



## **Do You Know What Your Customers Want?**

*by George Dodge*

"The True Function of Any Successful Business is to Sell People Precisely What They Want To Buy" - Bob Serling

I suppose the above seems rather obvious. After all, no customers, no business, right? But if the failure rate of businesses today is any indication, then perhaps it's not so obvious after all.

What do I mean by that last statement?

Have you noticed the ads that most business place, if they place any at all? Don't most of them focus on the business, and not on the customer's needs, wants, and desires? Here are some of the marketing failures I see daily:

- Ads with no headlines (to attract a potential customer's attention). - Ads with only the business name as the title. - Ads listing how long a entity has been in business or other boring company information. - Ads simply listing the names of products and services. - Ads with no contact information provided. - One time mailings with no follow ups. - No subsequent offer of a related product after an initial sale. - No clue as to the real target market. - No research to find out what the target market wants. - A build it and they will come mentality.

Where is the customer in all this? Who is speaking to the customer to find out what he or she wants, needs, or desires? Who is providing a solution to the customer's problems? Who is making life easier or better for the customer?

The answer to the above questions is "successful companies." Successful companies find out what their customers want, need, or desire. Successful companies provide solutions to their customer's problems and make life better for them. Successful companies carefully design their products or services to satisfy their customer's wants and desires and to make their lives easier or better.

Successful companies focus, not on themselves, but on their customers. They

carefully research and define their target market and they implement customer centered marketing strategies to ensure that their target market is aware of their products or services and the benefits that they provide.

What too many companies fail to realize is that customers don't care about them or their business. What the customer cares about is "what is in it for them." For companies that answer that question, sales and profits fall into place.

I recently wanted to sell a timeshare that I had purchased a number of years ago, so I called a local real estate company to see if they handled timeshare resales. The agent that took my call informed me that she did not have any prior experience in dealing with timeshares but would get back with me if their company did.

The next day she called and informed me that while her company did not deal with timeshare resales, she had the name and numbers of two companies that did. She provided me the numbers and then mentioned that if I did sell my timeshare through either of them, they would pay her a commission for the lead. I think she told me that information hoping that I would feel some bit of obligation to her since she had gone to the work of providing me with the contacts.

But, just like your customers, I also listen to WIIFM (What's In It For Me) and my decision as to what company I list my timeshare with will depend purely on where I think I will get the best service. My decision will not include in any way the fact that she may or may not get a commission.

When I called the first company she referred, I discovered that they wanted an upfront fee - red flag - bad sign! I have been down that road on a previous occasion with disastrous results. Scratch one company off the list.

Based on the results of the first call, I have now researched several alternatives on my own and will probably list my timeshare with one of the alternatives that does not require an upfront fee and seems to have a good track record.

"If you want to sell as much as you possibly can and as often as you possibly can, the formula is simple. Find out what your customers really want and sell it to them. Make their lives easier. Make their lives better. Solve their problems. Deliver their dreams to their doorsteps. And watch your company grow beyond belief." - Bob Serling

As an example of the above, take Nordstroms department stores. Nordstroms rose to such prominence in the retail world, not by being cheaper, but by providing superior customer service. Nordstroms is the only place my wife will

shop for shoes. Why? Because Nordstroms is the only place where she can find what she wants!

Remember, if you focus your business on your customers wants and desires, build long-term relationships with your customers, and service your customers far beyond the level of service that your competition might provide, your business will flourish. You can even be more expensive and your customers will gladly pay.

All of your profits depend on your customer - Do You Know What Your Customers Want?

In a follow up article, I'll discuss the importance of having a powerful USP or ESA - you do have one don't you? Be watching for it.

For more articles and information to help your business grow visit:

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