We wish you holiday joy and good cheer!

We join the chorus of well-wishers calling "Merry Christmas" to you at doorways, in the halls and on the street. And "Happy Hanukkah" brings the same smiles to those who welcome the greeting.

Though we may not come face to face with you right now, these good wishes are from the heart.

Yes, the holiday season is with us again. For everyone among us, it probably recalls memories of childhood and past family gatherings. We may get sentimental about the absence of family members who are no longer with us, or we may be longing for those serving with the armed forces in distant lands. But still we thank God for the opportunity to gather together.

As 2011 draws to a close, we want you to know we appreciate your business in the year that's just ending. Without you, we could not have accomplished all that we did. Though the economy was not in our favor this year, we soldiered on in spite of it.

Some experts optimistically predict that the economy (and sales!) will be stronger in 2012. Whatever the case, we will be depending on you and your business to see us through the year with flying colors.

To you, we wish you a very happy holiday season.

Why customers leave: one surprising reason

When business is slow, it's easy to think customers have moved to cheaper products or decided to do without the services you offer. Particularly during such times, it's a good idea to survey present and recently departed customers in order to check the pulse of your business. You'll probably discover some customers didn't like the level of service you provide. That's not pleasant to hear, but complaints of any kind are good. They give you a starting point for improvement.

Many former and present customers are nice people who don't want to complain. These are the people you need to talk to. Conversations with customers will show that you really care about their opinions. They will be more loyal to you in the future.

To you, we wish you a happy New Year's Day.

Free Cleaning Tips and Specials at www.MyWebsite.com
Upgrades in the iPhone 4S

The processing chip from the iPad 2 is now in the iPhone 4S. It means Web pages and videos open faster. The camera gets a big boost with an 8-megapixel sensor for sharper photos, and it performs better in lower light.

The new iPhone also has Siri, the personal talking assistant. Hit the home button on the iPhone, and ask the computer's female voice to find you the weather or directions, set a meeting place, or incorporate your personal talking assistant. Hit the home button again, and have Siri speak to you in your selected language.

Display: An 3.5” Liquid Crystal Display (LCD) with a resolution of 320 x 480 pixels.

Camera: The camera got a major upgrade to a 8-megapixel camera, able to record HD 1080p video.

Siri: Siri is a virtual personal assistant that can answer questions, set reminders, control your phone, and even perform tasks on other apps.

GPS: The iPhone 4S includes built-in GPS, allowing you to use apps like Maps to get directions.

Battery: The iPhone 4S has a longer battery life than its predecessor, allowing you to use the phone for longer periods of time.

App Store: Get access to the largest selection of apps in the world.

Shake to share, all of a sudden your phone alerts you to things you already have the ability to share. You can share content to social networking sites, email, messages, or other apps with just a shake of the phone.

Christmas Eve story shows how problems can lead to discoveries, improvements

You’ve heard the story before, but maybe you never associated it with your own business and life.

It was 1818 when Austrian Father Joseph Mohr was worried about Midnight Mass services. The organ was broken. Would there be no singing? Mohr hastily wrote a very simple song. He took the words to organist Franz Xaver Gruber and asked him to compose a melody to go with them.

That night, “Silent Night, Holy Night” was sung for the first time, accompanied by Father Mohr’s guitar.

The masterpieces reminds us that broken things and broken people can be turned into opportunities that can produce more benefits than we know.

Consider the broken employee, the one who objects to going along with a program, the one who complains all the time. If you get to know the troublemakers, you could discover that their points of view could have merit, that they have the company’s interest at heart as well as their own. Talk to them and you could make a discovery.

Now consider the broken customer. Business professor Keith Starcher says some experts say it’s best to fire trouble makers, but you could improve your own world.

Decorating safely for a joyful holiday

Decorating for the holidays can be a huge undertaking. Cramming on the roof, placing the star atop the Christmas tree and lighting the house with candles are dangerous activities. They send about 12,500 people to the emergency room every year. The Consumer Product Safety Commission recommends:

Tires: When buying an artificial tree, look for the “Fire Resistant” label. For a fresh tree, find one on which it’s not easy to pull needles from a branch. Keep the tree in a stand basin filled with water. Christmas trees are involved in some 300 fires each Christmas season.

Electrical connections: Use a power strip to connect several power cords inside your home. A circuit breaker will turn off instead of blowing a breaker if there is a power overload.

Lights: Buy light strings that are approved by a testing laboratory. Check last year’s strings for broken sockets or wires. Toss any that are damaged.

Candles: Keep burning candles in sight. Put them out if you move to another room or go to bed.

Decorations: Use only non-combustible or flame-resistant materials to trim a tree. In homes with small children, avoid decorations that are sharp or breakable. Don’t use any that look like candy or food.

Fireplaces: “Fire salts” produce colored flames when thrown on a wood fire, but you could improve your own world.

Do You Know…

1. Which river is spanned by the Royal Gorge Bridge in New York?

2. Which river is spanned by the Brooklyn Bridge in New York?

3. What actor was the co-writer of a syndicated newspaper column about the card game bridge with expert Charles Golten?

4. What actress performed her rendition of “Makrii’s Whoopee” from atop Jeff Bridge’s piano in The Fabulous Baker Boys?

5. Which James Bond film culminates with a fight on the Golden Gate Bridge?
   a. Moonraker, b. Diamonds are Forever, c. The World Is Not Enough, d. A View to a Kill.

6. The third-longest suspension bridge was the Tacoma Narrows Bridge until it collapsed during a violent windstorm in 1940. The bridge was located in which U.S. state?

7. What actor threatened to end his life by jumping from a bridge in the movie It’s a Wonderful Life?

8. The Royal Gorge Bridge, the highest suspension bridge in the U.S. crosses what river?

9. Over 26,000 feet long, the Mackinac Bridge, nicknamed “Mighty Mac,” is located in which U.S. state?

10. The original London Bridge was taken apart in England and reconstructed in which U.S. state?