



THE BIG IDEA

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Let Your Customers Call the Shots

Bob Williams, president of Briscoe Protective Systems, headquartered in Centereach, a hamlet in New York's Suffolk County on Long Island, is a thinking man's alarm dealer. What I mean

by that is he doesn't answer a direct question with a simple and concise answer. He takes stock of all of the question's variables, ponders them and then he delivers an answer.

When I posed my Big Idea question to him, Williams' response came forth immediately. However, as soon as I had it written down he added, "I would also say that no matter how big you are, never forget who the true bosses are in the company. They are your customers. Always treat them with care and concern and put their interests, as well as your co-workers' interests, above anything else. If you do the right thing by your customers, everything else will fall into place."

It sure appears as though everything has fallen into place for Williams and his company, which specializes in the design, service, monitoring and inspection of fire alarms and security systems. Briscoe earns right around \$250,000 in recurring monthly revenue (RMR) and this year sales will be about \$6.5 million. Keep in mind, less than 1% — and actually, probably less than half of 1% — of the companies in this industry ever achieve that size. Therefore, you have to take seriously what Williams has to say.

Just as I was about to begin delving into what he had advocated in response to my original question, Williams went on to further expound on his thoughts with a question of his own: Out of all of the business disciplines involved in running a security company — accounting, financial, sales, management, operations, etc. — which one should an alarm company owner work hardest at?

Because Williams is also a marketing guy, I thought for sure he would suggest marketing is the answer. Yet instead he focused on a particular area that — based on my experience in acquisitions and mergers — presents the

IDEA OF THE MONTH

If you had just one really great idea you could share with the alarm industry, what would it be?



This month's great idea comes from Bob Williams, president of Centereach, N.Y.-based Briscoe Protective Systems

Williams' great idea:
Diversify into different product lines and utilize the market channel you are currently using to find out what your customers' needs and requirements are.

biggest problem for the majority of security professionals.

"Always understand what your costs are in all of the different areas in which your business specializes," Williams says. "Concentrate on the most profitable areas and reconfigure the less profitable areas." In other words, put your strengths, capital and effort into the areas that are going to provide you with the most profitability.

STRIVING FOR A HAPPY TOMORROW

It occurs to me, some years ago I heard the comment that all activities are either tension relieving or goal achieving. Well, by concentrating on the most profitable areas you are able to more progressively attack the goals that you've established for you and your company. Since those goals always have at least one component of finance to them, making the most money is probably one of your highest priorities.

The question I always ask myself after interviewing someone for this column is, "Is the person I've interviewed successful because of their work disciplines, or are the work disciplines providing the greatest physic value and therefore success is a byproduct?"

The answer: I simply do not know. But if I am a betting man, I want the odds to be with me; setting meaningful goals all the while, but doing the work that I find most enjoyable. For sure the two can go hand-in-hand! ■