

AMNESIA MEDICATION

Not long ago, I saw a sign on Lawrence Ave. in Toronto that said, "Don't loan people money. It gives them amnesia."

It does, doesn't it? Not just the fact the money is owed, but the terms and commitments and promises that may have been made. Slight or massive cases of amnesia affect consumers as well as accounts payable departments. We cannot stop the spread of this 'collection virus'; it comes with the territory as soon as you grant credit.



What we can do is reduce its effects, all negative, as they relate to our business.

In my books and seminars, we spend most of our time on being the very best when you are one-on-one with the Customer on the telephone. But for amnesia medication, your best bet is notices, letters, faxes, messages, and e-mail.

(To make this simple and short, 'letters' in the following suggestions includes notices, faxes, and e-mail.)

Content

You want the best-written letters possible, but for the benefits of amnesia medication, almost any letter will do. When they know YOU haven't forgotten about them it does wonders for reviving their memory.

Timing

There are standards in the business, such as sending a notice at five or ten days after the payment was due. Think! Did you set your standards based on what may have been effective for 'general' business or even a different 'type' of business?

Chapter from: Tipping the Scales by Tim Paulsen - you have author's permission to download, print and distribute copies.

Tailor your timing

Some of your Customers will have a more serious case of amnesia. They need higher doses of medication. Where promises have been broken in the past, a reminder notice or telephone call on the day of the promised payment (or even the day before) is best.

A bit of humor?

Cut some pieces of string and tape to the bottom of a letter. Ask the Customer to tie on one of their fingers to remember their commitment. (Not for everybody, but a different technique will reduce, dramatically, cases of 'future' amnesia.

Clear message

This has been mentioned in previous tips, but needs repeating. (In collection training, I have found the attendees can also develop cases of amnesia!)

When you leave a message, speak clearly and SLOW DOWN. The most important part of our message is the telephone number, but this is the area where most collectors speed up and the number is difficult if not impossible to decipher.

Jawaharlal Nehru said, "*You can't change the course of history by turning the faces of portraits to the wall.*" Ensuring our portraits are always close by and facing our Customers will change our collection future.