



## Big and Powerful Doesn't Always Carry the Day

THERE'S THE BIBLICAL STORY OF DAVID AND GOLIATH, OF COURSE, BUT JUJUTSU MIGHT BE THE MORE PRACTICAL EXAMPLE BECAUSE THE TERM TRANSLATES TO THE ART OF USING AN OPPONENT'S FORCE TO WIN INSTEAD OF TRYING TO OVERPOWER THE OPPONENT WITH YOUR OWN FORCE. BEING SMALL HAS ADVANTAGES.

Nobody at WalMart reads this newsletter. Or at Apple, Microsoft, Kroger, Amazon, or DuPont. Nobody at Verizon, AT&T, or Chevron, either. Likewise Lowe's, Starbucks, General Dynamics, and General Electric. McDonald's or Wendy's. The list of who doesn't read this newsletter is long. That's because I generally work with small, closely held organizations.

Running a large corporation isn't an easy job. You have to deal with SOX (Sarbanes Oxley) regulations when you're a publicly traded company. And stockholders. There's an enormous amount of power within large organizations but my experience suggests that the larger an organization is, the most opportunities it has to do something stupid.

That's exactly why a small, nimble organization can beat a giant. You can't beat WalMart nationally. You can't beat WalMart locally on every product that they sell. But you can beat WalMart in your community and in your area of expertise. Just don't try to compete on price. That won't ever work.

Marketing guru Ray Jutkins, who was both a long-time friend and a long-time client stressed that price is not a selling point. There is an exception: When someone asked him why his prospects always wanted the lowest price, Ray found that price was the key selling point in the industry. "When they bought that type product, people made price a top factor." In other words, the product in question was a commodity.



If you're selling a commodity, you may think that price will have to be your primary consideration. Ray recommended asking one or two money questions first to be sure that the prospect was truly a prospect. "Get that out of the way first," he said, "then close the sale with those who want to buy what you're selling by emphasizing your extra services."

### Conner's Approach

I found an article by Gordon Conner on a similar subject. He had a different approach, but he echoed Ray's comments on price.

"You're going to have a hard time surviving against the big box stores," Conner wrote, "if you don't get smart and go after those guys. There are

at least 5 ways to beat them without having to fight them on price." Here's what he has to say:

It's amazing how many small retailers don't get it. After all, there's no way they will be able to compete on price with the WalMarts and Amazons of the world. To win, they have to compete on experience.

Conner cites a great example of how a specialty retail store wins: Tinker Toys of Abilene, Texas. This small chain of four stores is owned and operated by a fiery entrepreneur, Betsy Barton. When you walk into Tinker Toys, you don't expect great deals on the clearance rack because there is no clearance rack. But what you will get is an awesome experience.

Here are 5 things that Tinker Toys teaches about how to compete on something besides price:

## 1. Offer Incentives

When you walk through the Tinker Toys door, you'll be greeted by someone with a big smile.

Before you know it, you have a toy shoved into your hands. It's a small store but with plenty of room to play.

It's a virtual playground and kids love it. Tinker Toys is constantly holding sidewalk sales, outdoor festivals and fundraisers to get the community involved.

## 2. It's All About Value

Tinker Toys doesn't shy away from their higher prices because they make up for them by providing a spectacular experience for customers.

Regulars get a newsletter with frequent specials and Tinker Toys offers special deals on social media. They put the customer experience above everything else.

## 3. Differentiate

The big box stores aren't going to take chances on new and different products.

Smaller stores get the first crack at the really cool stuff and the cool stuff is what their customers look for. Often these oddities become their best sellers. Nowadays, Tinker Toys is one of the first stores to be involved in new product testing, so they get the first shot at all the new ideas.

## 4. Go Online

Tinker Toys may be small by comparison, but they have a great catalog and website to go along with that great in-store experience.

We all know that online shopping is going nowhere but up, so offering this alternative for shopping will definitely be a strong key to Tinker Toys' future success.

## 5. Be Social

Tinker Toys does a super job of attracting and retaining loyal, local customers.

A fun newsletter, on-going website updates, social media exposure, and an owner who is known by everyone in Abilene and throughout the toy industry keeps their fans constantly engaged.

Conner says that all retail businesses need to be active on social media.

For retailers to compete with the big box stores is always a daunting task. It takes hard work and there's no short cut to success. Betsy Barton is one of the hardest workers in the toy business, but if you watch her closely, you'll never know she's working hard.

Barton says that she looks like she's simply having a great time, doing what she really loves. Which she is. [Ω](#)



**Gordon Conner is a Branding Consultant/Coach and Copywriter who helps small businesses become exceptional companies. He has been providing advertising, marketing, branding and copywriting services for 39 years and lives in**

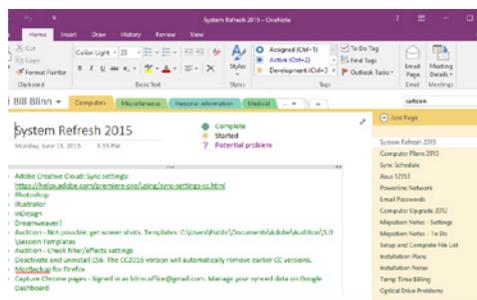
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# Office 2016, Office 365, or Something Else?

**IF YOU UPGRADED A COMPUTER TO WINDOWS 10, YOU MAY SEE NOTIFICATIONS THAT OFFER 50% OFF FOR OFFICE 2016 AND OFFICE 365. IS THIS A GOOD DEAL?**

You can sign up for a year's worth of Office 365 for about \$35 for one computer. If you have several computers, one of the standard offerings may be a better deal.

Office 365 Home costs \$100 per year and the applications can be installed on 5 computers – any combination of Windows machines, Macs, Android tablets, or Apple tablets. You can also install the applications on 5 smart phones. Office 2016 is compatible with Windows 7, 8, and 10. Mac users need OSX 10.10 or later.



The package includes Word, Excel, PowerPoint, OneNote, Outlook, Access, Publisher, 1TB of space on OneDrive, and one hour per month for Skype calls. If you use Visio or Project, you'll need to license them separately or continue to use older versions. Unlike the preview version of Office 2016, the commercial version doesn't require that you uninstall previous versions of Office.

There's also no need to activate the applications with a 25-character key. Just log on to the Microsoft Store and the installation process is virtually automatic.

Do you need all that power? Open source office suites (Open Office and Libre Office) do most of what the Microsoft applications do and online applications such as Google Docs and Zoho Docs may offer sufficient capabilities.

The online and free applications don't include a replacement for one Microsoft application that I consider to be indispensable: One Note.

One Note is a free-form information manager that includes a powerful search function. If you need to remember how to perform a task, maintain a list of books you're planning to read, compile medical information, or store any other information in a readily accessible location, One Note is the perfect tool.

A free application called Evernote doesn't fit my way of thinking. Evernote is more like a filing cabinet and One Note is more like a notebook.

Microsoft Office is still the standard by which other suites are judged, but Corel Wordperfect, open source applications, and cloud-based apps should be included in any review of software for your office needs. [Ω](#)



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