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Talks About
Customer Service*

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MARKETING MINUTE (Under)Water Skiing



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Were there underlying issues that I hadn't considered before heading into the water? Of course.”

A few years ago, after a parking trade show in Denver, Dave Packard and I realized that we had made an error with our flights. The show was over, but our flights didn't leave until the next evening. We were a day off. What to do? We are both too cheap to make a flight change and pay the charges (weren't on Southwest Airlines), so we decided, why not go skiing?

Dave and I grabbed whatever clothes we could find worthy of the slopes as we headed to A-Basin, the only ski area that remained open that late into the year. We passed by the closed Keystone Resort and headed further up the mountain to find A-Basin busy with late season skiers. It was a priceless day, sunny and warm. We skied without coats, just jeans and sweatshirts.

It felt like I had just gone skiing last week, like riding a bike, it all came back to me. Dave and I were enjoying the day, relaxing after the busy convention. A-Basin is an advanced hill with challenging black diamond runs and 10' drops as you come off the top of the hills, not a place for novice skiers. That day, it was tame as the late season took away the challenging moguls and replaced them with soft forgiving wet and a heavy corn surface.

Since it was so late in the year, a pond developed mid-mountain where melting snow collected in an ever-growing body of water. All day, I watched from my perch high on the chair-lift crossing over the "lake," skiers brave the water and cross it full speed on their skis. It was thrilling and something I had never had the opportunity to try for myself, as I rarely went spring skiing. I wanted to hit the water to see what it was like, but I kept avoiding it, keeping to what I knew worked for me.

Finally, I couldn't take it anymore. I told Dave that I was going for it. Before you knew it, from a hundred yards up hill, I faced my skis directly down the hill to collect speed and I entered the lake. It was amazing.

I was flying across the lake, screaming like a high school kid, water spraying to my left and right, then something happened. My rental bindings set too easy for this new found stress on my skis, broke lose and down I went.... completely under water. I disappeared like Nessie, the Loch-Ness monster.

When I found my senses, and my missing ski, I resurfaced, leaving my pride in the water. I stood there, dripping wet with my phone in my pocket, a soaking wet wallet and my #7 Ben Roethlisberger jersey stuck to my shivering body. Hoots and hollers from the chair lift that crossed the lake enveloped me as Big Ben comments abounded from the dry observers above. I walked out of the lake, soaking wet and proceeded to ski down the rest of the mountain drenched and freezing, can you say major shrinkage?

Surprisingly, the rental guy got such a laugh out of my misfortune that I didn't get fined for returning soaking wet rental boots. I immediately went to the pro-shop to buy something dry (and warm). All I could find this late in season was a "stoners" full zip sweatshirt that I wore the rest of the day along with my pair of shorts I found in the car.

To this day, when Dave brings up the story, we laugh until we cry.

I don't regret doing it in the least. I would have regretted NOT doing it more than attempting and failing. That day, I had victory over the restrictions in my mind.

It reminds me of the previous time I went skiing. Mike, a friend of mine, was skiing with me as we approached the Half-Pipe. I said, let's do it Mike. He freaked out. No way was he going to go down the Half-Pipe with me. The Half-Pipe is for tricks and flips and crazy X-Games kind of stuff. I said, 'Mike, listen, all we have to do is ski straight down the center of the pipe. We don't need to go up the walls'.

Was I prepared properly for my adventure crossing the lake? Not at all. Do I regret taking the chance and attempting something I hadn't done before? Not at all. Did I learn from my mistake? Yes. Were there underlying issues that I hadn't considered before heading into the water? Of course. Should I have tried it on a small puddle first? Yes.

I have spent a ton of time, money, and emotions dreaming and chasing ideas. Rarely do the results look like I had hoped they would. But, never, and there is no exception to this rule, NEVER, will you get anywhere towards realizing your vision and dreams until you point your skis downhill and take the plunge.