

AI-01593 Want vs Needs in Business

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In business, finding what people want is more important than finding what people need. Deep dive the truth of the statement and list 22 examples.

This statement — “In business, finding what people want is more important than finding what people need” — reflects a critical distinction in human psychology and consumer behavior. It may sound counterintuitive, but it’s profoundly true in practice. Let’s unpack it first, then follow with 22 real-world examples.

Deep Dive: Why “Wants” Trump “Needs” in Business

1. Wants Are Emotional; Needs Are Rational

People don’t make buying decisions based solely on logic. Most purchases are emotional, even irrational. People buy what makes them feel good, look good, or feel in control. “Wants” tap into these emotional needs. “Needs” often get delayed or ignored.

2. Wants Create Urgency

You want a new phone even if your old one works. You want coffee every morning, not because you need it to survive, but because it gives a daily dopamine boost. Businesses flourish by riding this urgency.

3. Needs Are Often Met Already

Water, shelter, rice, basic healthcare — these are “needs” — but in most modern economies, they are already available. Wants offer differentiation, personalization, luxury, identity — they create a market.

4. Wants Drive Premium Pricing

People need shoes. But they want Nike, Balenciaga, or HOKA. You can sell a need at cost or lower. You can sell a want at 10x cost.

5. Wants Fuel Brand Loyalty

Wants foster tribes. Apple users. Tesla fanatics. Starbucks regulars. Needs don't create loyalty — wants do.

22 Examples: Wants That Beat Needs in Business

1. iPhone – Nobody needs an iPhone. A cheap Android can do the job. People want the brand, design, and identity.
2. Starbucks Coffee – People don't need \$6 lattes. They want the experience, consistency, and social signal.
3. Luxury Bags (Louis Vuitton, Chanel) – Bags are a utility. These brands sell desire, status, and storytelling.
4. Air Jordans – Shoes that aren't just for walking — they're symbols of culture and style.
5. Tesla – You don't need an electric sports car. You want the tech, the performance, the Elon Musk vibe.
6. TikTok – Nobody needs endless scrolling. But billions want the dopamine hit of fast entertainment.
7. Coca-Cola – Sugary water isn't a need. Coke sells happiness, nostalgia, and brand legacy.
8. Netflix – You don't need to watch 10 hours of K-drama. But you want to escape reality.
9. Disneyland – It's not a need. It's a \$1,000+ fantasy-fueled family want.
10. GoPro – Most people aren't extreme athletes. But they want to feel like they are, or at least look like it.
11. Apple Watch – You can tell time with any watch. Apple sells lifestyle, health aspirations, and cool tech.
12. Spotify Premium – Music is everywhere for free. But people want seamless, ad-free, curated audio.

13. Uber Black – You could take a regular Uber. But people want comfort, class, and status.
14. Pet Fashion & Spa – Pets don't need designer sweaters. Their owners want to pamper them.
15. HelloFresh – You can cook for less money. But people want convenience and variety.
16. Peloton – A regular bike works. But Peloton sells community, sleek tech, and elite fitness vibes.
17. Instagram Filters – Nobody needs filtered selfies. People want to project an enhanced self.
18. Bottled Water (Fiji, Evian) – Tap water is available. But branded water is a want rooted in status and purity myths.
19. Online Dating Apps (Tinder, Bumble) – You don't need an app to meet people. You want efficiency, fun, and validation.
20. Crypto & NFTs – Few people need them for actual transactions. People want speculation, exclusivity, and hype.
21. Designer Furniture (IKEA vs. Roche Bobois) – Chairs are needs. Style and status are wants.
22. Adventure Travel – You don't need to trek Everest. But you want a story, transformation, or bragging rights.

Summary

Needs are necessities. Wants are choices. And in capitalism, choice is king.

The best businesses don't just solve problems — they create cravings. If you find what people want, you tap into the irrational, emotional, and aspirational — the source of profit, loyalty, and market dominance.

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