



THE IN-STORE ADVANTAGE

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"The single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place." » George Bernard Shaw

Don't Mind Me

Two middle managers from a bank approached me after a recent speech at a bank association meeting.

Both were nice and just wanted to comment on one of the topics I touched on.

One said, "Oh, my gosh. I so wish our CEO could have been here for this. He could really benefit from that stuff you said about communications and not expecting your people to be mind readers."

As her peer nodded and agreed, I thanked her for the kind words and then joked, "Well... I wish he could have been here too. But...you know...you were."

They smiled and the other manager said, "I guess you're saying we need to talk to him about it."

I told them that what they did next was up to them, but they need to remember that their boss is not a mind reader either.

It is as likely that he does not know what is confusing them as it is that they do not fully understand what he wants from them.

After all, most of us are a little hesitant to let our bosses know when we're confused or unclear.

Chasing That Neon Rainbow

My wife has long chided me for being such a boring traveler when I am alone on business.

She will ask, "How is it possible that you could be in the same city as (insert cool thing here) and not go there?"

I always tell her, "Easy. I am good at it."

That said, Nashville is one of the cities where I try to find time to get out and about.

And honestly, "out and about" may be overstating it.

When I am staying downtown, I make a point to visit the local establishments within walking distance that feature live musicians.

Frankly, they are everywhere. I was shocked not to see a live band at the Raising Cane's Chicken Fingers on Broadway.

Then again, maybe they were just on a break.

Sure, I enjoy the music. But what I really appreciate is what it takes for these musicians to show up night after night, hustling to make it.

Having a son in the arts, I have always been amazed at what it takes to succeed.

It takes far more than talent. It takes a thick skin and a willingness to face rejection.

One of the points I made to the group was that too many people confuse information distribution with communication.

We think that just because something has been said or shared with a group, everyone is on the same page. Heck, sometimes it actually is on a page.

How in the world can two people read the same words and have different takeaways of their meaning? (That's rhetorical. It happens all the time.)

Depending on the culture, some will not fully embrace a new priority until it has been clearly communicated more than once.

Too often, leaders sound as though they are thinking out loud instead of providing firm directions about the team's focus.

Leaders think they have given instructions or priorities or guidance...while the team is not quite sure.

And if that is an absolute foreign concept to you, congratulations. Everyone else envies you.

The good news I share with leaders is that many times what looks like incompetence, resistance, or even passive aggressiveness is none of those.

People simply are not on the same page about your, and therefore their, priorities. And it should not be their job to figure that out.

Over communicating is not micromanaging.

In fact, it may be one of the best ways to avoid having to micromanage.

Strive this week to be more of an open book than a black box.

A lot of it.

I once saw an interview with Keith Urban where he described coming to Nashville confident in his chops.

It did not take long for him to realize he would have to raise his game.

He was stunned by how good everyone was and how competitive it was just to get on stage.

While I am no authority on bar band economics these days, it appears that many of these bands work primarily for tips.

That may have always been the case, but it seemed even more pronounced on my recent visit.

Most of these bands are as talented as musicians as you will find anywhere. And they have essentially become live jukeboxes.

They take requests for tips, often by scanning a QR code.

As I watched, I thought, wow.

They have to fight for stage time, sell while they perform, and pour their hearts into songs while half the room is talking and not really paying attention to them.

It takes guts.

I found myself motivated watching different bands as I walked from one club to another.

And yes, I tipped. Actual cash.

I'm old school Gen X. We still like cash.

I continue to remind younger folks that the most successful people you see, in business and in life, rarely had an easy path.

Challenges, hardships, and rejection are part of the necessary grind.

That grind will either wear you down or polish you.

The difference is whether you continue showing up and taking your shots.

Play on.

“Live as if you were to die tomorrow. Learn as if you were to live forever.”

» Mahatma Gandhi



The image shows a vibrant nighttime cityscape of New Orleans, Louisiana, with illuminated skyscrapers and a bridge over the water. The FSIV\$ logo, featuring a globe and a dollar sign, is positioned at the top center. Below the logo, the word "EVOLVE" is written in large, white, bold letters. Underneath "EVOLVE", the text "THE FUTURE OF RETAIL BANKING" is displayed in a smaller font. At the bottom of the graphic, the event dates and location are listed: "MAY 5-7, 2026 - NEW ORLEANS, LA". The hashtag "#FSIEVOLVE2026" is also present.

EVOLVE
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*Dave Martin, author of *The In-Store Advantage*, has become one of the most prolific writers in the banking industry. His keynote presentations, seminars, and podcasts have an authenticity and humor that brings teams of all sizes and seniority levels together.*

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