

Strategic Marketing and How To Communicate Your Sales Message so Buyers Take Action Now!

By Don L. Price

Wouldn't it be great that every time you made a sales presentation, write a letter, send your sales literature or place an ad that you knew, with some certainty, that you could get your prospects to take action and respond to your offer? Well, to put it bluntly, it's not that difficult if you simply apply the basics of marketing. Unfortunately, marketing is one of the least understood and arguably one of the least underutilized, course of action, in business today.

Marketing has and will continue to make the difference between the survival and extinction of a business today. Treading our way into the future with the overwhelming velocity of day-to-day change in this wildly unpredictable changing marketplace, with shorter product life cycles, require businesses, small or large, to have an edge or lose share of market to the competition.

Having the edge today will involve refining your marketing with a holistic approach and razor-sharp strategies that accelerate your business growth. The more I research and study how businesses stay alive and well -- the more I am convinced and respect that strategic marketing is the forerunner to optimizing our selling performance.

Think of it this way: Visualize an umbrella - and label it "marketing" and "strategy." Next, under the umbrella see advertising, branding, public relations, etc. Label those items, "selling" and "tactical processes."

"Marketing," -- the strategy -- is what favorably positions your company products or services in the mind of the customer and is aimed at stimulating a desire and demand on the part of the customer to make a purchase.

"Selling" -- the tactical processes -- are tools used to educate, inform, influence and persuade purchasing actions from the customer.

Both marketing and selling must lead the customer to action. For example: Advertising is salesmanship in action. Radio, television, newspaper, direct mail (electronic or paper) and magazines should all be constructed in the same demanding way that a salesperson makes a presentation to a prospective customer.

The same skills, habits and attitudes that are required of a salesperson for influencing action, on the part of the customer, should be directly aligned with all your various tactical processes.

For example -- The successful salesperson must:

1. Develop and build rapport
2. Understand customer needs
3. Emphasizes tangible benefits
4. Skillfully move a customer toward a purchase
5. Keep the prospective customer "engaged" in the purchase process
6. Strategically link a product or services to a customer's most important needs and issues
7. Detail the product or service to motivate the purchasing action of the customer

Each advertising piece that is used in your marketing arsenal - newspaper ad, magazine ad, direct response mailing, public relations campaign should make a complete and compelling case for your products and services in the same way that a salesperson would do in person.

1. Do your ads (metaphorically) talk to your customers - do they build a rapport?
2. Are your brochures, letters, newsletters, ads and public relations material believable and emotionally peak the curiosity of people to want to learn more?
3. Is your marketing targeted toward perspective customers that have a real need for your products and services - have the money and willing to spend it?
4. Does your marketing materials educate and emphasize all the tangible benefits to keep the prospective customer engaged and motivated to take a purchasing action.

Today is not the time to be timid in your marketing. People need a nudge in making decisions. They want and expect to be told how to take action to obtain your products and services.

Take an assessment of your strategic marketing and selling action mentioned above and in addition see if you are:

1. Educating your customers about the unique advantages your products and services offered,
 - a). Service guarantees
 - b). Technical or manufacturing support

- c).** Warranties
- d).** Durability and dependability
- e).** New product developments
- f).** Upgrades and product enhancements
- g).** Delivery

2. Asking strategic questions for

- a).** Linking products or services to customers needs
- b).** Providing solutions to problems
- c).** Manage customer relationships
- d).** Keeping your customer and prospective customer engaged in the buying process

3. Active Listening for

- a).** Emotional triggers
- b).** Logical reasoning

4. Handling objections to

- a).** Minimizing concerns
- b).** Overcome obstacles

5. Presenting benefits that

- a).** Motivate your customer's loyalty and purchasing action
- b).** Advantage your products and services over your competitors

Now is the time to pull out all your marketing materials, ads, sales scripts, brochures, presentation materials, marketing channels, and yes, check your attitudes, habits and skills - it's time to be innovative, nontraditional and bold in your thinking and business endeavors.