

Title:

Are You Ignoring Your Customers' Requests?

Word Count:

1334

Summary:

If you really listen to your customers they will tell you exactly what products they want. They will also tell you what backend product they want to buy from you. Here's an example of how my customers told me what they wanted in one of my million dollar niches.

Keywords:

info products, product development, product funnel, backend, repeat sales

Article Body:

Copyright 2006 Willie Crawford

Many Internet marketing experts will tell you that the best way to find out what your customers want from you is to ask them. While that may be true, I believe that an even more accurate way is to just listen to what they're telling you, and to what they're asking you for.

To illustrate my point, I'll use a couple of examples from one of my own niches... the recipe and cookbook niche. If you already have even a minor foothold in any niche, my experience should be somewhat instructive.

In-case you're unfamiliar with my background, I earn six-figures from a soul food cookbook that I wrote and self-published. I wrote that cookbook because my site visitors asked for it.

The full story behind my first cookbook is that, when I first came online in 1996, I was told that I should focus on a niche. After building your typical "Internet marketing" site, which didn't really take off immediately, I eventually decided to build a site around the "soul food" recipes that I learned while growing up on a farm in North Carolina. I posted a few of my favorite recipes online as search engine bait, and then advertised affiliate products around the site ... usually with banners.

I was also told that I needed a mailing list to bring visitors back to the site, and to stay in touch with potential customers. With a recipe site, it made

perfect sense to me to create a list where people could trade recipes. That list was an immediate hit, and has been going strong for over 8 years.

While the recipes sent out through the list were primarily from site visitors, list members grew to associate me with great recipes. They eventually started asking me if I had a cookbook. I told them "no" but that I would write one if they would buy it. I also announced that I was taking advance orders (to verify the demand). I had over 100 orders before I wrote the first word. That cookbook has provided me, and my family, with a comfortable living for YEARS!

Over the years, I tried to sell those site visitors, and list members, a variety of different backend products, but nothing sold as well as my cookbook.

For the last six years, list members have regularly told me what my next few products should be, but I wasn't really listening. List members regularly emailed me saying that they loved my recipes, but that they were on restricted diets. They often asked if I had diabetic, low-fat or low-carb recipes. They also often wrote to tell me that they'd been diagnosed with high blood pressure, and asked if I had any recipes for people with hypertension.

When I finally started listening, I knew exactly what my next 4-5 products should be. They should be versions of my cookbook featuring diabetic, low-fat and low-carb recipes. I also needed to write a cookbook for those with high blood pressure. All of those cookbooks will be rolled out to my list and sites within the next 2 months!

What's also instructive is that over the years I built up this HUGE asset... people who have bought cookbooks from me and then asked if I had more. They were telling me what to sell them. They were telling me that if I just offered them what they WANTED they would buy it.

The above is just applying basic common sense and a little bit of marketing know-how ...which most Internet marketers already possess. Let me share with you a few more insights that you probably already have but are not using.

1) The easiest way in the world to make more money from a proven, profitable niche is to "go deep." Produce multiple episodes or versions of the product. That's what movie producers do. That's what traditional book publishers do. Look at the "Chicken Soup For The Soul" series! That told me that if I produced additional versions of my cookbook, it would sell. My list members also "told" me that.

The way that I will apply this is by re-labeling my first cookbook "Volume 1"

during the next printing. Then, I will introduce "Volume 2" and as many volumes as the market will bear over the years. Labeling the original "Volume 1" tells my customers to look for additional volumes. It sets up collectors to collect the complete series.

Speaking of collectors, another version of your product that you can release is a limited collectors' edition... if appropriate for your marketplace. The co-producer and host of the television cooking show that I'll tell you about later is doing just that. At my prompting, he's released a "Limited Edition Autographed Version" of his cookbook, "The Devotional Cookbook." You can see how he did that with my help at: <http://Chitterlings.com/devotionalcookbook.html>

What will make the limited edition of the cookbook, in the example above, sell out really fast is the fact that it really is only being released in a very limited quantity, and that a television personality is autographing copies. Ask yourself how you can apply a similar idea to your product. I'll admit that this idea isn't something that I dreamed up... it's something that I heard a speaker use as an example at a seminar. All I did was have my client APPLY the idea!

2) Go deep by offering more versions of your basic product. For example, with my cookbook, I offer it in PDF, print, and on CD. In a few months many of my recipes will be available on DVD since I will share them on a television cooking show that I'll be co-producing.

My mentors long ago told me that I needed not only a cooking show, but a full line of spices and sauces. Instead of listening to them, I went off in search of more exotic markets... largely ignoring the hungry market that I already had (pun intended).

It took one of my clients, coming to me with an idea for a cooking show that he had, to get me into the television business. When you really think about it though, producing a cooking show is just repackaging the information that I already have into a different format.

Listening to my market, will not only allow me to triple my book sales, it will also generate millions when the show is nationally syndicated. The show is just beginning production now, but will grow rapidly. You can follow our progress, and learn from the process, by frequenting our blog at:
<http://TheDevotionalChef.com/blog>

You can also see how I develop and market a full line of cookbooks and related products by visiting my cooking site at: <http://Chitterlings.com> Go ahead and join the mailing list, as this is where I announce new products and site news.

A few people may ask why I share so much of what I'm doing in my cooking niche with you here. You may wonder if I'm not afraid of competition. The fact is that there are MILLIONS of webpages out there offering free recipes, yet I earn six-figures selling them. The fact is that there are thousands of people who have written cookbooks and are having difficulty selling them. I don't have to worry about competition because by studying Internet marketing I have learned how to dominate my niche.

What should you do with the information that I've just shared with you? Ask yourself how you can apply it in your niche. Ask yourself if your site visitors and subscribers aren't already telling you what they want to buy!

Once you discover that your product is a hit with the marketplace, listen to them as they tell you how to improve the product, and how to sell more things to them. Instead of going off looking for new and more glamorous markets, serve the one that you've already mastered. Apply the many marketing techniques you already know to your existing niche. It will pay off handsomely!