

MBC today

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Volume 21 Issue 5 | September/October 2019

The voice of the mail and business center industry since 1982



NETWORK | LEARN | INSIGHT | GAIN

In this issue:

AMBC's The Event 2019 Schedule
Fahim & Seema's Excellent Adventure
Tech Talk with Tobye
A Little Something Extra

Dealing with the Unexpected
Dog Days of Summer
Ask Uncle Marty™
And more!

MBC today

A Publication of
Association of Mail & Business Centers (AMBC)

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www.ambc4me.org

AMBC Mission:

As a member-run non-profit trade association, our mission is to provide a #MembersHelpingMembers community for businesses in the shipping, mail, and business center industry to connect, learn, and grow.

Building on decades of experience, we believe in always reaching for what's new and what's next, and strive to grow fresh content, programs, and trusted supplier connections that benefit our members ... and inspire them to reach their full potential.

Our industry is ever evolving, and we are here to keep you current, viable, and accessible so you grow and thrive in your communities, and in our unique industry. Join us!

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Questions?

Please contact us at:

hello@ambc4me.org

or call 815-316-8255



Letter from the Editor

Dear Readers,

This issue of *MBC Today* is one I'm very, very excited to share with you.

As this magazine and our organization grow, the content seems to be taking on a life of its own. AMBC's message of #MembersHelpingMembers is becoming clearer each time I see a content submission from an AMBC Member, a story of a helping hand, a business that's growing steadily because it got its priorities right by putting clients first and always choosing to do the right thing, and so much more. It's so encouraging!

In this issue, please pay close attention to what Tobby mentions about Google. I can't tell you how much having a proper presence on Google has helped my own business grow. At my shop, our clients are mostly students, so they generally don't find us by advertisements that we do, signs we put up, or anything like that. No, they get on their phones and google "Shipping in Ithaca" and then, because we have good Google love and excellent reviews, we pop up toward the top of their search results. So, they choose to come to us instead of one of the other two shipping options that we share the same city block with.

Yelp is also very important. Make sure you claim your Yelp page, work hard on those reviews, add photos, and keep it fresh, because it's in the digital search that you'll acquire new clients. Then, it's in the stellar service and unforgettable, warm experience that you provide in your shop that you'll retain those clients, encourage more positive reviews, encourage more word of mouth, and climb to amazing new heights as a result. It works. I promise. But you have to back it up by treating everyone right, going out of your way, and knocking their socks off with an experience they never saw coming.

Also in this issue, travel with Seema and Fahim to Memphis as they recount the amazing privilege they just had. What an honor to have been selected for the red carpet FedEx treatment! An experience like this can be yours too if you keep the right attitude, keep growing, and (of course) keep shipping FedEx!

There's a lot more I could encourage you to take in on the following pages, but I'll leave the rest for you to discover. Take time to absorb it all. Read and reread. Share this issue with your team. Keep these magazines in a file at your store and ask your team to go back and reread them when things are slow. Ask your team to look into every AMBC Trusted Supplier listed in our directory, exploring what each can do to help your business reach new heights.

There's gold in these pages. Dig for it, polish it, and then take it to the bank.

With care,



Marty Johnson
Editor, *MBC Today*



News from Headquarters



Our Dear AMBC Members,

How has summer flown by so fast? I hope yours has been as wonderful and uplifting as ours and that you're gearing up for a whirlwind fall. And that means that, yes, prepping for the holiday season is right around corner!

It was tremendous to see so many of you at the RS Expo in August. What an event! We're all excited for this industry and to see the great things that are happening, the excitement and enthusiasm of all of our sister stores nationwide, and the potential for growth that so many are now seeing so clearly.

If you haven't yet, please mark your calendars for AMBC's The Event, happening November 1-3, 2019, in Phoenix, Arizona. We've been working tirelessly on creating a stellar, packed, fresh schedule for The Event, knowing this year's fall workshop will be our best one yet. We've extended our early bird pricing for The Event until September 23rd, so hurry up and book your spot today; they're going fast! We're planning on another year of full rooms and overflowing minds.

I want to extend a personal expression of gratitude to my fellow AMBC Board of Director members, Seema, Norman, Steve, MaryAnne, Barry, and Tobye. This group is such a joy to work with, putting in countless volunteer hours to make sure AMBC grows and continues to provide as much value to our members as possible. Of course, I also need to thank over and over our incredible AMBC staff, some of whom are also volunteers, giving their time to make this non-profit, member-run organization the best it can be. And we're pleased to announce our newest staffer: Kim Deters, AMBC Director of Member and Supplier Relations. Welcome, Kim!

Please let us know how we can serve you better, what programs you'd like us to explore, what new AMBC Trusted Suppliers you'd like us to consider, and anything else we can do for you ... because we are here for you. The whole point of AMBC is #MembersHelpingMembers. We try our best to keep fresh content coming to you to encourage, uplift, and rejuvenate your businesses to grow bigger and better, care deeper, and serve your communities as pillars of trust and friendship.

I hope to see many of you face to face in Phoenix! Book your flights and your rooms now, block off your schedules, and join us for a fantastic weekend of learning, networking, and growing together!

Thank you, as always, for your care, outreach, enthusiasm, and trust.

With gratitude, effervescence, and optimism,

Fahim Mojawalla
AMBC Board Chair
#iamAMBC #MembersHelpingMembers
#AMBC4ME
Direct email: Fahim@ambc4me.org

MPC Shipping Insurance

from **Shipsurance**

Full Coverage for Your Shipments... and Your Profits!

Shipsurance offers shipping insurance coverage for your Mail & Parcel Center. Make sure that the parcels that pass through your store are 100% covered for loss or damage while adding to your bottom line. Trust Shipsurance as your outsourced claims management department.

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What's Going on in the Industry...

AMBC's The Event 2019 Early Bird Pricing Extended

You asked; we listened! Early bird pricing for AMBC's The Event has been extended to September 23rd. Go to ambc4me.org to register online before the extension has passed and view the most up to date schedule. Spots are filling up quickly, so hurry and reserve yours today!

The Event, AMBC's annual fall weekend workshop, will be held in Phoenix, November 1-3, 2019. While this past spring's AMBC Basic Training Weekend 2019 in St. Louis focused on certification and getting back to basics with training in packing, shipping, mailbox rental, and software, November's The Event in Phoenix will focus more on what's new and what's next in our industry.

AMBC has hosted very popular fall events for the past few years in different parts of the country. Now simply titled "The Event," these annual workshops are full of brainstorming sessions, networking, real-life scenarios, and presentations on where our industry is headed and how to make the most out of the incredible potential that's coming our way.

Please see the spread in this edition of *MBC Today* for more information, with the most current information always available at ambc4me.org/events.

USPS Updates HAZMAT Question

The USPS has recently sent a communication to USPS Approved Shippers that reads:

Effective August 30, 2019, the word "mercury" is being added to the end of the current HAZMAT question.

CURRENT PROCESS: For all articles/items accepted on the behalf of the United States Postal Service employees must ask: "Do any of your articles contain anything liquid, fragile, perishable or potentially hazardous, such as lithium batteries or perfume."

REVISED HAZMAT QUESTION – Effective 8/30/19: For all articles/items accepted on the behalf of the United States Postal Service employees must now ask: "Do any of your articles contain anything liquid, fragile, perishable or potentially hazardous, such as lithium batteries, perfume or mercury."

This change is being made as a precautionary mea-

sure to address recent incidents of mercury spillage at USPS mail processing facilities. Since August 2018, three main locations have reported mercury spills. Adding mercury to our HAZMAT question is part of our Hazardous Material program and a requirement in the prevention and alleviation of risks to our employees, customers, and property.

Software Training for PostalMate and ShipRite

PC Synergy, the Makers of PostalMate®, and ShipRite Software both hold training events throughout the year, across the country.

If you think you know everything there is to know about the software you use, you're wrong. Discover new tools that will make operating your business much more efficient, save you time and money, and offer services to your clients that you already have at your fingertips but just don't know about yet ... and learn what's coming next!

For more information, visit pcsynergy.com/training and shipritesoftware.com/training.

Sign Up for Cayan CC Processing and Get \$100 Toward AMBC Renewal

Cayan, formerly known as Merchant Warehouse, offers our members tremendous rates on processing. AMBC will put \$100 toward AMBC membership renewal. Yes, that's a \$100 incentive just for trying Cayan! The Genius terminal scans the credit card and determines the best interchange rate for your store for each individual credit card. Store owners with the Cayan and Genius terminals are already reporting tremendous savings on their credit card processing rates.

The best part is that it is a risk free offer. They are so sure you will love it that there is no minimum contract time, you can cancel at any time. They have live tech support to help walk you through the transition. The new Apple Pay interface on the Genius terminal is a real winner for smart phone users, and these terminals are in compliance with the new technology required in October when the smart chips become a full time reality. Are you prepared? Call us today and we'll help you start saving money right away!

Update Your Bookmarks... and Address Books!

We are very excited to announce that we have a new website URL and new email addresses

.Our new website URL is www.ambc4me.org. Your log in information will stay the same, just make sure to update those bookmarks!

We also have fancy new email addresses to go with our website.

Below are our new email addresses for our AMBC Board of Directors and Staff:

Fahim Mojawalla:	fahim@ambc4me.org
Seema Mojawalla:	seema@ambc4me.org
Steve Dick:	steve@ambc4me.org
Norman Forscher:	norman@ambc4me.org
Barry Risch:	barry@ambc4me.org
Toby McClanahan:	toby@ambc4me.org
MaryAnne Scarponi:	maryanne@ambc4me.org
Kim Galloway:	hello@ambc4me.org
Kim Deters:	kim@ambc4me.org
Marty Johnson:	marty@ambc4me.org



*Kim Deters
Director of Member and
Supplier Relations*

You may have noticed we snuck another Kim in there! Well, in addition to our newest branding, we are extremely excited to announce our newest employee! Kim Deters has joined as our Director of Member and Supplier Relations.

Kim will be reaching out to our AMBC Members and AMBC Trusted Suppliers to make sure they are getting everything they need. She is just a phone call away! Don't worry, our number is staying the same at (815) 316-8255. She can be reached between the hours of 8:00-6:00 central time.

Please join us in welcoming Kim to the AMBC team!



Early Bird Pricing Extended Until September 23rd!

AMBC's
The Event
2019

Attendee Pricing
Phoenix, AZ November 1-3, 2019



**#Members
Helping
Members**

AMBC Member Pricing.....	\$249 first attendee \$229 each additional attendee
Non-Member Pricing.....	\$349 first attendee \$329 each additional attendee

- You think you know how to pack? Think again! We guarantee you will learn something with Uncle Marty in his packing techniques class.
- Does freight make you uneasy or just simply not sure where to start? Join us for a freight made simple class!
- Venture into new territory with a dye sublimation class from experts.
- Not sure where to start with print? Learn the essentials with Steve.
- Struggling how to market all of the services? Let Fahim and Norman show you how to market effectively, diversify your offerings and make more money.

This is a just a glimpse of what will be offered at this
"Can't Miss" event of the year!
Space is limited, so sign up today at ambc.org/events.



ambc.org/events

AMBC has negotiated a low rate of \$109/night at the Hilton Phoenix Airport. This rate is good until September 30th. Questions for the hotel? Reach them at 480-894-1600.

Or, book now using the following link: <https://tinyurl.com/y4pmvwwk>



"The Event" 2019 Schedule

Friday, November 1

8:00 AM	9:00 AM	Breakfast - Registration
9:00 AM	12:00 PM	Software Training
12:00 PM	1:00 PM	Lunch
1:00 PM	1:15 PM	Trusted Supplier Presentation
1:15 PM	2:15 PM	Inside the Box: Packing Tips from Uncle Marty
2:15 PM	2:30 PM	Break
2:30 PM	3:30 PM	How to Handle the Front Counter
3:30 PM	4:30 PM	Trusted Supplier Presentation
4:30 PM	5:00 PM	Break/Networking
		Dinner
5:00 PM	6:00 PM	Conference Opening and Meet & Greet
		Trusted Supplier Recognition
6:00 PM	8:00 PM	Trusted Supplier Showcase
8:00 PM	9:00 PM	After Hours Mingle

Saturday, November 2

8:00 AM	9:00 AM	Breakfast & Presentation
9:00 AM	9:30 AM	FedEx Welcome
9:30 AM	12:00 PM	Trusted Supplier Showcase
12:00 PM	1:00 PM	Lunch
1:00 PM	2:00 PM	Round Table
2:00 PM	2:15 PM	Trusted Supplier Presentation
2:15 PM	3:00 PM	KPIs - Set Specific Performance Goals
3:00 PM	3:45 PM	Say "Yes" to Freight
3:45 PM	4:00 PM	Trusted Supplier Presentation
4:00 PM	4:45 PM	Outside the Box Marketing
4:45 PM	5:30 PM	Digital Marketing Strategies
5:30 PM	6:15 PM	How to Market Printing
6:15 PM	7:00 PM	Online and Offline Strategies
7:00 PM	8:00 PM	Dinner
8:00 PM	9:00 PM	Meet the Board/Networking

Sunday, November 3

8:00 AM	9:00 AM	PC Synergy, the Makers of PostalMate® Breakfast
9:00 AM	9:45 AM	Employee Recruiting and Engagement
9:45 AM	10:00 AM	Trusted Supplier Presentation
10:00 AM	11:00 AM	Round Table
11:15 AM	12:00 PM	Effective Social Media Solutions
12:00 PM	1:00 PM	Lunch
1:00 PM	2:15 PM	Group Exercise: Stellar Client Services
2:15 PM	2:45 PM	Break / Networking Opportunity
2:45 PM	4:00 PM	AMBC Member Town Hall
4:00 PM	4:30 PM	Farewell

*Schedule subject to change

Tech Talk with Tobye

by Tobye McClanahan

This edition of Tech Talk is going to be a little different. Instead of telling you about some great new app, I'm going to re-introduce you to a *free* app you've all heard of, but unfortunately many aren't using to its fullest potential. Twenty years ago, it was one of the newest tech companies to emerge. Today, it's a household word that even my 69-year-old mother likes to use regularly. It's called Google!

Google gets 5.6 billion searches per day! According to the tech giant, 15% of all their searches are brand new, meaning they've never been searched before. This is because people use Google for everything from asking random questions, to regular day-to-day activities, to simple or complex research projects. An average user initiates 3-4 Google searches per day.

I've said it before and will say it again: ***it's free to advertise via Google!*** So, it's totally mind-boggling to me to see stores so detached from their store's Google listing.

When was the last time you googled yourself? (That's right, the word "google" is so popular that it's a mainstream verb now, with no capital G needed in its verb form.) I regularly google myself, but not just my store name. I google services in my area to see how high my store is ranked in the search results. If you've never done that, do it right now. This will tell you a lot about your online presence ... or lack thereof. If you have a good website with good SEO (search engine optimization), you should be closer to the top. If you're not, then you may have some work to do.

Now, let's talk about the free Google My Business™ listing that every business in America has. It should pop up when you do a search for your store by name. Have you claimed your listing so you can make edits? This also is free and easy to do. If you need instructions, go to <http://bit.ly/claimmygoogle>.

Once you've claimed your listing, take steps to add/edit your store info. Make sure your hours of operation are correct, your website is linked, etc. The next step is important and upon recently searching for a lot of stores in a large area, I found that many stores aren't doing it: upload pictures of your store! I found lots of stores that only had a Google street view photo that was very unattractive and uninviting and, in some cases, just showed the back of a brick shopping center ... or you had to rotate the image to even see a picture of the store.

In today's world, customers have choices and information is vital for them to decide to use you. If you think people aren't looking you up online and virtually checking you out first, you are quite wrong. (Sorry if that stings a little.) We live in a visual world and pictures of your store identify and define your brand. They are the first impression given to thousands of people each month, and if your Google listing isn't impressive, you may not meet a huge portion of those people because they instead chose the store a few blocks away that looked more inviting or professional. Remember that perception is reality. You may have an awesome store, but if you aren't showing it off on Google visually than you may be losing potential customers that assume that no information is bad information.

I love getting my monthly email from Google that tells me how many people found me via Google, how many of them called, how many asked for directions, etc. Google also sends me a list of my most viewed photos, which proves that people are looking! But to get that, I had to claim my Google My Business™ listing, make my Google profile attractive, and then continually keep it up to date and fresh.

My last point is going to be about Google reviews. If you aren't monitoring and replying to your reviews on Google, you're also missing out on customer service and public relations opportunities. I know this is an area that is hard to stomach at times, but it is *vital* to your store to know what people are publicly saying about you. Yes, many people are hard to please, and you will never get rid of all the naysayers, but it's important to combat them with positivity.

You do this by: 1) Replying to the negative reviews in a professional manner (apologize, tell them what steps you've taken to make it better for the future, and move on). The replies aren't for the one person that left the review, but rather they are for all the others that will read the review. 2) For every negative review, try to get five positive ones to keep a nice ratio. Now this is a challenge because only a fraction of happy customers will think to leave a good review. This means that good reviews don't come as organically as negative ones, so they require work.

(continued on page 12)

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TECH TALK...

Continued from page 10

I'm going to tell you something that is working for me. Like everyone, I had a couple of bad reviews that were just flat out not true and/or from people that didn't get their way—one of which wasn't even for my business. In the past six months, I have made a targeted effort to increase my rating with a goal of 4★+. I'm currently at 3.9★, so I'm almost there. I took one of our business cards and on the rear side I have QR codes that take people directly to our Google or Facebook review page and the wording asks them to "help us grow." It makes it easy when we have a customer that we know we have really gone above and beyond to help, to give them the card and ask them if they mind giving us a good review in trade. Having these cards so readily available makes it very easy to ask and helps the customers to remember to do it.

I had a lady this week that called to say she couldn't figure it out and came back to the store for us to help her and two of her friends! I got three 5★ reviews in five minutes! This is worth way more than the special-order fee I waived for her job.

To recap, here's a checklist for your homework:

1. Google yourself
2. Claim your page and keep your information up to date
3. Add some awesome photos of your store—not just images of services or stuff you shipped, but of a well organized and inviting business, and of course of your staff's smiling, happy faces
4. Keep a check on your reviews and come up with a plan to increase positive ones to counter any negative ones (remember it takes five good to counter one bad)

If you need help with your Google listing, email me at tobyemc@ambcforme.org or catch me at AMBC's The Event in Phoenix in November! #Google

...



Toby McClanahan is the owner of Mailboxes & Beyond in Blytheville, Arkansas and serves on the AMBC Board of Directors as Director of Technology. She has a passion for small business and loves to visit other stores for fresh perspective. She's a strong advocate for lifelong learning, so she's always looking for a new idea! #TobyTips

A Little Something Extra

Annabel and Philip are easily two of my most favorite people.

I met them about eight years ago. They were a young couple moving out of an apartment and hired me to pick up their boxes, store them at my shop for a while, and then get them to their new destination safely. I remember the day I met them distinctly because I was having a rough day when I did the pickup, but somehow their loveliness and attitude toward me cheered me right up. I carted their boxes through the narrow hallways of their apartment building and then down the street to my shop. And then they gave me a \$50 cash tip! To this day, that holds the record.

They were impressed with the service I provided them. I was a one-person operation at the time and they were intrigued by my business model and had lots of questions about my motivation, future plans, and more. We've continued to have some great chats over the years about business, entrepreneurship, and more, and they stop in to visit whenever they're back in town.

On their last visit, they told me that they were starting their own business. I was so pleased to hear that! They share a strong entrepreneurial spirit and I couldn't wait to hear all about their plans. The model they're toying with is unique, so I gave them some advice from my own experience about making sure that they have their mission, purpose, and intentions set correctly before even thinking about the logistics, business plan, or anything else. I sent them a book that I thought they should read, and they seemed very grateful for that.

When someone's good to you, you remember it. And often it comes full circle, even if it's years down the road. I'm so excited to see where Annabel and Philip's new business venture takes them, and I'll certainly be following their posts every step of the way!

...

A Little Something Extra would love your stories! Please write to us at hello@ambc4me.org and share a brief paragraph or two about something extraordinary—or ordinary, with an extraordinary impact—that one of your clients has done for you. What prompted their generosity, and how has your business been brightened and strengthened by it in return?

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Dealing with the Unexpected

by Michele Zajac, Owner of The Boxes etc. in Naperville, Illinois

When you own a shipping store, you learn to deal with the unexpected. Every customer and every package is different, every day. It keeps life interesting. Maybe too interesting. Lunch time can span from a half hour of cherished uninterrupted time to a minute or two to eat and jump up for the next unexpected customer.

It was on a such a day when I tried to grab a quick lunch that I heard the distinct sounds of a car hitting a car. If you've heard that sound once in your life, you know what I am talking about. As I looked up towards the front of the store, I watched my front windows shatter, inventory flying and support posts flailing.

I ran to the front to check on our dog, Sookie. Her normal hiding spot is in-between the greeting card racks—in the exact spot where the windows broke. She greeted me from the other side of the store and tried to run toward the car to escape. The intruding car's tires were still spinning fast and burning rubber smoke filled the air in the store. I motioned to my husband to grab Sookie, check her paws, and get her out of the store while I called 911.

While the driver was fine, she managed to total the entire side of a parked car and move it to the adjoining space, move a USPS mailbox 12 feet over to the front of our neighbor's unit, and rip off the brick pillar façade before coming to rest in our store. As the store became overrun with police, fire department and city code officials, I took photos before anything (like the car) was moved, to account for any and all damage.

The nice thing about shipping is that organization is key and many people feel that I take it to the nth power. I detest chaos and disorder and this was a test to my ability to handle things. As customers walked into the store, oblivious to the broken glass and thrown objects surrounding them, I instructed people where to put their packages in the back room (normally forbidden) so that nothing would be forgotten or lost. My husband cleaned up glass while our employee arrived to keep the customers in line.

Making lists is important. As we sorted through the damage, we noted each item in a list app. As the windows were boarded, people came in in disbelief that we were still open. Some customers thought that we had simply decided to update our windows. Add to the list: a sign

to put out front to let people know that we are open for business and that accidents happen.

Every day since, we work to keep our customers informed and updated. We post on social media every day to let people know we are still here, but it is just a little darker inside. It should be no surprise to anyone that our post on Facebook showing people's photos of the accident did better than 95% of other posts. In fact, it was our best post ever! What else can you do?! What was done is done and you have to move forward to succeed—in life and in business.





We are so grateful that Michele, a long-time AMBC Member and familiar face at industry events for years, has shared her account with us. It inspires us all to deal with the unexpected with grace, professionalism, and gratitude (yes, gratitude!) We've been watching her social media posts through this ordeal and to say we are impressed with her poise and fortitude would be an incredible understatement.

We would be remiss if we didn't mention another shining example of gracefully dealing with the unexpected from other long-time AMBC Members, Curt and Barb Raines, who own Erie Pack & Ship in Erie, Pennsylvania. In May, a fire at a restaurant in the same plaza as their store forced them to temporarily close due to smoke damage. Through the rebuilding process, Curt and Barb have shown incredible positivity.

When the unexpected happens, AMBC Members rally. Michele has been there for Curt and Barb, and Curt and Barb have been there for Michele. Our AMBC family is full of stories like this—of store owners who go out of their way to help each other's businesses and families in times of both tragedy and prosperity. It's exactly what #MembersHelpingMembers means.

Michele told us recently, "I will say and have said that the shipping industry is unique. We are not an island as an independent store. We are not competitors. We are not alone. We are a community, and communities help each other when the need arises."

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Dog Days of Summer

by Norman Froscher

The dog days of summer are gone and soon we'll be gearing up for another holiday shipping season. But often in this glamorous industry we can get a little bedraggled, feel a little unmotivated, and just get plain weary.

As entrepreneurs and small business owners, the ins and outs of managing our stores, employees, and customers can often seem a little much. So, what can we do when it feels like the riptide is pulling us under and the juggling of our many priorities has us wondering which ball is going to hit us in the head?

First, take a deep breath. You're human. And it's normal to feel that way sometimes. Then consider some of the following suggestions that may help you get reenergized, catch your breath, and reset your mindset.

Go to conferences.

Conferences are a great way to get recharged, talk to fellow store owners, meet new vendors, and generally get excited about this industry again. As I write this, we're getting ready for the RS Expo in Dallas, and by the time this article is published, planning will be in high gear for AMBC's The Event in Phoenix in November. We promise to have a knock-your-socks-off agenda at The Event that will give you energy and ideas ... not just for the upcoming peak season, but hopefully all year long.

Visit another store.

When you're on vacation, look up surrounding stores, then reach out and ask if you can stop by and visit. Or, take an afternoon and drive to visit another store an hour or so from your home. That's far enough away that they aren't competitors, but close enough to make it practical to visit. Every time I get the chance to visit another store, I learn something that I can take back to my store. I see the pluses and minuses of how they operate, and that knowledge helps me grow as a store owner. But more importantly, it enables you to talk to a colleague who understands the battles that you are fighting. This networking is the backbone of AMBC and #MembersHelpingMembers. And you never know when your visit may help the store you're visiting. #giversgain

Change up your store.

We actually do this every few weeks, whether we're feeling the blahs or on cloud nine. Move as much stuff as you can. Make it look different. Knock off the cobwebs and dust and you'll be surprised how a fresh look (no matter how minor), will breathe life into you and your customers. Inevitably, when we move something, we'll have a customer question how long we've offered that product or service. We smile and tell them that we've had it a while. But it's something they apparently didn't realize, so it's like gaining a new customer.

Add a new product or service.

Conferences are great for finding new things. But everyday life can provide opportunities if we are looking for it. Just last year, we saw a really cool handmade soap company that was really funny at a university bookstore. We contacted them and it has become a very popular line. We've expanded with several of their other products and are very happy to have made the discovery. Be willing to try something new. You'll find that bringing a new product or

service in will force you out of your lethargy. Concentrating on marketing your new service will give you something positive to focus on. And that's what we're shooting for here: positive energy.

Change up your routine.

Take a brisk walk or jog or bike ride in the morning. Go to a gym. Exercise is a great way to help your physical energy, which will in turn help your mental energy. You'll feel better and look better. Maybe, when things are a little slow at the counter, do some squats or torso twists. Get the blood flowing during your workday.

Listen to an audiobook on your commute. There are many great motivational authors or find a subject you want to learn about. I listen to several coffee roasting and social media podcasts instead of top 40 radio. Always be learning—it will keep your mind sharp and fresh.

Set aside a time to unplug. Turn off all the voices and devices that compete for your attention. Maybe it's on the walk you've started taking. Facebook will still be there when you get back. It's important to find a way to just be and meditate without the glow of a TV or phone.

Go away.

Lastly, find a way to take a vacation from your store. These are our babies and we all know that they won't operate well or long without us at the helm. But find a few days and know that you can fix whatever goes wrong when you get back. As much as we are dedicated to our stores, we have to be equally dedicated to our families, and to ourselves.

I hope to see you in Phoenix so we can discuss this even further. #iamAMBC



Norman Froscher and his wife Lisa co-own Espresso Mail in West Palm Beach, Florida and Norman serves on the AMBC Board of Directors as Director of Engagement and Board Vice Chair. When he's not packing, shipping, or printing, he's looking for a good cup of coffee or espresso, which makes it really convenient that he has a coffee bar in his store. #NormanKnows



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Penelope, Lisa, and Micky are three outstanding business leaders in my community. Penelope owns a specialty foods business, Lisa runs a local co-op book shop, and Micky is an industry-renowned jewelry designer who happens to own a very popular jewelry store in town.

These three powerhouses were on a panel together recently at a local chamber of commerce event that I had the privilege of attending. As they spoke, giving tips and advice, telling stories of their successes and missteps, and answering questions from other chamber members, I sat in my seat and furiously took notes; here some golden nuggets:

- Some atmospheres and industries can be perceived as a little intimidating. In the jewelry business, for example, clients sometimes come in a little anxious. Making them comfortable is essential.
- In the service industry, the goal of a service provider is to guide people and fix things. Never forget that. Guide them right and fix things well and they'll come back again and again.
- Keep your clients by:
 - 1) being a nice person
 - 2) doing good work
 - 3) being on time
- Do something new each week in your business to keep interest; create a warm, welcoming, interesting environment by changing traffic patterns, displays, and featured products as often as possible.
- Make the front of your business—your storefront—ever changing and interesting to catch the eye of and attract new clients from the street.
- To learn and grow, it's important to connect with three factions:
 - 1) other artists and/or business owners in your field all over the country—like at trade shows and conference
 - 2) other local businesses, regardless of what the product is, for referrals and to open doors

3) community organizations

- Client retention all comes down to a human connection. Always send hand-written thank you notes, birthday cards, and special thoughts for special occasions. In the jewelry business, sending flowers to ring purchasing couples on their anniversaries can keep them coming back again and again.
- When sourcing new products, look for stories that are unique behind the products; look for products that blend a local flair and those that echo your own core values and business focus.
- Work with causes that your employees and clients care about deeply. This could be animal organizations, libraries, food banks, or whatever. Give gift baskets, sponsor, and raise funds for these organizations in your businesses.
- In retail, you change your hat every five minutes when the phone rings, problems come up, and your plan for the day goes out the window. This is normal. Don't let it frustrate you too much.
- Business is full of highs and lows and progress is not always linear. Sometimes, to grow, you must have setbacks along the way. Keep riding the highs and surviving the lows and, over time, if you keep your focus, you'll see the trend has been going upward in the long run.
- Target employees who will thrive in your environment. Define your core values as a business and what makes your brand special, then hire those who share those values and vision. Hire for culture first and skills second.
- Instead of a "Now Hiring" sign, consider "If you love doing business and spending time here, maybe you'd like to spend even more time here!" Sometimes the best hires are those who are already your best customers.
- Stay relevant in your community by visiting other businesses near you to share ideas, co-market, co-sponsor, and grow together.

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ASK UNCLE MARTY...

Continued from page 18

- Shop local all year long, not just when it's trendy on the Saturday after Thanksgiving, and give a call to action to your community to do the same. Give them specifics on why it's important to shop local.
- Value what you're passionate about and don't make all decisions based on how much money you're going to make. Consider qualities things bring you and not just the economic benefits.

At the chamber event, I was one of only two or three people in the whole room taking notes. Some people were paying close attention to the speakers, while others were drifting ... and some were even checking their phones. These business leaders had gold to share and I didn't want to miss any of it!

So, pay attention when you have these opportunities to learn and grow from people who have been doing this a long time. Learn lessons from their experience so you don't have to learn it for yourself the hard way. Take advantage of every networking and growth opportunity you can, and your business will thank you for it.



Marty Johnson is a shopkeeper, writer, and business coach. He serves as ex officio Director of Communication for AMBC, Editor of MBC Today, and is the owner of Uncle Marty's Shipping Office in Ithaca, NY, where he's also Co-Founder of the Collegetown Small Business Alliance. Please visit him at askunclemarty.com. #AskUncleMarty



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Fahim & Seema's Excellent Adventure ... in Memphis

by Seema and Fahim Mojawalla

There are approximately 5200 FedEx Authorized ShipCenters® (or FASCs, as they are known in our industry) in the United States. Every year, seven to ten of these stores get invited by the retail and marketing teams at FedEx to join in a weekend of learning, networking, business growth, and entertainment. FedEx does this to show gratitude for these businesses' efforts in promoting the FedEx brand and selling FedEx services in their stores.



This year, we were truly honored and privileged to be among those chosen for this excursion. We wanted to highlight this amazing, once in a lifetime journey for all of you, since you all (or "y'all," as they say in Memphis) are the reason why we were chosen.



Our excellent adventure in Memphis included a private tour of the FedEx World Hub in Memphis, located right on the Memphis International Airport property; we both got the chance to go inside a FedEx Boeing 777 jet, to see for ourselves the huge size available for nothing but packages to

be transported from the hub to all parts of the world. It was Fahim's childhood dream to go inside the plane one day, and both of us were just ecstatic!

Our trip began on Thursday morning, July 25th, when we arrived in Memphis. We were warmly greeted by Mallory, who was holding up a welcome sign for us.

Mallory directed us to the private limo bus, where we met another couple from Newark who were also selected for this trip. Paul, our driver, drove us to the Peabody Hotel, where we met other FedEx hosts in a private welcome reception in one of the Peabody's absolutely elegant rooms.

We arrived just in time to see the daily march of the Peabody ducks, a daily routine which is worth mentioning. These ducks have their penthouse, known as the "Duck Palace," on the 12th floor of the hotel; they come down the elevator at 11am every day, walk across the red carpet, and are greeted by crowds of visitors—including jovial children eager to see them march to their fountain, which is located right near the reception area of the hotel. At 5pm, the ducks march back to the elevator and crowds gather to cheer once again. Anyone from outside (or visitors to Memphis staying at other hotels) is welcome to see this spectacle.



The Peabody Hotel is one of the 100 most historic hotels in America; it is also the place that Elvis signed his famous RCA contract in 1955 for a sum of \$4,500!

At 5pm, we met Paul at our bus downstairs at 5pm and he took us to the FedEx Family House for a tour that evening. This place was amazing! FedEx donates generously to the FedEx Family House, which houses parents and families of children who are being treated for illnesses at nearby Le Bonheur Children's Hospital. Right after the tour, our dinner was catered by Central BBQ. Throughout this trip, FedEx was kind enough to cater to our specific dietary needs, something that is truly worth mentioning.

Upon returning from our tour that evening, we had a short break and then we met at 9pm that same night to go for the FedEx World Hub tour, one of the big highlights of our trip. Since most of the action happens at FedEx during weeknights, from the hours of 10pm to

(continued on next page)

MEMPHIS...

Continued from previous page

4am, FedEx scheduled our tour at night so we could see all the action.

We arrived at the FedEx World Hub, checked in (with all our IDs and proper verification), watched a short movie about the tour, and proceeded to go with John, our effervescent and informative tour guide. Due to the confidential nature of this tour, all pictures were prohibited. We only took permitted pictures in the lobby of the FedEx Experience Tour building.



The tour was incredibly amazing; it would be impossible to fully describe the impact it had on us, or the vastness of the FedEx World Hub and the fascinating speed and proficiency at which shipments are expedited. We saw the daily operations of millions of packages that come in every night into Memphis, get sorted and redirected on the correct flights so they can be out for delivery in the morning.

The tour was mind-blowing, breathtaking, awe-inspiring, mesmerizing, and truly gratifying all in one. We appreciated our jobs that much more; the care that we take for making sure each package is packed correctly is not in vain. We also saw the FedEx flight simulators, in which pilots train and complete their required training hours. The FedEx World Hub is a mini city inside the airport, complete with its own security, fire company, food establishments, and hospital. It comes alive at night and is truly a sight to see. We returned to our hotel at 2am—exhausted, yet elated from this magical experience.

On Friday morning, we met our tour bus in the morning and headed to lunch at the Majestic Grille, which used to be a silent movie theatre. To this day, silent movies play on a large screen in the front, while diners enjoy

their meals. It was magnificent. During this business lunch, our FedEx hosts asked us how to make the FASC program better. We provided our marketing suggestions, feedback, and constructive criticism, for which they were thankful and eager to consider.

After lunch, we went on a private tour of St. Jude's Children's Research Hospital, the most famous of its kind, which opened in 1962, founded by Danny Thomas, and now has 182 research labs on site. When it opened, there was a 20% survival rate for childhood cancer; today, there's an 80% survival rate domestically. St. Jude's is working to make that rate 100% domestically and internationally. Its motto, coined by Danny, is "No child should die in the dawn of life." We saw firsthand the care that is afforded to its patients and their families, all of whom do not pay a dime to be treated there. All the funds come from private donors, including FedEx, which sponsors the FedEx St. Jude Invitational World Golf Championships every year. It costs \$2.8 million per day to run this hospital and the treatment is worthy of recognition. All of us on this tour had tears in our eyes, yet we knew there was so much hope for so many of these kids.



(continued on page 22)

MEMPHIS...

Continued from page 21



On Friday night, we had dinner at Felicia Suzanne's, a local favorite restaurant in downtown Memphis, after which we met the owner and chef, Felicia! Her food is cooked with so much love and is absolutely delectable and decadent.

Saturday morning was the second to last day of the FedEx St. Jude World Golf Championships. We rode in our tour bus to the front of the entrance line and were escorted by our wonderful hosts into the private FedEx cabana, overlooking the 18th hole at TPC Southwind. We saw many of the world's greatest golfers compete so close to us; it was truly sublime. For example, Rory McIlroy and Brooks Koepka (the ultimate winner of this particular championship), putted right in front of us.



After spending most of the day at the tournament, we proceeded back to our hotel and got ready for dinner. This time, it was at Flight Restaurant in downtown Memphis. The menu was tantalizing, the service was

extraordinary, the smiles were aplenty, and the ambience was exceptionally memorable. Each portion was a meal in itself and yet, they served three "small" portions for each course! We both could not finish our dessert.

Upon arriving back to our hotel that evening, we said our goodbyes to everyone since our return flight was very early the next morning. Then, at 4:45am on that Sunday morning, Mallory met us in the lobby of the hotel, just to see us off, and Paul drove us to the airport, with that same smile that had greeted us three days prior. We flew home safely, anxious to share our journey with our friends, family and, community.

We thank Larry, Ty, Shari, MJ, Karen, Mallory, Randy, and of course Paul, for this amazing journey and opportunity. We look forward to growing our business with FedEx services and serving our guests for years to come!



Seema Mojawalla has a unique viewpoint that is always fresh, forward-thinking, and focused. She has an eye for merchandising and a passion for finding the perfect products to sell at Seema Boutique, located within the Spa of Shipping, Island Ship Center, an experience-based retail shipping spa located five miles south of Niagara Falls in Grand Island, New York, which she co-owns with her husband Fahim. Seema serves on the AMBC Board of Directors as Director of Innovation. #QueenofRetail



Fahim Mojawalla is a social media guru known for his love of hashtags. He uses them to explain his #FahimFix ideas—ideas which he shares as an instructor at industry events and at FahimFix.com. He serves on the AMBC Board of Directors as Director of Social Media and Board Chair and, along with his wife Seema, is an effervescent co-owner of Island Ship Center, the Spa of Shipping. Be sure to follow [islandshipcenter.com](https://www.islandshipcenter.com) and [@islandshipcenter](https://www.instagram.com/islandshipcenter) on your favorite social media channels. #FahimFix

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Steve Merrick
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Hello, friends. Abruptly today, I can't open tiff files on my windows computer. None of the Google searches solution are working. Has anyone gone through this and found the solution?
– SP

How to open a TIFF file in Windows 10:

- 1) Right click on the TIFF file that you want to open
- 2) Point to Open With, and then click Choose Program
- 3) In the programs list, click Microsoft Office Document Imaging
- 4) Click to select the always use the selected program to open this kind of file check box, and then click OK.

Have you checked your computer for a virus? Can you open other photo files? – JB

...

Does anyone know what UPS OFD mean? Long story short, I have a package that was returned to me. The customer it went to is claiming lots of things that I don't believe are true. The package had a UPS report taped to it that mentions OFD.
– KV

Out for Delivery – J

OFD normally is short Out For Delivery – SD

...

I have a customer whose driver's license has expired and he needs his signature notarized to collect insurance because his mother died. His wife has valid IDs and is ready to vouch for him. Can I notarize on that evidence? – PT

I would call the National Notary Association hotline and ask them to be safe. Hate to do the wrong thing and get sued. – JB

Thanks! I just talked with NNA expert and here is what she told me:

- 1) I can notarize if I know the signer personally.

- 2) If the signer brings in a mutual acquaintance and they are ready to swear that the person is who he says he is and signs for it.
- 3) Signer's friends or family cannot vouch for his ID since they cannot be impartial witnesses.

It was easy to talk with NNA. prompt response and clear guidelines. – PT

Great! Always safer to call to be sure... – JB

...

We just intercepted an elderly person trying to send \$68,000 in cash to "the IRS." The sad part about this is she had already sent the same amount the day before. We had several levels of law enforcement involved to convince her and her husband, but no matter what we told them they still believed they owed the money. I have never seen that much money in one package at one time in all my business. The last largest cash intercept was \$15,000 and that was an easy fix. But this customer would not believe me, the police officer, or the police sergeant. We had to have the cash impounded to the evidence locker, being it might have been used in a crime, then a visit from the states attorney to convinced them. The sad part of this is the husband is retired from being a mechanic on the police force. It just goes to show you these scam artist are good.

Please keep an eye on your elderly customers and don't let them get taken advantage of. – LH

Great job! You touched two lives for the better. Just so hard to believe the crooks are that good. Really scary.
– BC

We had an elderly gentleman come in with a FedEx envelope that "had to be there early AM." A few minutes before our FedEx pickup, his son called frantically and asked us to please hold the package. It turned out it was a fraud. The grandfather was convinced his grandson was in trouble and he had to bail him out with several thousand dollars. I do not remember exactly how much. Anyway, he got saved. – PT

AMBC Trusted Supplier Spotlight

In each issue of *MBC Today*, we feature two AMBC Trusted Suppliers so our members can get to know them better. These are people and companies that we admire and trust, and we know you'll benefit from them.



Company Name: International Package Shipping

Contact:



Steve Walker, Vice President of Sales
Office: 1 (413) 693-0065
Mobile: 1 (978) 618-8451
swalker@internationalpackageshipping.com

What products / services do you offer?

International Package Shipping is the largest consumer-to-consumer package transportation company from the United States to Europe, with recent expansion into Asia. With over 60 years of experience handling both ocean and air shipments, we have earned a reputation as a consistent, trusted carrier that is relied upon to cost effectively handle shipments to 46 countries.

International Package Shipping works with hundreds of independent retail shipping centers throughout the United States. Our deferred time-in-transit international air and ocean shipping services are the perfect complement to the major carriers and provides choice, flexibility and a more affordable shipping option to retail shipping outlets and their customers.

What benefit(s) do you bring to AMBC Members?

If you have ever had a customer walk out of your store due to the high cost of international shipping—or ask if there is a slower, less expensive, but still reliable and trackable option—International Package Shipping will be a great option for you and an additional revenue stream for your shipping center. With easy sign-up and no up-front cost, International Package Shipping can quickly have you ready for the next customer that comes to your store looking for international service.

What new or growing opportunities do you see for AMBC Members in the future, and what can you do to help them?

International Package Shipping will work with you to assist in the growth of your International Shipping volume. There are cost-conscious customers that simply do not shipping due to the generally high costs, and International Package Shipping gives you the opportunity to retain that revenue.

Where to follow:

www.internationalpackageshipping.com



The Anytime Mailbox Team

Company Name: Anytime Mailbox

Contact:

Austin Stephens, Manager, Sales
austin@anytimemailbox.com, 1 (702) 342-0539

Juliana Souza, Customer Relations Manager
juliana@anytimemailbox.com, 1 (866) 444-8417

Matt Going, CEO
matt@anytimemailbox.com, 1 (760) 809-4782

What products / services do you offer?

Anytime Mailbox is the leading provider of digital mailbox software solutions in the U.S., generating new, recurring revenue for our over 600 operators across the country.

Anytime Mailbox is the most straightforward way to add new, recurring revenue to your business each month while leveraging your existing location and team.

What benefit(s) do you bring to AMBC Members?

Anytime Mailbox drives thousands of new virtual mailbox renters to our operating partners each month with our effective online marketing campaigns. We have the best customer support in the industry, serving both you and your base of renters, ready to help seven days a week, including the early mornings, evenings, and on weekends.

We are the most competitively priced, full-service, and stable platform, with industry-leading 99.99% network uptime.

What new or growing opportunities do you see for AMBC Members in the future, and what can you do to help them?

Anytime Mailbox prides itself on being the #1 marketing company in the digital mailbox industry. This fall we will be rolling out digital marketing tools and assets that AMBC Members can use on their website, in-store, and via digital marketing campaigns including social media.

Where to follow:

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Business Coaching – Onsite Visits

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www.staplesadvantage.com

585-414-2205

Ship & Pack & Office Supplies Distributor

USPS

www.usps.com

800-275-8777

Postal Shipping

UPS

www.ups.com

877-543-4207

Ground & Express Shipping

MBC Funnies

"Straight from the Customer's Mouth"

Someone called on the phone and asked if we could help him track a USPS package.

Me: "Was this a shipment sent from our location?"

Customer: "No, it's an incoming shipment, but I can't understand what the tracking results are trying to say."

Me: "OK. Let me see if I can look it up and help translate."

He gave me the tracking number and I looked it up. The tracking results clearly said that the package was forwarded yesterday, per a forwarding order on file with the USPS.

Me: "It looks like this was forwarded yesterday to your new address. Do you have a forwarding order on file with the USPS?"

Customer: "Yes, but I saw it was forwarded and cancelled the forwarding order three hours after it was forwarded. Do you think it was still forwarded?"

Me: "Well, yes. If you cancelled the forwarding order after it was forwarded, then I'm sure they wouldn't retroactively go back and unforward everything they had already forwarded."

Customer: "Oh. OK. I wasn't sure what their process was."

Me: "If you'd like more information, you can call 1-800-ASK-USPS."

Customer: "I've been waiting on hold with that number all morning, so I thought I'd call you because I know you always answer."

...

"You can't ship when it's raining, can you?"

...

A couple came in, wanting to send a postcard to Kazakhstan with just a phone number and no address ... and wanted it sent for free, through FedEx, "like they do at the restaurant." I asked them to clarify and they said, "You just fill out a card at the restaurant and put it in the box and it goes for free with FedEx."

I'm not sure what magical restaurant they're talking about, but I'd sure like to check it out!

...

Customer: "What time do you close tonight?"

Me: "We close at six."

Customer: "Is that six PM?"

...

Me: "And what is the recipient's phone number?"

Customer: "I don't know, but I can call him really quickly and ask."

(Proceeds to get out her phone and calls the recipient to ask what their phone number is. And not like a Facebook Messenger or WhatsApp call, an actually need-a-number-to-call call.)

**MBC Funnies wants
your submissions!
Send your ridiculous,
hilarious, or simply
eye-rolling bits to
hello@ambc4me.org.**



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