

the Focal Point!



A newsletter for the customers of Focus Telecommunications, Inc.

Healthy...

Tis the season! If you are feeling stressed and nervous, take a moment to look at your "To Do" list. Is there more on it than you can possibly accomplish in a week, much less a day? Choose just a few things that have the highest priority and plan when you are going to do them. Look to see if any errands can be combined with others for later in the week. Eliminate some tasks. If all else fails, delegate—ASK FOR HELP! It's okay to admit that you can't do everything. You'll feel more energetic and healthier if you give yourself a break.

Wealthy...

We all make purchases that we later determine aren't right and need to be returned. Most of us also procrastinate on returning items until too much time has passed or we are too embarrassed to return them.

Make a habit of placing the item and the sales slip in a bag and placing it in your car immediately. Tape a note to the dashboard that you have to stop at the store to return it. Thousands of dollars are wasted every year because people neglect to return items that they cannot use.

...and Wise

Looking for something really special for someone you love? Make them a playlist! It's a gift that tells them you not only love them, but you know them. You can make one using Media Player at Microsoft.com, or check out iTunes.com or other similar sites. When you are finished, burn the list to a CD or load it onto their cell phone or iPod. Choosing the perfect songs for the people you love will make a cherished gift they will always remember.

Focal Point! to Become National Publication

For nearly two decades Kelly Gillis and Donna West have been teaming up to write, publish, and distribute many industry newsletters. They began with our own client newsletter, which began as the *Focus Newsletter* and evolved into *The Focal Point*, then *Business Calls*, and finally back to the *Focal Point!*

They have written our staff newsletter, *In Focus*, for about 20 years, until this past year when Focus Director of Operations, Barbara Ireland, took over writing that publication. The *Focus Leader*, a quarterly newsletter for our supervisors has also been their project, and will now go to Barb.

In 1998 they agreed to write a newsletter for the SNUG organization, a group of telephone answering service owners that all use Startel equipment. The *Galaxy* has grown to over 30 pages a quarter! From there it was a natural progression to write

a 4-page quarterly newsletter called the *Constellation* for the employees of the businesses in SNUG.

As Donna became more involved in ATSI (The Association of TeleServices International) she and Kelly took on a project to produce an on-line magazine for the membership, called *Answer OnLine*. They are about to publish the eighth quarterly edition of the 60 plus page e-zine. They coordinate other writers for the publication as well as writing much of the e-zine themselves.

Now, by popular demand, the dynamic duo are about to come full circle – they will be publishing *Business Calls* for owners of other answering services to send to their clients. Some customization will allow owners to make the newsletter their own. Their newest publication will be sold through the United States and Canada through Regional Industry Organizations.

Life in 25 Words or Less

“You may be disappointed if you fail, but you are doomed if you don't try.”

—Beverly Sills

Breaking Technical News

A while back Focus changed the way we take messages. We went from taking messages in all capital letters to being case sensitive. We did this because as a group we decided that the messages (our product) looked more professional. Now, not only does it look more professional but it also keeps our messages to our clients from being reported as SPAM!

A colleague recently warned. "While working on a project involving Google Apps and Gmail accounts, I discovered something that has a direct bearing on our industry: Did you know that part of the anti-spam systems imposed by MANY mail providers and ISP's includes case sensitivity? Many providers are marking as SPAM messages that contain ALL CAPS - especially if every message coming from that same IP address is formatted the same way." Expect this trend to continue with more providers, it is one way to help eliminate everyone's nemesis, SPAM! If your e-mails to others are not being received, be sure that you are not transmitting messages in capital letters.

November 30, 2010

Our Services Include

Answering Service
 Appointment Making
 Customer Service
 Data Entry
 Dealer Locate
 Direct Mail
 Fulfillment Literature
 Help Desk
 Hotlines
 Pre-Announcements
 Relief Receptionist
 Reservations
 R.S.V.P.
 Surveys
 Voice Mail

Focus Comm Centers

1912 Liberty Rd. Suite F
 Eldersburg, MD 21784

2930 Carol Rd.
 York, PA 17402

Remittance address:

PO Box 822640
 Philadelphia, PA 19182-2640

Phone Numbers:

301-421-1111 MD/DC
 410-880-8600 Baltimore
 301-236-5500 VA
 1-800-886-6696 Toll Free

E-mail: ask@focustele.com
website: www.focustele.com

On-Call info can be sent to:

301-421-0347 Fax
 301-421-5261 Phone
 on-call@focustele.com

Customer Care Contact

301-421-5894 Office
 301-421-0347 Fax
 customercare@focustele.com

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Search people for
 "Lannette Gerbrick", our
 Director of Business
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Call us NOW for more info at
 301-421-1111

The President's Letter



Dear Friends,

My bird feeders had been empty for several days, in the whirlwind of preparing for my daughter, Lauree, her husband, Neil, and their two children to visit for 10 days at Thanksgiving (something for which I was very thankful). I had neglected to purchase the seed for my feathered friends, so Cammie and Brett made sure that a trip to the store was scheduled! Soon the garden was full of Cardinals, Nuthatches, and Chickadees.

At this time of year it is easy to be so busy that we forget those who depend on us not only for food but for the happiness in their lives. This is the perfect time to draw a deep breath, and focus on the people around us who may not have all the blessings that we have. The elderly neighbor, the single parent, the student too far from home, may all be in need of nourishment for their spirits. The wonderful thing about taking time to share your warmth with others is that by doing so, your own spirit is nourished in return. Yes, it may mean that you have a little less time in your busy day, but relaxation is over rated.

Enjoy the rest of the holiday season with others; the stove, the laundry, the dirty car will all wait. Caring for your family and neighbors is what the season is all about, no matter how you celebrate. The gift of yourself is the kindest (and most appreciated) gift you can give. Happy Holidays, everyone.

Hugs,



Focus staff volunteered for The 4th annual People's Pay for Play on 105.7. The X raised a record-breaking \$93,000 for Children's Miracle Network and the kids at Penn State Hershey Children's Hospital.

Rock On!

Our own Kelly Gillis has been singing with the X-Band (a bluesy rock group) since January of this year. You can hear them play by visiting www.xbandjams.com.

The X-Band was recently heard at Bangkok Blues in Falls Church, VA. Check out their website for upcoming events.

They have a few openings during the holidays, so if you are looking for last minute entertainment, e-mail robert@xbandjams.com for more information.

Santa Hotline

Every year Santa and Mrs. Claus

are so busy that they have to set up a phone line at

Focus. So let all the little ones in your life know they can call Santa anytime at **1-866-409-1635** or **410-792-9332!**



Gotta' Giggle

“What we're really talking about is a wonderful day set aside on the fourth Thursday on November when no one diets. I mean, why else would they call it Thanksgiving?”

Referrals

Special thanks to Steve Coates with Chimney Masters, who referred Oakbrook Management, and Stephen Millstein with Debt Relief Center, who referred Residential Relief to Focus. Steve and Stephen each received a check for \$100 as a token of our appreciation!