

Title:

Customers: The Key To Successful Marketing

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Summary:

How well do you know your customers? What is the primary reason your customers or clients come to you? Or purchase your product or service? What you don't know could hurt your business.

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Article Body:

How well do you know your customers?

What is the primary reason your customers or clients come to you? Or purchase your product or service? What is the Number One problem you solve for them? Do you know? Are you certain? If you don't, your marketing could be missing the mark, and you could be missing out on sales.

Uncovering Your "Key Selling Point"

This is the Single Marketing Message that is the central message in all of your communications about your business, product or service. It can be difficult for small business owners to determine what their single marketing message should be. Why? Because they are too close to their business. And, because they are viewing their business from their side of the desk.

Keeping your marketing customer-focused can be a challenge

Even if we know we should be looking at our business from our customers' perspective, it's often easier said than done. As a result, it is easy to get caught up in all the amazing features of our product or service and the reasons we THINK our clients are attracted or are buying.

But sometimes our vantage point is clouded by our own perceptions and beliefs. And those perceptions and beliefs may be inaccurate. So how do you pinpoint the real reason customers are attracted to your product or service and the true reasons they are choosing to buy?

There is an easy way to stay on track

Very simply, YOU ASK THEM! Okay, I know it seems obvious, but you'd be surprised how often we don't think of the obvious.

Your prospects and customers (and yes, even your rejecters – those who visit but don't buy) can provide great insights about the benefits they value most in your product or service and why they chose to buy.

Whether you have a lot of customers or only a few

You don't have to have a large customer or prospect base to do some research to see if you are on track. Even if you only have a handful of clients or customers, contact them and ask them what they like most about your product or service.

Talk to your Clients or Customers

- (1) What is the one thing that got them to purchase?
- (2) Have you delivered on that promise?
- (3) What do they like least about your product or service?
- (4) How could you improve your product or service?
- (5) What else (in your business category) do they have a need for?
- (6) How else could you help them be successful, be happier, or solve whatever problem your product or service solves for them?

Talk to your Rejecters

If you choose to survey rejecters (which I have done very successfully for years for one of my clients) find out why they DIDN'T buy.

- (1) Ask them what product or service they bought instead of yours? And why?
- (2) Ask them what that competing product or service offered that yours did not?
- (3) Ask if there is anything you could do to get their business in the future? Product or service changes, additions, deletions?

Talk to your Prospects

Do you have a list of prospects – those who have expressed an interest in your product or service but have not yet purchased? Perhaps they have subscribed to your newsletter or ezine.

- (1) Ask them for feedback on your newsletter or ezine content.
- (2) What topics are they interested in learning more about?
- (3) How can you help them to be more successful, happier, etc?
- (4) Find out what they want and who they are

And in all three cases – Clients/Customers, Rejecters, and Prospects – if it seems appropriate, ask for a little information about who they are. Age, gender, profession, where they live, how much they typically spend in your product or service category.

This will help you get a better understanding of your target audience and you'll know if you're attracting the kind of people you thought would be interested in your product or service. And if you need to change your marketing strategy to reach a different audience, or to perhaps change your target audience.

It will help you better serve them

The more you can learn about your prospects and customers the better you can serve them. And the more effectively you can market to them.

You may be in for a surprise

I've had clients tell me they thought they knew why people were buying from them until they asked. And what they heard surprised and shocked them.

Very often what you hear can help you zero-in on a Unique Selling Proposition that you never thought of. And because it came from the mouths of your customers you know it is compelling and effective.

Don't change everything based on a few opinions

My only caution is if you only have a handful of customers or prospects to survey, don't make any major changes or decisions until you are able to validate

your findings among a larger group of people.

Or at least test any changes you do make before making a final decision to overhaul your entire business or marketing plan. Common sense is the rule here. Just use your own good judgment and don't over-react to comments made by only a handful of people.

You can ask in a number of ways - Choose what works for you

There are any number of ways to collect research from your prospects and customers. You can telephone them, email them, mail them a written questionnaire, or you can meet with them in a group (called a focus group) to collect their opinions.

You can be as formal or informal as you feel comfortable. Typically the larger number of clients you survey, the more formal the survey. If you have only a handful of people to talk to, simply pick up the phone and call them.

Don't be afraid to ASK

Don't be afraid to ask for opinions on your products or services or how you can serve your clients better. What you find out could be extremely valuable in helping you to build and grow your business.

Don't forget to say "thank you"

You will also want to consider offering an incentive to encourage your prospects and clients to participate or respond. A bonus, such as a special report, or a discount on a future purchase is a nice way to show your appreciation for them taking the time to respond to your survey.

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