

## Headlines

From September 2000 Cape Cod Times

A lot of us get the news from Sound Bites and Headlines. Most of the time they can convey the story adequately. Like: “ Sox Fever Hits Hub“.

But then you have some stories that won't fit in a nutshell. “ Sox Lose Game Seven” There was a lot more to that game than a headline or even several paragraphs could get across.

Businesses are like that. Sometimes all the characteristics of the business are not apparent to the general public. The facade we see is often the tip of the iceberg. Business people are real good at facades. In fact, facade engineering is a huge industry - web site design, logo, advertising and public relations...

Every business is a major corporation in it's own mind. Recent technology has enabled the solo practitioner to be perceived as a larger company.

So how do you tell if you are buying mystique or real beef ? You can't. It's that simple.

The only way you can tell what's under the shell is to pick it up. Unfortunately, with some services, you usually have to pay for it first. And sometimes you can't get your money back if you don't like the pea.

I started thinking about all this when a potential customer asked me if I had a real office with real people that answer the phone - not a virtual business with a fancy web site and a voice mail system at home. They wanted to make sure they were hiring an iceberg and not just a tip.

There used to be a radio personality named Paul Harvey who had a show called “The Rest of the Story”. On his show you could hear the whole story, not just the sound bite. Oftentimes there was a lot more to a given story than what played on the network news.

Is there such a thing for business ?

Consumer Reports, the Better Business Bureau, the Division of Registration which licenses certain categories of business people - they can level out the playing field a little in logging major violations, but we all know the best advertising is...

Even if you have a web site, a database, a really cool logo and a real person answering the phone you got nothing if you don't have a word of mouth clientele. It's the only way customers can see what's behind your headlines.