

Flow-On

3 Swans newsletter no. 10, March 2009

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WHAT'S NEW?

Email orders: Please email orders to orders@3swans.co.nz

After a staggered start to the year we are all now back on deck; Jo is back from maternity leave; Yvette is back from honeymoon and John is back from Whangamata. Thanks for your cooperation in leaving voice messages if we were unable to answer the phone in time. In this newsletter we again highlight our new range of snap-taps and cap tighteners. We also now have the ability to provide bar coded products. Jo is going to be updating our web-site with products and information.

We're keen to get customer testimonials on there too, so we've included a customer feedback survey in this newsletter. We would really appreciate you responding with your honest opinions on how we're doing and how we can improve.

We now have a dedicated 'orders' email address and would appreciate it if you could use this for placing orders to ensure they go straight to the correct person (see above).

For your information, our business coach,

Annette Mitchell has supplied an article that she wrote for her local newspaper regarding surviving the recession, something we are all concerned about at the moment. Good luck out there!



Jo, John, Elliot, Yvette

BAR CODING OF PRODUCTS

We have long been mindful that some of our customers would like us to supply products bar coded. We have been working on this and now we are pleased to say that we can bar code products. We can produce bar codes with our own or with customer's numbers. If this is something that your company would find useful please contact Jo to discuss your needs. There will be a small extra charge for individually bar coded items.

DOING OUR BIT

Finding we had old stock of unusable taps (perfectly good but with an unusual thread size, unable to be used on NZ jerry cans), we approached the Salvation Army. They contacted their man in Fiji who happened to have also received lots of clean, used jerry cans which they wished to use for water. It was a good match and last week we shipped 800 taps, washers and back nuts to Fiji to be put to good use by allowing more people to have access to clean drinking water.

SURVIVING THE RECESSION

Annette's top tips for surviving the recession and coming out the other end with a thriving business:



1. Don't stop marketing - just make sure the marketing you are doing is working - so test and measure it. Why waste money on marketing that doesn't work?
2. In this business climate it's winter time - so that's a time to prune. Cut unnecessary overheads wherever possible. Go through your financials with a fine tooth comb!
3. Watch your debtors closely. Now more than ever is the time to have a fool-proof system in place to ensure you do not give unnecessary credit to those who cannot pay you on time, if at all! Remember - there is no sale until you've been paid for it!
4. Reduce debt as much as possible. This is not a time to over-leverage your business, or your personal/family, finances - liquidity and cash flow is the key right now.
5. Increase your knowledge - and your team's knowledge. What skills do you and your team need to acquire in order to do business in a completely different environment? Ask yourself these quality questions.
6. Evaluate your product or service offering. Customers needs and wants have changed and its only businesses that are flexible and adaptable to this change that will find the opportunities to grow. What you sold 2 years ago may be totally unrealistic in this new economic climate.
7. Relationships are everything. Now more than ever focus on customer loyalty. Give great service and train your team to do likewise. Don't allow your business to be fully dependent on only your wonderful personality, enthusiasm and drive to give great customer service. You are not an unlimited resource. Train those people whom you pay every week!
8. Re-negotiate with your suppliers. You may be surprised how open they are to offering you a better deal. Remember, if you don't ask you don't get!
9. Know your numbers. Gross profit, debtors, stock turns, conversion rate, etc. The fundamentals are more important than ever.
10. Get your goals clear. They may have to change from what they were 2 years ago but at least have some! If you don't aim for something it is unlikely you will achieve it. Write them down and go over them regularly.
11. Build up a positive mind-set. We attract what we focus on the most. So focus on the great opportunities out there in the marketplace - rather than what's wrong with everything.
12. Surround yourself with good people. In challenging times you need all the support, encouragement and skills you can get. Don't be afraid to employ or work alongside people who are better than you. Get over your ego and raise your own benchmarks. Stay connected to people who have a positive influence on your life and business i.e. those who are experienced in your business and/or industry - teachers, mentors, coaches and advisors.

Lastly, business is like life - it's a game. Seasons come and go and we learn to play the game and adapt to the seasons as we go along. Have some fun with the game of business and keep it in perspective - especially why you're doing it in the first place! A strong sense of purpose really helps.

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SNAP-TAPS AND CAP TIGHTENERS

In the last newsletter we advised that we would be stocking Snap-taps, which are spring-loaded press taps that can screw into a 3/4" BSP bung on jerry cans, drums or water coolers. We now have stocks of the following Snap-Taps, but we have access to a vast range so if there is a different configuration or colour you are after please let us know. Snap-taps are suitable for beverages e.g. water, juice, as well as oils and detergents. Please enquire for pricing for quantities over 200 as these will be done on direct indent. Prices below exclude GST and freight ex-Hamilton.

Code	Description	1+	10+	20+	50+	100+	Image
302033	TTTL13NZ, 3/4" BSP thread, green, with washer	10.50	9.20	8.30	7.60	6.90	
302110	RTTTL, 3/4" BPS thread, white with round handle and washer	10.50	9.20	8.30	7.60	6.90	

LOOK!
The unique snap design means **NO drips!**

Also, in the last newsletter we advertised our new Visy 58mm cap tightener. We have now also added the Alto 70mm and 45mm cap tightener (combined), details shown below:

Code	Description	\$ 1+	\$ 5+	\$ 50+	Image
800406	Alto cap tightener for 70mm caps, blue. The tightener can fit over a tap so can be used with our 70mm tap-caps. The small end is for 45mm caps on Alto 5lt industrial jerry cans.	10.50	7.00	6.00	
800407	VIP cap tightener for 58mm caps, red. This tightener does not fit over the tap on our 58mm tap-caps.	24.20	16.13	15.53	

CUSTOMER FEEDBACK SURVEY

WIN a \$50 Warehouse Voucher!

So that we can make sure we are serving the needs of our customers, and to find out what our customers like and dislike about our product range and service, we'd appreciate it if you could take the time to complete the following questions and fax this page to us (or you can type them up and email them if you prefer). If you wish to remain anonymous that's fine, but all named surveys will be put in the draw for a **\$50 Warehouse voucher**.

1. What are the three main reasons you deal with us and not somebody else?

a. _____ b. _____ c. _____

2. What is the point of difference that makes you want to deal with us? _____

3. If you could improve two things about us, what would they be, and how would you change them?

a. _____

b. _____

4. What are two things that annoy you most when dealing with businesses in our industry?

a. _____ b. _____

5. I would like to be able to order online YES / NO, WHY / WHY NOT? _____

6. If you currently receive this newsletter by post can we email it to you? YES/ NO

For the \$50 voucher draw, and to receive this newsletter by email:

Your Name & Company Name: _____

Phone no. &/or Email address: _____

Thanks for taking the time to respond! Please fax to 07 850 9581 or email joannamc@3swans.co.nz