



## Dube, Dube, Do

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It seems that every time you turn around some mass media guru is touting economic chaos. The dreaded "R" word (recession) is eluded and hinted at as subtly as the orange on a Home Depot sign. Housing prices are dropping through the basement, no pun intended. Taxes and tolls are going up, the government owes more than the worth of all the oil in Saudi Arabia, and of course, what's worse is that you have a ton of inventory and your counter people are playing solitaire on their computers. One night after what seemed to be a week-long day, I turned on Larry King and I thought he was interviewing Chicken Little. He was practically predicting that the sky was falling.

I wish I could say that I am immune, but I am not. My taxes are soaring; the cost of my kids' college tuition keeps trying to outdo itself. I go to the gas station and they have a clerk to help you fill out a home equity loan to pay for the tank of gas. My favorite coffee chain (for anyone who wants to buy me a cup), Starbucks, raised their coffee price by a dime. The USPS announced that they were raising first class postage again in May, just in time for my birthday (all presents gratefully accepted). My boss told me that he was doubling my workload, but not to worry, he was only cutting my salary a little bit to make up for it. Somewhere towards the end of last year, 24/7 became 28/7%. And of course, my local government has informed me that we

are implementing a new give and take system for property tax assessment; I give and they take. In USA Today, I read that congress had passed a bill declaring middle income to be about \$8.50 an hour and to simplify things, the IRS will have our employers send them our paychecks and the IRS will cheerfully send us that what is left of it. Life is beautiful, isn't it?

Well, there I was at the Lancaster Show last weekend, surrounded by my fellow vendors, who, like wise, were ever spreading joy and love, for they too feel the love of the economy.

There I was, at the Lancaster Show, over 1,000 miles away from home, and it seems to me that I have done dozens if not hundreds of shows since January. Tired would have been what I felt after a couple of days off to rest up. I got to the show early, going over details, taking care of last minute issues that always come up. There was the unspoken pressure of selling a lot to justify spending the money and putting in the time and effort to be at the show and of course, knowing that it was a big deal for a dealer to travel to San Antonio in a year where the doom and gloomers dominate the airwaves. All things considered it was shaping up to be a less than happy day.

When along came Mike Dube.

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Mike is the fellow who last year suffered a major life changing accident that left him with far greater challenges in life that most people can imagine. Here was this man coming down the aisle at the Lancaster show, still bearing the scars of a halo that was attached to his head. Of all people, he was the one with the most amount of good reasons to be bitter, to be down, and to be in a really bad mood. On the Lancaster web site, you can follow a link that lets you watch Mike and the progress at his rehab facility.

Anyway, back to the show., There came Mike Dube, and I had a few things to go over with him that needed to be taken care of. I wasn't sure what to expect.

As he wheeled in to my booth, another Lancaster person distracted him. They spoke for about a minute, and then Mike, having turned around to talk the other person, started to roll away. I called his name and he turned back into my booth. Politely asking him how he was doing, I saw a really big smile blossom, his eyes opened wide and he uttered three words that changed my day. He said he was great.

Of all people in that building at that show, he was the one who had the most reason not to be having a good day, yet he told me that he was great.

In a split second, my day changed. I was now feeling great as well. His attitude spontaneously infected me. He was right. Despite everything life has thrown against us all, we have it pretty darn good, and if Mike Dube, with all the challenges he has faced this last year, can see that, certainly the rest of us can and should. Every time I saw him

during the show, I would come up to him, tell him a joke and we would both laugh. I spoke to Mike after the show to discuss some business issues that needed to be taken care. While not one of the things we talked about were humorous in nature, I still had a smile on my face during and after our phone call. I will be going down for a meeting in a few weeks and I know that no matter what, I will be in the company of a man with a remarkable attitude. Hopefully, some more of it rubs off on me.

It is not always what you know. Sometimes it is about what you believe.

Next time when you walk into your store, take stock of how lucky you really are. You are living the American Dream. Sure, we are facing some challenges in our businesses this year. Sure, we will all be tightening our belts, watching our inventories very closely, and we will all be taking a conservative approach to spending. But, and that is a BIG BUT, do not get caught in a pattern of negative attitudes and behavior.

Think about it. Would you want to walk into a store and spend money with a grumpy store person?

I am not telling you to load your store with merchandise, double your staff and hope for the best. I am telling you to take the attitude of appreciating what you have and sharing the happiness with your customers and your staff. You might just find your day getting better and seeing more customers. Attitude is very important in sales and aren't you in the sales business?

Hope you are having a good day.

*Chas Wolfson represents the Rock Miracle brand for Samax, Inc. He knows everything you'd ever want to know about restoration, paint stripping and deck preservation. His articles and observations about the industry are informative and funny, and he manages to bring a lighthearted touch to the heavy duty world of restoration. You can find his articles in various publications to the trade.*