

One of the problems all of us marketers has is that we lie to ourselves. We want so badly to reinforce what we think we know that we often miss the obvious.

We turn to focus groups and see what we want to see.

We turn to "experts" and hear what we want to hear.

We turn to research to read what we want to read.

We even talk to our customers. Unfortunately, our customers perception of how they interact with our products and services don't always match reality. No where is this more obvious than at sporting events.

No where in any research have customers told us that they get most excited at a sporting event by T Shirts. But its true. I have gone to NBA games in every arena and many NHL and MLB games across the country . Without exception, the response to T Shirts being thrown into the audience exceeds the response to actual game action for all but the most exciting of game action moments.

The minute the T Shirt cannons or slingshots come on the court, field or ice, every man, woman or child of any age is up screaming their head off trying to get a free T Shirt . They have no idea what is on the shirt. They know the chances of getting one are slim, but it doesnt matter. Its T Shirts gone wild.

Its a huge marketing lesson.

The Customer is always right, but often they tell you what they want not by their responses to your inquiries but by their actions.

Sporting events are special because they allow customers to be part of and participate in an energetic environment that is unique. Some leagues are trying to minimize that energy by reducing sound, lights and other activities. Its a huge mistake. Maybe they should take a step back , or better yet a step up and sit with their customers and watch how they act during a game.

Its much more rewarding than sitting through a focus group.