

TUESDAY, MAY 11, 2010

## Is Anyone Listening?



Last night, I caught the end of Neil Cavuto's show, when he told a story that made me think - he said that he was shopping for a Mother's Day gift and went into a store. Both the store owner and his wife came over to him within the first few minutes to see if they could assist him with finding a gift to purchase. He told them both politely that he preferred to look by himself, that he didn't have anything in mind, but was in a hurry, so he wished to be left alone. They did so, but only for a minute. As soon as he picked something up to look at it, they both immediately came over to him again, giving him information he hadn't asked for, insisting that the gift he was looking at must be what he wanted, and continuing to badger him. He again asked them to let him look for the gift in private, and they continued to ask him what he was looking for and let him know that the gifts in the section he was standing in could all be mailed. As he was getting more and more exasperated, his phone rang. It was his daughter in the store next door, saying that she had found a gift. So he walked out of the first store, leaving the patrons in shock. His message was that "no one is listening."



That message got me thinking - are we guilty of the same thing? Do we bother our clients or potential clients with information that they've asked not to receive? Do we help them when they need it and let them be when they want some solitude? What is our customer service experience really like for them - are we overbearing, like these store owners? Or are we facilitators, business partners, trusted advisors? Do we insist that we know what's best for them, without finding out what it is that they really want and need? Does that ultimately push them away? I think Cavuto's message is a good reminder that part of being great at our jobs, whether as legal marketers, as attorneys, or in any other field, is really listening to our clients, their needs, and even the underlying needs and wants they have that they might not be expressing. Ask yourself today, are you listening?