

## **Business is in a slump...so are the Phillies.**

Philadelphia sports fans were thrilled when the Phillies went to the World Series last year. Playing against the Yankees was a David and Goliath match, like a small software company competing against a Microsoft. Even though the Phillies lost that series they were committed to come back even stronger. Over the first six weeks of this season, the Phillies were the hottest team in baseball and seemed destined to win the championship. However, with a string of losses and under performances, the Phillies discovered they were not invincible, unbeatable, nor guaranteed success.

This is a lot like our businesses. For many of us, 2010 is still less than stellar. Not up to the performance of past years.

Like great baseball teams, the key to a turnaround is to fully examine what went wrong, get back to basics and capitalize on our strengths. What was it that got us to where we were? Was it a great product or service, outstanding staff and support, delivering when needed or just all around good play? Providing what the customers (fans) want on a consistent basis creates loyal fans and generates profits.

How do we get back to the top? For the Phillies, they know it's a long season and not time to panic. It may require more practice time in the batting cages, getting back to basics, overcoming complacency and even rearranging the players in the field.

Sometimes, we have to go back to those who had confidence in us. For the Phillies it's reaching out to the fans, encouraging them to continue supporting the team. Those interviews, team events, community outreach etc. are all critical. For us, it's reaching out to our customers, maintaining communication, winning their hearts day by day. The Phillies know that keeping fans happy is crucial. They don't have to win every game, just keep the fans engaged, desiring more. We have to do the same; reach out and respond beyond what we're already doing. The importance of being in front of your customers can't be overstated.

The simple lesson we learn from successful baseball teams is by keeping the fans engaged in the drama of the ongoing season they are giving customers what they want. And the fans keep coming back.

And one last lesson to learn from baseball is to enjoy what you do, have fun; keep our spirits and enthusiasm up. When customers see our passion, it will have positive results. - "When they start the game, they don't yell, "Work ball." They say, "Play ball." ~Willie Stargell, 1981

Steve McCarthy

June 2010