

VANTREO

INSURANCE BROKERAGE

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Imagine biting into a freshly-baked, still warm, homemade chocolate chip cookie. The outside is crisp...the inside soft. The dance of chocolate, brown sugar, and butter feels like a party in your mouth while the rich aroma fills the room. This truly is one of the best cookies ever baked. You know it. Now imagine opening a shop dedicated to bringing this incredible experience to the world and finding that your future raving fans are not coming through the door.

That's exactly what happened to Debbi Fields when she opened her first Mrs. Fields store in Palo Alto, California in 1977. Debbi knew the cookies were so tasty they were almost addictive, but her potential customers had no idea how good they were. So rather than wait around, Debbi grabbed a tray, filled it with delicious samples and headed down the street offering them to everyone she encountered. The result was a line of people following her back to the store to buy cookies to share with their friends. And the rest, as they say, is history. Today the company has nearly 400 locations and about 4,000 employees.

Of course, we're not all in the cookie business but there is a correlation...really, there is. The formula for bringing in prospective opportunities, new customers, and raving fans in just about any business is in making sure our ideal customers know we exist and know enough about us to do business with us...it is in distributing "samples". A sample, by definition, is a small part or quantity of something intended to show what the whole is like. Our prospective customers want to analyze a sample of us.

We start by recognizing that we can't expect people to simply believe us when we say we are good. If we want our online or other connections to follow us back to our businesses, we need to develop our tray of samples.

At VANTREO, we're insurance professionals. How does an insurance professional give out samples?

Our tray of samples includes many quick ways people can check out how we uniquely make

life easier, less time consuming and more affordable for our clients. Things like our **work comp overpayment calculator** [1], or our BenefitsRx **HR onboarding and Employee Benefits administration technology** [2]. Often we offer a newly developed sample like our white knight technology solution for **managing COVID re-entry** [3] which helps ensure that people do not come to work sick and that helps manage the employees that do contract the virus. And our list of samples goes on.

Just as Debbi Fields pursued her future raving fans down the streets of Palo Alto , every business must find, and share samples with, its ideal prospects.

While it takes time to develop authentic and active prospect/customer relationships, we are all fortunate to be able to use the online world as our marketing freeway .

Consider this. It is impossible to virtually smell a batch of freshly baked cookies. Yet, millions of cookies are sold over the internet. In fact, Americans consume over 2 billion cookies per year...about 300 cookies for each person. The average American eats about 35,000 cookies in a lifetime. And an increasing percentage of those cookies are purchased online.

Online prospecting in any business is still where the potential big payoff comes from.

It is incumbent upon every business owner and every sales person to develop their own "tray of samples" and then step out into the world to let people try them out.

Got milk anyone?

VANTREO is here to help. We stand ready to provide you with the information, education and tools to help you navigate your insurance and risk management world. If you'd like more information about this or any topic we discuss, just let us know. **Reply here** [4].

(800) 967-6543

Fax: (707) 546-2915
info@vantreo.com

Santa Rosa

100 Stony Point Rd #160
Santa Rosa, CA 95401

San Rafael

851 Irwin St, Ste 300
San Rafael, CA 94901

Larkspur

700 Larkspur Landing Cir
Larkspur CA 94939

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