitch over and over and over, sometimes from different names within the "company." In other words, more than one inquiry.
- 2) Adding, without permission, your name to an email marketing list, and putting the onus on you to unsubscribe (this is a direct violation of the CAN-SPAM rules and can/should be reported as such).
- 3) A sketchy sounding proposition (financing with no credit check, for example).

Is this company a legit spammer?

For the past several weeks, I have been getting emails from

something called Imparture about social media marketing classes in Washington, DC. I was getting about three emails a week, every week. They all had the unsubscribe feature, and finally, this week, I unsubscribed (not that I had subscribed in the first place). Then yesterday, I got a personalized email from "Elliot.": Here it is:

Hi Deborah,

Did you get a chance to consider my last email?

Check out our upcoming [Google Analytics training course](#) taking place in Washington DC.

There are only a few spots left so sign up if you are interested.

All the best,

Elliot Jay

Client Relationship Manager

Imparture

London / New York / San Francisco

Now, I don't know Elliot, and as I said, I had already unsubscribed from these emails. I wrote him and told him I would be reporting him for spam. Then, today, I got this email from "Noah":

Hi Deborah,

I came across your profile and saw that your skill set contains Social Media Marketing, and wanted to reach out with an opportunity.

We have only a few spots remaining in our upcoming [Social Media Marketing Immersive course](#) in Washington DC.

This course will give you an advanced level of understanding regarding Social Media Marketing, and add significant value

to your skillset – might this be something of interest?

You can find out more about the course, as well as sign up, [here](#).

Please do not hesitate to reach out with any questions.

All the best,

Noah Kelsey

Client Relationship Manager

Imparture

London / New York / San Francisco

I looked up Imparture and the company does have a website, a LinkedIn profile, and even a Twitter account (with only 500 or so followers), which look legit enough. On the other hand, I did find a review stating that the company had scheduled a class, cancelled it, and didn't issue refunds (sketchy!).

This company may indeed be legitimate (albeit with questionable customer service), but its marketing practices are definitely spammy. As I said before, *I have never signed up for a class or to get these emails*. And I have "unsubscribed" and have since gotten two more emails. Any legitimate marketing effort would ask for permission to add you to a list, and would respect an unsubscribe request. This company has failed on both ends. It added me to an email list without my express consent (and again, I am not sure where/how they got my email address), and it has ignored my unsubscribe request, twice so far.

Do not be a spammer!

If you are a legitimate business, do not follow the scammer's playbook. Sending unsolicited mail is against CAN-SPAM rules.

Want to learn more? Check out the FTC's [CAN-SPAM Act: A compliance guide for business.](#)

Have you had a similar experience? What is your take on the legit versus spam discussion?

How do you know who to vote for when there are so many candidates?

There are thirty (that is 3-0) people running for Montgomery County, Maryland Council. Voters are allowed to vote for up to four. There are also eight candidates running in the Democratic primary for Maryland Governor (the incumbent, Larry Hogan, is a Republican and is unopposed). Voters also get to vote for County Executive (six Democrats running), U.S. Senator, U.S. Representative, State Delegates, Judges, even for the Clerk of the Circuit Court. In short, there are a lot of people competing for votes in Montgomery County, Maryland. And with so many people running, it's a real challenge to stand out.

And it's because of the crush of candidates that every registered party voter in Montgomery County (where I live) has been inundated with campaign literature. (Read today's Washington Post story, [In Montgomery County, voters face a deluge of campaign literature mailings](#), about it). And that is all in addition to the countless political commercials that have been airing on both the local TV stations and the political talk shows on cable TV. And the many sponsored ads on Twitter and Facebook. And the ubiquitous lawn signs and placards placed throughout the county.



Placards outside Silver Spring Early Voting Center

I know because I have received dozens of door hangers and flyers on my doorstep, dozens of flyers in the mail, tons of emails, and even personalized texts to my cell phone (I am still trying to figure out how they got the number). The most notable piece of campaign literature that I got was a form letter from a candidate stuffed inside a handwritten envelope.

The name of the game

When a race is so crowded, you have to really fight to stand out. When you are running against 29 other candidates, name recognition matters. And so you spend a lot of money to make sure people know and remember your name.

So you need money to succeed in politics

There are two big problems with making name recognition a

priority. The first is that you need a lot of money to be able to make people remember your name, which means candidates with the deepest pockets have a big (unfair?) advantage. And indeed, in Montgomery County, two self-made millionaires (David Trone, who is running for U.S. Congress, and David Blair, who is running for Montgomery County Executive) are leading in the amount of money spent. Both these guys are saturating the market with flyers, TV commercials, placards and so forth.

And a stand voters agree with

The second problem is that we don't vote on name recognition alone. Serious voters (and primary voters tend to be serious) vote on where candidates stand on issues they care about. Name recognition is helpful for sure, but it doesn't inform voters sufficiently. If voters care about issues, it becomes incumbent on them to research the candidates' positions. Thankfully, the League of Women Voters publishes a Voters' Guide. And most candidates have websites.

In the end, you vote for people who reflect your priorities and values, not for the person with the most lawn signs or door hangers. To really stand out in a crowded field, candidates need to be able to communicate who they are, what they stand for, and why they are the better choice. That takes a lot of money, great communications know-how, and superb political skill.

May the best candidates win! And if you live in Maryland, don't forget to vote on June 26th.

UPDATE: Today, I received an additional five pieces of campaign literature in the mail, three of those promote ONE candidate, and the other is the tenth or so piece I have received from another candidate. Sending three pieces of mail about one candidate strikes me as overkill, and could backfire. Certainly the other candidate, who clearly has very

deep pockets, has shown he will spend (waste?) as much money as he can. There's no added advantage to sending a piece of campaign literature every day. It becomes junk mail, quite literally. Direct mail does not benefit from frequency as does radio/TV.

Deception is not a good marketing tactic

Have you ever bought something because it was on "special" promotion pricing? Have you bought a product to get a "free" gift? Have you rented a car because of a "discount" rate? If so, you may have been a victim of deceptive marketing tactics designed to boost sales.

Some marketers seek to entice customers by offering what seem to be great deals. Usually, it's a special "one-time only" price or a discount or a "bonus." What they fail to mention is that you may have to pay extra for the bonus (many cosmetic brands do this) or that the special price doesn't include something else that you are required to pay.

Recently, I fell for a "special rate" from Thrifty. I was planning a trip to Boston, and researching rental cars when I got an email from the car rental company offering a 30% discount. This made the base fare for a rental car in Boston much better than the competition. It seemed like a no-brainer.

Last Friday, after landing in Boston, I got to the counter at

Thrifty to find out that in addition to my discounted rate, I would be forced to pay an \$11.99 per day toll charge for each day I rented the car. Massachusetts has joined other states in getting rid of toll booths (and jobs for tollbooth collectors, but I digress) and instituting an all-electronic system. You need an E-Z Pass to pay, or else the toll authority will take a picture of your plates and send you a bill (with an extra fee to boot).

At no point in the reservation process, nor in any confirmation email, did Thrifty tell me that Boston was a place that has all electronic tolls and that I would be required to pay an additional toll pass fee. They also did not disclose the amount of the fee for the toll charge, which they add on for *all* Boston renters. Had I known, I could have brought my own E-Z Pass and avoided the extra charge. And had I known that tolls would be an issue, I could have researched the toll charges at other car rental companies, and may have chosen one of them instead.

This situation could and should be avoided. Thrifty has permanently damaged its reputation with me because it chose to be deceptive. It could have done the following:

Tell me the true cost of my rental—including *all* taxes and fees.

Thrifty used a special rate to entice me to use its services. The company never mentioned the additional toll pass charges, which effectively increased the total amount of my rental by \$48. Thrifty also charges much higher toll pass rates than its competitors.

Provide enough information for me to make an informed decision.

Thrifty knew I was renting in Boston, and it knew that Boston requires electronic toll collection. But Thrifty did not include that information anywhere on its website when booking.

The first I learned of it was after I was already at the rental counter.

In the end, deceptive marketing tactics will backfire.

Deceiving your customers just to get them to buy from you may generate a *short-term increase in sales*, but it will create a *long-term decrease in your credibility and trustworthiness*, which will mean a loss of future sales.

It's easy to notice bad writing

Last week, I went to a panel discussion about user experience (UX) design. The whole idea behind UX is that websites should be designed with the users/readers in mind, so that they can easily find what they are looking for. One of the panelists said this:

It's easy to notice bad design.

Why? She went on to say that if something is easy to use, then you don't notice it.

Right.

The same is true for writing. If something is written well, you don't notice anything wrong. You understand what is being said. Conversely, when something is written poorly, then you don't understand what the writer is trying to communicate.

On Friday, I got a very odd email from a local brew-pub with this subject line: Curtain Call-[XX] Brewhouse

The body said this (although I have redacted the name and location of the brew-pub):

We are honored to have been a part of your community and your history.

When we opened [XX] Brewhouse in March of last year, we sought to give a piece of [city]'s history a home in the West End and provide a community gathering place to relax and enjoy the company of friends and family. While this chapter in [XX] brewing history may seem short-lived, it will remain with us for the entirety of our lives.

In realizing the changes to the surrounding landscape, we pushed for appropriate changes to our lease agreement, which were temporarily provided by the landlord. However, permanent change could not be achieved. We did everything in our power to sustain the company it for as long as possible, which is why we are sharing the conclusion to this chapter with you today.

Whatever the future holds, keep us in your thoughts, drink really great beer and hold family dear.

When I read this email, I was confused. Had the brew-pub closed? If so, when would they stop serving? What would happen to the employees, the beer, the brand? And that last sentence, about holding family dear, gave me a sense of dread. Did someone die? (Plus, the use of the word curtain the subject line made me think of Agatha Christie's book *Curtains*, in which her main character, Hercule Poirot, dies.)

Why am I so confused? Because this email is poorly written. It lacks basic information, creates more questions than it answers, and makes too many assumptions about the reader's

knowledge. I am left wondering what changes were they trying to make? Why were those changes not implemented? Why do they mean about a short-lived chapter? Does it mean there are more chapters coming?

And then, there are the mixed metaphors. The subject line talks of a curtain (I assume, as in a theater's curtain call) but the body of the email talks about chapters as in books, and not about acts in a play.

In sum, this email is a mess. You notice how bad it is because it was not written for the reader. It did not take into consideration what the reader may or may not know about the brew-pub. It doesn't even spell out the basic news, which is that they are closing. The reader does not know if this has already happened or will happen, since no date is given for the closure.

If I were to rewrite this email I'd start with a clear, unambiguous subject line: XX Brewhouse will close on [DATE] or XX Brewhouse has closed.

Then, I would write something like this:

It's with heavy hearts, that we are writing you, our supporters, today to let you know that we will be closing XX Brewhouse as of [DATE]. We thank you for your support, and we are honored to have been part of the [city's] community and history.

We are closing because we could not reach a permanent agreement with our landlord regarding our operations. Our location needed [whatever this was]. Without permanent arrangement, we weren't able to operate the way we needed to continue to bring you our high-quality beer and food.

For now, we do not have plans to re-open in a different location, but please stay tuned.

Before you write anything, think of your readers. What do they need to know? Why are you sending them this information?

Make your communications easy to use and understand. If you do that, you will be noticed for what you say, and not how you said it.

2 big digital marketing mistakes with easy fixes

It happened at least twice this week (and it's only Thursday of a short work week): I came across two different digital marketing mistakes. One involves email marketing and the other involves content marketing. And I see different organizations making the same mistakes every single week.

These two digital marketing mistakes are common, and yet easily fixable. Take the time to make these fixes today, and I can promise you almost instant results.

Big digital marketing mistake #1: Sending an all-image/graphics email

Even though email marketing is one of the oldest and most useful forms of digital marketing, there are still lots of organizations that make the mistake of sending out emails that

are completely image/graphics-based. I just got one last night. It was made up of several images that provided information about promotions at different locations. And I couldn't see any of the information.

The big problem with these emails is that in most email clients (Outlook, Gmail, etc.) you have to download images in order to see them. So, if your email is made up exclusively of images, your recipients will not see anything unless they specifically click on "download images." And unless your email subject line is extremely compelling and/or descriptive, your recipients may not take that extra step, and your email marketing campaign will be a waste.

Easy fix: Use images in email sparingly, and make sure the important information (i.e., dates, costs, location, etc.) is *text-based*.

Big digital marketing mistake #2: Not having a sharing mechanism on your content

Just this week, a lawyer I know shared a link to a blog post his firm created regarding GDPR (the new European data regulation that went into effect on May 25). I checked it out, and thought it would be useful to my network, but when I went to share it, I found that there were no sharing buttons of any type. In 2018, more than ten years into Facebook and Twitter, and 15 years into LinkedIn, there is simply no excuse for not having sharing buttons. Sharing buttons allow your readers to easily share your content to their preferred social media network (mine are at the very bottom of this post if you'd like to share this content).

Social sharing is key to content marketing because it amplifies the reach of your blog post or article or microsite.

Easy fix: Add sharing buttons to your blog and to any other page on your website that a reader may want to share (for example, your contact page). There are many different plug-ins

available to do this work for you (ShareThis, AddThis, etc.). You can also read Hubspots's useful cheat sheet: [How to Create Social Media Buttons for All the Top Social Networks](#). Or simply search "social sharing buttons."

Have you seen these digital marketing mistakes? Are you making these digital marketing mistakes? I am interested in your experiences. Please comment to let me know.

It's all about being informed

If you were canvassing for a political candidate, would you place a paper brochure or flyer promoting the candidate outside in the rain? I hope you wouldn't, but that's just what happened around here today.

The forecast called for lots of rain

This morning, when I opened my front door to get my morning paper, I found a soggy brochure on my doorstep. The brochure was for a guy running for county executive in Montgomery County where I live. I couldn't tell you much about this candidate because the brochure was practically dissolving from all the rain we've been getting. I am not sure when the brochure was placed there, but I do know the forecast called for rain every single day this week, to the extent we are under a flash flood warning. And even if you didn't hear the forecast, all you had to do is step outside, feel the rain drops and look at the gray skies and know that the weather didn't look good.

But you have to care to know the forecast

A whole lot of effort and money was wasted here, seemingly because people didn't know it was raining. Or perhaps they just didn't care. I don't know which it is but if you are doing marketing, it pays to be informed.



The solution is simple: Do your research

In this case, whoever was in charge of the canvassing, should've looked at the weather and scheduled it for a day when it wouldn't be raining. Or perhaps, should have considered alternative means to get the brochure out.

If you were planning an event, you'd want to check the calendar to see if there was a holiday or other big event on the date you were considering.

If you were planning to launch a product, you'd want to make sure production is on schedule.

You have to ask the right questions

You always have to ask questions...but you have to know what to ask about. In order to do this, you may have to do some research, talk to experts, ask other people. In short, you need to gather information so that you can ask the right questions.

For example, you may have heard that the EU's General Data Protection Regulation or GDPR is going into effect on May 25, 2018. Some questions you may have are these:

- What exactly is GDPR and does it affect me?
- What do I have to do (if anything) to be in compliance?
- Why is this important?

If you don't ask these questions, you may not be in compliance with GDPR when it goes into effect next week.

For any marketer or communicator, information is the key. So do your research and ask the right questions before you undertake any action.

What the heck is Domo and why should you care?

If you watch as much TV/cable news and commentary as I do, chances are good that you've seen an advertisement for something called Domo. It's been running a lot over the past couple months. In case you've missed it, here it is:

Do you understand what Domo is from this commercial? Apparently it's something that allows you to "connect with anything in the company" and gives you the "company data in one place." And let's not forget, it will help Jeanne, who is always cold (huh?). The tagline on the commercial is Domo: For the good of the company.

This commercial is successful in making you wonder what Domo is, and maybe, like me, you go search it out on the web.

Take it to the internet

Some internet research into Domo reveals that it is a software company that deals in "business intelligence" and "data visualization." A visit to Domo's website has the description "connecting your data, systems and people" in the navigation bar. The home page has a tagline/descriptor that says: "Everybody on the same page, all the time. Run the business from your phone."

Here you do learn more about it. When I scroll down there is a

part of the home page called product benefits where I learn that Domo is “the fully-mobile, cloud-based operating system that unifies every component of a business. Data becomes decisions, ideas turn into action.” Someone needs to explain to Domo that this is not a listing of benefits, but rather an actual description of the product.

Then I click on “product” on the navbar. I get this content:

Domo creates a truly digitally-connected organization.

The sum of Domo’s parts deliver a virtuous cycle of business optimization. Everyone knows more, works together better, and gets more done, faster.

(And here we find a new contender for unintelligible business jargon: “A virtuous cycle of business optimization.”)

But what is it? And why do I care?

I don’t know about you, but I am still confused. I am confused because at no point does the ad or the website explain what exactly we are talking about and why being connected to all your data and systems in one place (apparently your phone) makes things run better.

There are so many issues both with the website messaging and with the TV commercial. The website and the commercial feature taglines, descriptors, slogans, product benefits, a product description—and none of them match up. The website prominently features a phrase that tells you you can get to everything from your phone. Is this the main selling feature?

Who should hear about it?

It’s clear that the target audience for the TV commercial is a CEO or a COO of a company. We know this because we have the

self-effacing female administrative assistant who starts by saying she's not the "c-anything o," and ends by saying that the CEO, to whom she is writing the email suggesting the company get Domo, is really the one who runs things.

How is it then that the lowly admin knows about this amazing product? And what I really don't get is how having data visualization on your smartphone is going to help Jeanne who is always cold?

The bottom line

Domo, with its short and easy to remember name, has succeeded in building brand recognition and perhaps even increasing its website traffic. What is less clear is if has succeeded in getting customers. There's a lot of explaining that needs to be done about what Domo actually is, how it works, and why you need it. To be successful in your branding, you need clear and consistent messaging and a strong selling proposition.

Domo has many messages and several reasons (maybe too many) for you to consider getting it.

What do you think? Do you understand Domo? Do you need Domo?

You may have noticed that the DBMC website has been spruced up a bit. During the "remodeling" I refrained from blogging so that there would be no new content to migrate to the new site. But now I am back! Let me know what you think of the new website.

What a bad cup of coffee can teach you

Do you always start your day with a extra-big mugful of coffee like I do? If so, you'll appreciate just how terrible it is to start your day with a bad cup of coffee. A cup of coffee that lacks the delicious aroma of perfectly roasted coffee beans. A cup of coffee that just tastes awful.

A bad cup of coffee just gets your day off to a bad start, and for that I blame myself. You see, I had just finished a package of coffee and needed a replacement ASAP (it is a DEFCON 5 situation around here if there is no coffee). Normally, I buy my coffee at Trader Joe's but I had forgotten to do so during my weekly shopping trip. And so I found myself shopping in a gourmet store for something else, and thought I would pick up a brand of coffee that I enjoy (and for which I am willing to pay a little extra). Apparently, this store no longer carries that brand. They did have another brand that I have tried in the past, but I didn't feel like paying the gourmet store price for it.

So I made a very big mistake: I grabbed a bag of coffee simply because it was cheap. It was not a brand I knew or recognized or had even seen before, but I figured a bag of medium roast Costa Rican coffee from a gourmet store can't be all that bad. Well, I figured wrong. It was the worst coffee I have ever bought in my life. It tasted horrible. It had no coffee aroma. It was so bad I actually threw what was left out.

Then I hustled over to Trader Joe's and bought my go-to coffee. Now, my mornings are back to normal.

A bad cup of coffee taught me never to buy an unknown brand. And it's really not about the cost. You can get very good yet

cheap store-brand coffee like I do at Trader Joe's or at stores like Target, *where you trust the brand*.

Brands are quite literally markers that serve to identify. They let you separate one product from all the others like it. Once you've experienced a brand, you can then look for it if you liked it or avoid it if you didn't. *Brands provide a shortcut* that consumers can use to know what to buy quickly and without much research.

Remember this the next time you are out of coffee: Unless it's a brand you know already, buying just anything based on price alone will get your morning started on the wrong foot.

Do you know what your brand stands for? Are you communicating it well enough? If not, perhaps you should invest in my new [Brand Identity Kit](#). Check it out!

If you want to sound smart, don't use big words

So many times, people think that by using big words, they sound smarter. After all, people might need to go get a dictionary to look those words up. Yet, people who do this, often think they know exactly what a word means, when they don't. Take for example Chris Cillizza, a political commentator for CNN. Last night, on the Don Lemon show, Cillizza was discussing some of the latest news regarding Donald Trump and adult film actress Stormy Daniels. Cillizza

thought that the salacious details wouldn't matter much to Trump supporters, because, as he put it, "Trump has never been a model of *moral turpitude*." Nobody corrected him even though what he said was actually the exact opposite of what he meant.

Cillizza was back on the air this morning, talking about the same subject, and repeated the phrase he had used last night, that Trump isn't a model of moral turpitude. This time, one of the other panelists questioned the word, but couldn't quite find the correct word to use instead.

What Cillizza meant to say is that Trump is not a model of *moral rectitude*.

Rectitude means righteousness, while turpitude means depravity. They sound similar, and that's what tripped Cillizza up. Sadly, nobody else seems to have understood that Cillizza was contradicting himself by using a big word that he clearly did not know.

Nobody can go back and correct the spoken word. However, you can and should fix written work. You can avoid sounding stupid just by getting someone to copy edit your work, and check that the big words you are using are being used correctly.

P.S. I did tweet Chris Cillizza the correction. I don't know if he read it, or whether he cared.

No response = no business

Last week, I had an urgent need to get my roof repaired. We'd had a severe windstorm in the Washington area that blew off several shingles off my roof, and rain was in the forecast. In order to prevent further damage, I knew I had to get someone

to fix this right away.

First, I contacted several friends to ask for their recommendations. This way, I got three names. Then, I went on Consumer Checkbook to check ratings and get more names. I wrote down a few names, and noticed that a couple of the names my friends had provided were on the Checkbook site, and had good ratings. First thing on Monday (I noticed the damage over the weekend), I called all the names I gathered. This is how it went:

1. Call to roofer listed as good value/good quality in Consumer Checkbook. I spoke to an office person, who added me to a list, with no guarantee or timeline for when I would get someone to fix it. She told me that there were several other calls ahead of me, so she could not tell me when someone would be available, but she did provide me with pricing.

2. Call to another qualified roofer listed in Consumer Checkbook. I left a detailed message, which was never answered.

3. Call to roofer (who was highly rated in Consumer Checkbook), referred to by a close friend. There was no answer and the voice mailbox was full, so I had no way to contact this contractor or leave a message.

4. Call to roofer referred to by my neighbor who recently had her roof replaced. When I called, I got a message saying that they were overwhelmed with calls, to either leave a message or send an email. I sent an email, to which I received an answer more than a week later, explaining pricing, etc.

5. Call to handyman referred by a friend. He referred me to a contractor friend of his, a jack of many trades, who answered immediately. This contractor offered to come by to give me an estimate, and then was able to complete the repair the same day.

Now, this was an unusual situation. Many, many people had damage to their roofs from a strong and unusually long-lasting windstorm. Roofers were slammed. Yet, their responses showed a lot about how their businesses are run and how they deal with customers.

I am sure I will have a need for a roofer in the future. Based on my interactions here, I would contact the first and the fourth roofers because they were responsive and I got the sense of professionalism. As to the contractor who actually fixed my roof, I know I have found someone who is punctual and reliable, but he is not primarily a roofer and I would not ask him to do more than repair shingles.

Not being responsive and not even having a mechanism to leave messages is the sign of a business that is overwhelmed and incapable of dealing with emergencies and not very professional and customer-centric. It's better to get a late reply than no reply at all.

No response leads to no business.

What can a small, one-person business do to be more responsive? There are several options.

- Have a website that explains how you respond in emergencies, and which also provides a phone number, email, and contact form to get in touch (in other words, many ways to get in touch).
- Have an online booking system. There are several paid and non paid options out there that allow your customers to book time with you, either for a consultation or a full-fledged appointment.
- Consider having an answering service, virtual assistant, or in-house administrative person so that customers can talk to a person in real time.
- Make time to answer every email, contact request or phone call that you receive, even if it is to say we

can't help you at this time.

No amount of marketing or beautiful website design is going to overcome a lack of responsiveness. If you want business, you have to respond to inquiries. If you don't respond, you will not get that business now or in the future.