

## Donald Trump - He Won't Run, But His Customers Might

By Larry Williams

It seems like every time we change the channel, there's Donald Trump again. He's either promoting his T.V. show *The Apprentice*, any one of his hotel properties, the Miss Universe Pageant or raising speculation about running for President. Regardless of his politics, I think everyone can agree that he sure knows how to get the media worked up.

His latest round of politically motivated attention can arguably be looked at as one of the most successful attempts to get free publicity in recent memory. But was it genius or a risky move? Perhaps the bigger observation is how this move might actually destroy the myth that "no press is bad press".



The Donald is certainly no stranger to publicity. One can certainly see that he enjoys the spotlight. This was most evident during his recent attempt to fuel speculation about a possible G.O.P. presidential run. His platform of choice was the "birther" issue. He was so certain that President Barack Obama was not a naturalized U.S. citizen that he stopped at nothing to prove his point. When the President unexpectedly

released his Hawaiian birth certificate, The Donald all but gave up his political ambitions. At least that's what we were all led to believe.

I believe there's another reason Donald Trump likely walked away from his presidential ambitions and all of that free publicity. But don't expect hear about it on any network or cable news channel. One thing The Donald knows well is business. He has built a very successful brand with his resort properties, investments and television appearances. There are not too many people who question his business acumen. It's probably not a stretch to assume that the overwhelming majority of people would love to achieve a fraction of his success.

So why did he walk away from this fight? Why did he pack up these ambitions and call it a day? It seems very uncharacteristic of Donald Trump! To understand the reason "why", you need not look any further than his customers. Think about it. A year ago, the majority of people had no idea what political affiliation Donald Trump was allegiant to. Now they do! They all know he is a Republican with a very outspoken viewpoint.

Now ask yourself, if you are a Democrat or Independent voter, are you likely to book a room and visit a Trump property and spend your hard earned money there? Would you buy advertising time during *The Apprentice* or the Miss Universe Pageant? Since our country is generally split down the middle along conservative and liberal lines, it isn't

difficult to see that alienating fifty percent of your customer base is not good business. Being outspoken about politics is the perfect way to nose dive fifty percent of your profits. Donald Trump is no fool and you can bet his decision to back away from the political arena is a business decision.

So what does this have to do with the wedding business? Well for starters, carefully examine how you express your political opinions while in public view. Do you freely express your political views on Facebook or other Social Media? It's important to maintain a neutral position when customers and business colleagues are looking on. It's not about your "Freedom of Speech" rights. It has more to do with alienating the very people who might choose to do business with you or refer you.

I remember participating in a wedding faire back in October 2008. This was just one month before the presidential election between John McCain and Barack Obama. I was amazed at how many logo'd up wedding vehicles had political bumper stickers on them. It boggled my mind. I could not understand what would motivate a business person to express a viewpoint that would alienate fifty percent of their customer base. You might as well just place a "Not Welcome" mat outside your business.

Before you begin a public expression that deals with politics, think about the real reason Donald Trump likely backed away from all this free publicity. He knew that the more he traveled down this political road, his customers would cast their vote to not do business with him. Save your business and some dignity, don't discuss politics when customers and colleagues are looking on.

(Editor's Note: Larry Williams is the author of the book – *Customer Service A to Z*. He is a nationally-recognized seminar speaker and passionate about spreading a positive message of customer service standards. For more information, please visit the website <http://www.CustomerServiceAtoZ.com>.)