



**Different thinking**  
for **changed** outcomes

## Marketing Strategy -Your Ideal Customer

Are you spending a lot of time and money attracting the wrong sort of customer to your business?

Often when we start a business we have a clear idea as to the type of customer we want. However as we grow we start to compromise, offer discounts, take on clients who seem to place little value on the service we provide. Soon we find ourselves working exceptionally hard on a treadmill of endless customer acquisition, increasing promotional costs and diminishing returns.

But there is a better way! Start by taking a step back and develop a profile of your “ideal” customer – then build an offer targeted at the specific needs of the ideal customer.

This process is simple to implement – but very powerful – it can also fundamentally change the way you do business!

### Step 1 - What do you want your ideal customer to be like?

Develop a profile of the characteristics of your ideal customer based on your own experience.

- What are they like to deal with?
- What traits do they have?
- What are their likely drivers?
- What are their needs?
- How do they behave?
- What are their buying patterns?
- When do they buy?
- Where are they located?
- What is their age? Sex? Occupation?
- Where or how are they employed?
- What is their life like at work and home?
- How do they think?

Develop a picture of your ideal customer – compare it to your existing customer base – are there any gaps? Do you have too many customers who simply are not your ideal customer? Ask what needs to change to make them an ideal customer?

When you have developed a profile of your ideal customer – then look for groups of people who think and behave in the same way.

It is only when you know what your ideal customer looks like that you can go out and look for them!

## **Step 2 - Are you walking over acres of diamonds and don't even know it?**

The next step towards building a profile of your ideal customer; is to review your existing client base. Who are your top ten or twenty customers? What do they have in common?

Importantly think about those customers you or your team enjoys dealing with, and ask why? What differentiates them from all your other clients?

Don't waste time chasing new customers until you understand the reasons why your existing good customers do business with you.

If you can't find the answers, ask your customers – you may be surprised at their response!

It is too easy to be caught on the treadmill of endless customer acquisition and ignore the diamonds right under your feet!

## **Step 3 - Every business targets a niche – even if they don't know it!**

It is a fallacy to say “everyone is a potential customer of my business” – every business targets customers or should target customers, with a particular profile. This could include:

- Customers of a particular age
- Of a particular gender
- Disposable income
- Have similar likes and dislikes
- Located in certain geographic areas
- A particular industry or field
- Facing particular problems or challenges
- Hold similar values
- Have interests that are similar
- Of a particular personality type
- Price driven
- Quality focused
- Have certain service expectations

The profile of the ideal customer will change depending on the business – but the key is to first spend the time to learn what the characteristics are.

## **Step 4 – Ask what sort of service would my ideal customers expect me to provide?**

Having developed a profile of your ideal customer, the next step is to ask,

- Based on what we know about our ideal customer what sort of service would they expect us to provide?
- What would be the elements most critical to the ideal customer?
- How could each customer service touch point be improved to appeal to our ideal customer?
- What would our advertising and promotional material need to look like and say to appeal to the ideal customer?
- What would our website need to look like? Function?
- What behaviours would they expect us to demonstrate?

The key is to start looking at your business through the eyes of your customer – this is when the magic starts to happen!

### **Step 5 – Communication - Are you focused on your customer needs, or your products and services?**

Review your advertising, your website and promotional material – which world are you talking about? Your customer's world, *their* needs and problems? Or, like most businesses are you focused on *your* world, your product and services?

Customers want to know, “what's in it for me” - When they buy, they looking for what the product or service can *do* for them – the *benefits* they can gain, the *problems* they can solve or the *risks* they can avoid.

The actual product or service is simply a means to an end, yet most advertising, websites and promotional material we review talks more about the business and the product features than how it can help the customer.

Hint: Try and aim for 30% about you and your product and 70% painting a picture how your customers world and how your product or service can be of benefit.

This simple shift in focus can deliver some remarkable results.

### **Summary**

Building your business around the needs of your ideal customer & their needs can be a truly transformational process – in reality it involves a very different way of thinking – essentially planning your business from the “outside in” – which is the reverse of most businesses operating today. It will set you apart in the marketplace.

If you want to learn more about this topic, read Seth Godin's excellent book – All Marketers are Liars Storytellers!

**Bruce Hall**