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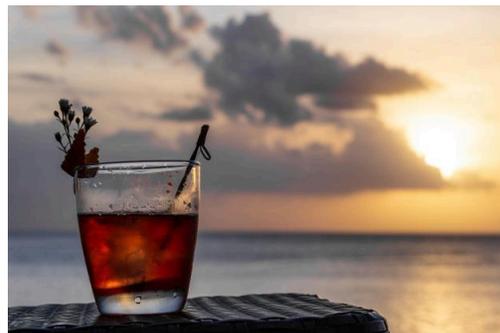
My wife and I go to St Martin in the Caribbean every March. We stay on the French side (there's also a Dutch side to the island) in the town of Grand Case. Yes, it's a vacation, but I'm always on the lookout for new and unique marketing ideas. Sometimes, like on this last trip, I get whacked over the head with how effective "the basics" are, and how time-tested techniques can – and should – be used.

## ***Where can you add a shot of rum?***

Grand Case is the culinary capitol of the Caribbean. I don't know who first bestowed that sobriquet, but I'd say it fits. The Boulevard is narrow, with cars parked haphazardly on either side of the street, tourists walking along it and other cars and motorbikes zipping between them. The Boulevard, at less than a mile long, is also home to 20 or more restaurants. While some of these are barbecue joints, serving things like pork ribs, chicken and other "home cooked" specialties, most of the restaurants serve fancy French cuisine, mostly in open-air establishments. Half of these, the ones on the north side of the Boulevard, are right on the beach, and offer spectacular views.

While locals may eat there occasionally, the main industry on the island is tourism, and the restaurants cater to the tourist trade. They know who bakes their bread, so to speak, and what side it's buttered on. Some of these folks are in town only for a few hours, others for a few days, and some have residences in the area.

Tourists who are there for a few days have enough choices that they can eat lunch, and then dinner, at a different restaurant for each meal. Some will return



year after year – or several times each year – and like most smart business people, the restaurant owners know that return business from satisfied customers is where they make most of their profit. But in paradise, lined with restaurants serving top-notch food, how do you entice people to return?

Studies have shown that for a presentation or event – and the dinners at these fine restaurants certainly qualify – it's the first things and the last things that stick in peoples' memories. Often the middle events or messages are hazy or completely forgotten. To sound truly jaded, when every meal you eat is on a balcony overlooking a beautiful beach, presented with exceptional service and tastes fresh and wonderful, they tend to run together. Did you have the sea bass for lunch over there, or was it the grilled lobster down the street?

Many of these restaurants have taken to ending your meal with complimentary shots of rum, often home made, or at least modified on the premises. Even if your meal was merely mediocre, you're likely to remember that final shot of banana-vanilla *rhum* that literally left a warm feeling in your heart – and your throat, and stomach. And it's free! Gratis. Complimentary. No charge. Your meal for two, without drinks, was north of \$130, but the memory of "expense" is supplanted by the memory of "happy warmth." Of course, the drinks aren't truly free – the cost is added to the operating expense of the restaurant, and you pay for your drinks, and the drinks of the people around you, in the price of your meal.

The barbecue joints, on the other hand, serve complete meals for around \$15 per person, and if you want booze they'll sell it to you, or there's a bar close by. The barbecues, or "lolos," are inexpensive, serving basic meals with paper napkins and impersonal service. The restaurants serve more complex meals with more expensive ingredients, with attentive service and cloth napkins. Each has its place, each has its fans. There are different times for eating at the different establishments.

My point – you should provide your clients with a small gift occasionally. Something to warm their hearts, and to help them remember you fondly. True, these gifts might be especially useful if you've solved a problem or corrected an error for them, but "satisfied" customers (and remember, the worst thing you can have is a *satisfied customer!*) can be swayed to happy thoughts of you and your business if they have something that gives them a warm, happy feeling. Something small and unsolicited.

I've received several packages that literally offered me a sweet ending – a few small candies packed in with my order. My order may have been a couple days late, or the price higher than I would have liked, but the firm is betting that I'll remember the candies, not any inconvenience.

## Action Item

Where can you add a shot of rum? **What would it cost you to send the top 20% – or 50%, or even 100% – of your customers some kind of "thank you" gift out of the blue?** Nothing major, just something that says "we're thinking of you." If you have to, raise your prices to cover these small gifts, and build it into your marketing efforts. Make these small gifts part of your brand.

Thanks for reading the Agile' newsletter. We hope you find our emails thoughtful and actionable, maybe even entertaining.

Until next time, be well and stay healthy & happy!

Very best,

***Scott Gardner***

[Scott@AgileMarketingServices.com](mailto:Scott@AgileMarketingServices.com)

315-439-7326

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### **Agile' Marketing Services**

535 County Route 54  
2nd Floor - Suite C  
Pennellville NY 13132

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