



Tricks of The Trade February 2012

Hope you're well.

Today's gloomy statistic from the news is that in January one in seven shops in the UK remained empty.

Similar stories abound in the newspapers, on TV, in blogs and social media. These are real stories of course - but they don't help us.

It disappoints me that in the UK it seems most people look downwards and backwards when we should be looking upwards and forwards!

So let's hit back. This month's Tricks will help you connect with your missing customers. Companies in general - and sales people in particular, are often in the dark when it comes to knowing the real reasons their customers buy from them - and the reasons they don't.

Connect With Your Missing Customers

In a nutshell, when choosing products or services, your customers will be motivated by one of two things; pain or pleasure. Never is the pain and pleasure principle more apparent than in the selling arena.

Therefore it's crucial you know whether your customers and prospects are motivated towards what they want (gain/pleasure) - or away from what they don't want (pain). Once you have established whether they are pain or gain motivated you can communicate with them in a way that is bound to build rapport, make them feel understood - and more likely lead to a fruitful supplier/customer relationship.

The Pleasure

Typically, when selling a product, the seller will concentrate on the positive features of the product (pleasures). The xyz widget can do this, so you'll get more of that. That works well if the buyer is a goal focussed, 'towards motivated' individual.

The Pain

But what if the buyer is not motivated by moving towards a goal? What if they're very 'away from' in their outlook? Whilst you're drumming in the positives of the product, they're not listening because all they want is for someone to ease the pain they perceive they're in. They're not listening to your pleasures, because you're not acknowledging their pain.

It's the same scenario - but two completely different outlooks.

What's Your Personal Preference?

You will have a natural pain or gain motivation yourself. Up to now you will have unconsciously imposed that on your customers, prospects and colleagues...in fact

anyone that you've communicated with! To those with the same inclination, you will have had great rapport and connection. To those with the opposite inclination, you will have noticed less connection and rapport...even friction! From now on you know you can achieve great rapport every time just by matching their preference!

Ascertaining their pain/gain motivation

Clarifying their pain/gain motivation is very straightforward. Simply ask a few open questions and check their responses. If they start to talk about things they don't want or are keen to avoid then it's clear they are motivated away from pain. From there on in your language should talk about their problems and how a relationship with you will resolve their problem or help them avoid one.

If they talk about what they want to achieve, what a new product would give them, their goals, then they are clearly gain motivated. You should therefore talk in positive terms of what they will get from a relationship with you.

There isn't a right way or a wrong way regarding pain and gain. Just talk in their language, what's right for them. If you find yourself presenting to a group where it's not possible to clarify their individual pain/gain traits, use both towards and away from language to cover all bases.

In your marketing, brochure, websites, email campaigns, be sure to include both 'towards' and 'away from' language to ensure you engage with everyone. Currently your marketing content will most likely be based on those traits of the person writing it, which engage some readers but leave many others cold. By ensuring your content includes both towards and away from language, you'll engage many more potential customers.

Use 'You' Language

The language you use can be critical, whether verbal, in e-marketing, letters, advertising copy, or your website. Many companies fall into the trap of talking 'we' language - we do this, we can do that etc. That type of language does little to engage the customer or prospect.

Instead use the word 'you' as often as possible 'if you're looking for', 'you will find the answer here' etc.

Action

Pick out your top 5 customers. When you next meet them, make a point of finding out their pain/gain motivation. Make sure your team are aware of pain/gain motivations amongst their contacts if different personnel are involved. Your customer relationships will prosper at all levels. Do this for all new prospects too.

Check out your website. How much 'we' language is there? Make a point of converting the copy to become more 'you' focussed. How about your other marketing materials? If you can't get this done immediately then do it over time. Be aware though that for all of the time you are using 'we' language, you are limiting your customer potential.

Ascertaining the pains and gains of your customers and prospects and reflecting their preferences back in your own written and verbal communications will turbo charge your sales results. Add in lots of 'you' language and you'll see a transformation in your customer relationships - and your sales results.

Let me know how you get on.

Until next time.

Leigh

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For previous 'Tricks of the Trade' go here

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Quick Sales Tip 1

When selling, don't forget the buyers' challenges. They often have to get others to buy in to your proposal.

Your proposal may initiate internal change they have to sell internally.

They could have to negotiate through all the internal politics, nurture internal relationships and a whole lot more. That's why you have to support the buyer and why it also take a long time for decisions to take their course.

Quick Sales Tip 2

Make sure you get proper feedback from your customers. Not just the occasional feedback form.

What are they really thinking? Listen - and listen some more. Your customers like you. That's why they buy from you.

Find out the real reasons they use you and then find others that have the same buying criteria. When was the last time you asked them?

Quick Sales Tip 3

Testimonials are a valuable part of your sales and marketing armoury.

If you can get a testimonial that overcomes an objection, so much the better.

For example something like "I thought their price was high, bought it anyway and came to realise they had the best value" would definitely hit the spot.

Or how about a 'happy ending' testimonial..."it's easy to use and the service is excellent. Now my people all love to use xyz"