

Title:

Avoid Being Vague

Word Count:

1177

Summary:

We are bombarded with thousands of marketing messages daily...on television & the radio, on the internet, in magazines and newspapers, on billboards and other signs, and even at the bottoms & on the backs of receipts. in order to get heard, we need our marketing messages to be clear & concise. To be successful in business, our messages must clearly target a specific audience, explaining to them the features and benefits of our product or service.

Keywords:

marketing, business, customers, advertising, sales, PR, sales management

Article Body:

We are bombarded with thousands of marketing messages daily...on television and the radio, on the internet, in magazines and newspapers, on billboards and other signs, and even at the bottoms and on the backs of receipts. The world is, indeed, a very noisy place. And in order to get heard, we need our marketing messages to be clear and concise.

A vague message is one that isn't easily understood - it doesn't speak to a potential customer or client. To be successful in business, our messages must clearly target a specific audience, explaining to them the features and benefits of our product or service. We need to get the public involved and interested enough to want to have further conversations with us. Only then do we have the entrée for beginning to develop a relationship with them, the first step in the selling process.

How can we ensure that our messages are all that they can be?

1. Define your target market. One of the best ways to create a clear output is to start with clear inputs. When it comes to anything you do for your business, you need to be very clear on your target market. Who do you want to reach with your marketing efforts? Define them as clearly as possible. Are they male or female? What are their ages, their occupations, and their lifestyles? Why would they want to do business with you? The more clear you are about who you want to work with, the more clear you will be when crafting your marketing messages.

2. Market narrowly, but deliver broadly. Your marketing message should be

carefully focused to cater specifically to the needs and wants of your target market. One might think you'd be passing up opportunities for more customers or clients. The reality is that more people will be attracted to you if you position yourself as a specialist rather than a generalist. Folks associate a higher degree of expertise with a specialist, and, more than likely, you'll be able to charge premium prices to reflect this marketing position. Once you've gotten their attention you can market many things to them (delivery broadly).

3. Talk about the customer, not yourself. Your marketing message should speak to the prospect, their particular needs and wants. What problems can you solve for the customer? Make a list of the top 10 problems that you solve for others. These should be the substance and focus of every conversation that you have. Avoid talking about yourself. People are interested in what you can do for them - sometimes even more than the specifics of the product or service that you offer. Your prospects needs and your solutions should be the focus of all of your marketing materials.

4. Explain the benefits. Not only should you explain the benefits of your product or service, but you should be able to explain the benefits of working with you. Features are defined as the distinctive characteristics of a product's use or design. A benefit, on the other hand, is how the feature will add value to the prospect's life. Carefully define your features and benefits. At the same time, what are the benefits of working with you? Do you provide 24-hour turnaround? Do you return emails and phone calls promptly? Do you offer a free introductory consultation? Do you provide additional value to your customers - extra reports, information or discounts on future purchases? People buy benefits, not features. What's in it for them? Let them know!

5. Know your products and services. There is a lot to know when it comes to your products and services. The more articulate you are in explaining their features and benefits, the higher your chances of closing a sale. For each product or service you offer, make sure you can clearly articulate the features, the benefits, and the specific client need that is addressed. Word this information in language that prospects can clearly understand - that relates to who they are as a target market. Drafting a simple one-page summary of these details can help you to get clear on what matters most.

6. Keep it simple. The best messages are those that are simply said. People understand simple. The more complex the explanation, the higher the risk you run that you'll "lose them along the way." Again, refer back to the one page summary of your client needs, as well as product or service features and benefits. Provide information that is easy to understand. Don't give more information until the client asks for the information. Always let the prospect

guide the conversation.

7. Use a tagline. A tagline is a slogan or phrase that conveys something about a feature or benefit of something you offer. For example, the tagline for Chase Manhattan bank is "The Right Relationship is Everything". This slogan clearly communicates that one of the features of working with them is relationship - not just any relationship - but the right relationship. Another example of a tagline is Alicia Smith: The DISC Ninja. The DISC Ninja implies skill, precision, and performance. What type of tagline can best describe you and your business?

8. Consult your R & D team. To create on-target marketing messages, run them by your friends, family, and colleagues before you release them to the world. Creating your own R & D team is a great way to experiment or to try out your ideas in a low-risk environment. Probably one of the best things to do is to get feedback from your current customers. They can tell you first hand what works and why. Never pass up an opportunity to get feedback, as it will help you to fine-tune your marketing message.

9. Provide clear and clean information. It should go without saying that you should provide clear, easy-to-understand information. This applies to everything from your business card to your website. Make sure you include your complete contact information on everything, including your email signature. Provide FAQ or Frequently Asked Question sections in brochures, on your website or on other marketing materials. Make sure that you make it as easy as possible for people to contact you and to do business with you. If they need to search for how to contact you, they may very well search someone else out. Along with the times and days you do business, include your business, cellular, and fax numbers, as well as your website and email addresses. Include instructions on how to return or receive a refund on an item. Clear and concise is the name of the game.

10. Understand the customer. Prospects, and even your current customers, are focused on one thing and one thing only; what's in it for them. For the most part, they aren't really interested in you or your product or service. They are interested in benefits. How can you solve their pain? How can you resolve their issues? If you keep this in mind, this will help you to create marketing messages that are focused and really hit their mark.

© Copyright 2004 by Alicia Smith