

The Guerrilla Framer

by
Paul Cascio



It's What You Learn After You Know It All That Really Counts

Those were the words of Earl Weaver, the former manager of the Baltimore Orioles. The wisdom they offer applies to business as well as baseball. You're never too old to learn.

Learning is what keeps us fresh and full of the enthusiasm we had when we first started framing. This enthusiasm can be lost after years of repetition, but it can also be easily regained.

Discovering a new framing technique or learning alternative ideas that will improve your management and marketing skills can serve to rekindle your motivation and put money in your pocket. Furthering your education is an investment that pays dividends year after year. In any framing business, your mind is always the most important tool you use—and hopefully, the sharpest.

This month, I'm going to challenge you to make furthering your education and sharpening your mind a resolution for the coming new year. Whether you're just starting out in the framing business or have an established, successful operation, you can always do better.

If you're new in the framing business, don't make the mistake of getting caught up in the romance of making beautiful frames. This doesn't mean that quality craftsmanship and fresh designs aren't important. Keep in mind that you also need to make money. Devote the same time and dedication to developing your business skills as you did to learning about frames and framing. Just because you have business cards doesn't mean you have a business. Without profits, framing is just another expensive hobby.

If you own an established business, don't let yourself get so busy counting your money that you fail to notice how

much more is slipping through your fingers. Make it a priority to re-evaluate and improve your business each year. One of the best ways to do this is by learning new techniques and discovering better methods for reducing expenses or increasing advertising effectiveness.

There are so many educational opportunities that there's no excuse not to participate in at least some of them. Distributor open houses, PPFA chapter events, and traveling education like the PFM Seminars on the Road practically bring the education to your backroom. Larger events—industry trade shows and conferences—mix product demonstrations and traditional education with panel discussions and open forums.

How do you know which option is best for you? It's not as hard as you might think. After all, you know your own strengths and weaknesses. You know where your business needs to improve. And while your objective should be to learn from the best in the business, any education is better than none. Maybe the instructor at your local distributor's annual event isn't a big name star, but that doesn't mean they won't have a useful mat cutting technique to teach or some good ideas about efficient shop design. What's more, just attending the event gives you a chance to meet your professional peers. There's lots you can learn from them, too. (Or did you really think you have learned it all?)

Like I said, you're never too old to learn and by that token, it's never too late, either. Take classes whenever you have the opportunity. But keep in mind that the busy times of the year are not the best time to devote to education. You want to make sure that by the time the

Paul Cascio, "The Guerrilla Framer," owns and operates A-Frame New & Used Equipment (www.framingequipment.com) as well as a retail custom framing business. Paul also conducts sales, management and marketing seminars for the framing industry. He will be teaching at The National Conference at the West Coast Art & Frame Show in Las Vegas, January 14-17, 2001.

holiday rush occurs, you're already operating at peak efficiency and taking advantage of your new-found knowledge.

The summer months, traditionally slow, are a good time to brush up your business and framing skills. The lull after December is also a good time.

If you're attending the National Conference in Las Vegas next month, you'll find numerous educational opportunities to help you further your business and technical skills. I will personally conduct a seminar on cost cutting that will help you analyze and control your business operating costs with a plethora of ideas and tips to cut expenses and increase profits.

In my "Strike Gold with Yellow Pages Advertising" seminar, I'll show you how to turn your Yellow Pages advertising into a customer magnet that will boost store traffic and increase sales. The Yellow Pages is one of the least understood and most misused forms of advertising. In fact, almost 98% of all Yellow Pages ads have a serious flaw or omission that reduces their effectiveness.

Because The Yellow Pages is the single most important form of advertising for service businesses, such as picture framers, you'll want to get the most bang for your buck from this expensive but necessary business investment. I'll share the secrets of developing and implementing a cost effective, high-powered Yellow Pages Directory advertising campaign. I also tell you what your local phone company doesn't want you to know.

Register now, by calling 800-969-7176, to guarantee that you won't be left out of what I consider to be one of the most valuable investments you can make to help ensure the success and growth of your framing business.

In addition to the seminars I'll be presenting, there are numerous other educational opportunities available at the National Conference. January is a great time to visit Las Vegas because you'll find great deals on airfare and accommodations. Temperatures are comfortable, too. After a busy holiday season, you could use a break. I hope to see you there. Be sure to introduce yourself. ■