



## **CAPE CHAMBER**

OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY

### **THE 6 LAWS OF RETAIL**

**Date Published:** 28 FEB 2017

The 6 laws of retail

You probably saw 100 advertisements in the past 24 hours. Can you recall three? Messages just don't stick like they used to. We might think that we're actively filtering out the myriad of advertising that comes our way, but Levanthal's fear experiments illustrate something less defensive.

Howard Levanthal, a social psychologist, tested two groups of students. The first group received a booklet explaining the dangers of tetanus and the importance of getting vaccinated. The second group received a similar booklet, but with the addition of the most horrific pictures of people who had contracted the disease. Trust me, they weren't pleasant. Although the second group were more convinced of the importance of getting tetanus shots, the results were somewhat surprising: only 3% of each group actually went for their shots. He then made a small alteration, which increased the vaccination rate to 28% – he included a map, with the times during which the clinic was open.

Malcolm Gladwell, the author of *The Tipping Point*, contends that Levanthal's students needed to know how to fit the tetanus shot into their lives – the addition of the map and times shifted this from 'another lesson' to a piece of practical and personal medical advice.

Moral: We tend to act on things that are practical and personal, not necessarily when they are exciting, unique or cheap.

Gladwell also cites an example from Madison Avenue in the 70's. When the Columbia Record Club appointed McCann to produce TV ads to support their direct marketing print ads, Lester Wunderman – who had handled their account for 20 years, was understandable peeved. So he proposed a test – he would also produce TV ads which would run over half the USA, and McCann would run theirs over the remainder. The winner would be the most records sold in those regions.

Wunderman won hands-down. He just gave people more of a reason to look out for the print ads – he included a small Gold Box on the coupon – and you were told in his TV ads that, if you found it, you could get a free record with your order (which was the deal anyway). But why he did so well, with what has been described as a 'cheesy' idea, was that he made the print ad relevant – you had a reason to look for it – to see if you had a gold box. Duh.



## **CAPE CHAMBER**

OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY

People don't have the luxury to consider all the deep and meaningful brand associations when they're ready to purchase. Sometimes clear signage, an uncluttered parking lot and an inviting storefront can be the tipping point for getting feet into the store. When considering consumer communication, the three laws of retail could then be extended from location, location, location to include: personal, practical and relevant.

Reference: Gladwell M. The Tipping Point. Abacus Books 2002.

### About the author

Sid Peimer is the Executive Director of the Cape Chamber of Commerce & Industry. His book 'The Clear Win: Pitching for new business – the strategies that work; the myths that don't' can be found on Amazon [here](#)

**Tags:** Advice, business, Business guide, cape chamber, Chamber Says, communication, ED's blog, Law, Levanthal, Marketing, Operations, Retail, Rules, Sid Peimer, small business, Small Business Development, SME, SMME, Steps, Steps to follow, Strategy, Tips, where opportunity meets

**Categories:** ED's Blog, Featured Item