

When Did This Become About You?

How to Tap Into Your Customer's Inner Desires for Fun and Big Profits

By Rebecca Hagel
<http://www.saleslettershark.com>

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When Did This Become About You?

The evolutionary biologists and psychologists are right about one thing – humans have a tendency to put themselves first. That makes sense – for example, you can't save someone else from drowning until you've saved yourself first. Those scientists would argue that this is simply a survival mechanism, a way to help propagate the species.

However, what started out as a survival mechanism has spilled over into every part of our lives. Americans in particular are known to put their individual needs ahead of the group's needs. Perhaps you've seen this selfish behavior taken to sickening levels – face it, we all have the friend who only talks about herself and never asks anyone what's going on in their life.

In business that same selfish drive applies, but beware: it can work both for and against you. Indeed, one of the most common beginner errors is focusing on one's own needs and not the customers' needs. If you want to succeed, you must reverse that. Specifically, you must focus on your customers' needs and understand them.

Sure, you might be rolling your eyes right now and saying to yourself, “no kidding, Sherlock...I KNOW that.” Yet the reason this is such an easy error to make is because you went into business for selfish reasons, right? Perhaps you work for yourself because you want more money, or you want to take care of your family, or you hate your job, or you want more free time...and so on.

That's normal. I did the same thing. I went into business for myself because I didn't want to work for someone else.

So when you start your business essentially for egocentric reasons, it's easy to forget to make the “switch” and start focusing on the customer. For example, it's pretty easy to get carried away thinking about what you're going to do with your newfound money and freedom, as opposed to keeping the focus on how to better serve your customers.

But here's the cool thing – when you fully commit your attention to your customer's wants and needs in lieu of your own, your needs automatically get met.

I believe it was Zig Ziglar who said (paraphrased) that if you help enough people get what they want, you'll get what you want. Think about that line and take it to heart – it truly is one of the keys to running a successful business.

Now let's take a look at some specific examples of where you need to focus on your customers and not yourself...

Creating the Product or Service: Wants VS. Needs

You've heard it plenty of times – find a market with a problem, find their solution, and throw yourselves in their path so that they throw their money at you. For the most part this is good advice. However, let's break this down further since essentially what we are referring to is meeting a customer's wants and needs.

You see, the problem is that it's easy for our ego to get in the way when we start a business. We may know what a customer needs and so we set off to create that product or service. Then we are completely befuddled when no one is buying our product.

What happened? We didn't create a product that people WANTED.

If you decide to create a business that meets people's needs, you better also be sure that these people want your solution.

For example, let's suppose you run into a specific population of smokers. They love gathering on Saturday nights on their front porches, enjoying good company, their favorite beverage, and a pack of Marlboro Reds.

The problem is, this particular group has a history of lung cancer in their families. And due to the long history of smoking each of these people has, coupled with the large number of cigarettes they smoke each day, you know they are walking a dangerous path health-wise.

What do these people NEED? This particular group needs to quit smoking before they meet their untimely ends. But if you attempt to market a stop-smoking product to them, you're the one likely to meet an untimely death. Quite simply, this particular population of smokers doesn't want to quit, so you're wasting your time and money trying to sell that sort of product to them.

At this point you have a choice:

1. You can find a market of smokers who DOES want to stop smoking, and sell them your product.
2. You can figure out what your "porch smokers" actually want, and sell it to them (discount cigarettes come to mind).
3. Or you can just choose another market and product.

You can see this same sort of example playing out across many different populations, especially in regards to health. For example, you may find

overweight people who need to lose weight, but they want clothes that make them look slimmer. Or you may find teenagers that need a dependable car, but the teenager is more interested in what the car looks like as opposed to whether it will need costly repairs.

Sometimes the product you are putting on the market is so revolutionary that people have yet to realize they need or want it. In that case, if you decide to proceed you will likely spend a lot of time and money educating your potential customers. This is one of those cases where being second into the market may be more beneficial, since your competitor spent the time and money educating the market, and now you can swoop in and get your market share.

For example, marketer John Reese was one of the first people to come out with an autoresponder. People didn't realize they needed it, and they for sure didn't want it. In fact, they didn't even know what it was. As such, John and his closest competitors had to educate the market before he could sell autoresponders.

Now of course when you say "autoresponder" most people want it for their business plus they tend to need it if they're running a mailing list. Even though the competition may be tough, at least if you entered that market now you wouldn't need to explain to potential customers why they wanted and needed your autoresponder service.

So what's the bottom line? Know your market! No matter who you are marketing to and what product or service you're putting out, if you want to succeed make sure your market wants what you have. Better yet, make sure your market **DESPERATELY** wants your product!

Now the next question you need to answer...

But WHY Do They Want Your Product?

Yes, if you've created a product that a certain product desperately wants, you're one step ahead of the game. But the next very important step is that you need to be able to effectively communicate your marketing message (e.g., through your ads, sales letters, etc). If you don't know why your market wants your product, then your marketing message will fall on deaf ears. End result? Pretty dismal results if you can't get your target market's attention!

A large component of this is helping potential customers see the potential benefits and outcomes they'll get if they buy your product, as opposed to you just letting them know the product's features.

For example, if you're selling toothpaste you can list one of the 16 letter ingredients as being a "feature" of your toothpaste. To most people that won't mean much. But if you tell people that this long word that they can't spell or pronounce is used to whiten teeth, you'll get their attention. And if you tell them the potential outcome of whiter teeth (such as attracting hot dates), you'll be tapping into the underlying desires and wants of your market.

Let's face it – toothpaste customers need toothpaste to protect their teeth. But what most of these customers want are more attractive mouths, perhaps with the intention of attracting suitors. Here you see that while people know they NEED toothpaste, your marketing message is likely to resonate with them more if you focus on why they WANT your toothpaste.

However, the story changes when you look at children's toothpaste. The parents buying this stuff for their kids aren't looking for "whiter teeth and fresher mouths." What these parents want for their children is exactly what these children need: dependable cavity protection.

Let's look at another example of getting into your customer's heads...

Some time ago on the Warrior Forum I reviewed a gentleman's sales letter. This particular letter was designed to sell a "copycat cookbook" – that's the type of cookbook that teaches you how to cook your favorite recipes from famous restaurants.

The sales letter was good overall – it had all the right elements, the trigger words and the overall look of a sales letter that should convert browsers to buyers. But in reality the letter should have converted better. The author wanted to know why it wasn't converting.

After about one minute reading the letter, I had a pretty good idea about why the letter wasn't converting. My feeling was that the marketer wasn't tapping into his target market's main desires. You see, the letter emphasized saving money. The letter suggested that instead of going out to eat at the restaurants, you could save money by cooking the same recipes at home.

Yes, true, that IS a bonus.

But is that the main reason someone would buy a copycat cookbook? I didn't think so... and here's what I told the marketer looking to improve his conversions:

My first gut-feeling is that the way your positioning the product might be turning potential buyers away. Specifically, you spend the first several paragraphs talking about how much money I'll save

by cooking these meals at home versus going out to the restaurants.

I don't know about you, but I don't go out just for the food. I go out for the ambience. I go out so I don't have to do dishes. I go out because it's a social occasion -- a time to celebrate a birthday, or just catch up with an old friend.

Price doesn't enter my mind. I'm not paying for the FOOD...I'm paying for the EXPERIENCE of dining out.

So in the beginning of your copy when you tell me how much money I'll save, I have the urge to click away. I'm thinking "this product isn't for me..."

In fact, if I was a potential customer I would have clicked away and not bothered reading the rest. But since I'm doing a review, I keep reading. And then...THEN you grab me when you say:

quote:

Now you can cook your favorite restaurant dishes for friends and family right from your own kitchen. They will be convinced that you've ordered in. You'll have them so fooled they won't believe you've made it yourself!

That's it!

Screw how much money I'll save cooking this stuff at home... I don't care because that's not an issue. But then you tell me that my friends will be amazed...now you have my attention. An ego stroke!

THAT'S what I want -- I want you telling me that my friends will stroke my ego and marvel over my cooking skills (even if I can't barely boil water...in which case all the better, cause then they'll be really amazed!).

I want to know these SECRET recipes.

I want to know the secrets and I want my friends to ask me the secrets of my great cooking (but I won't tell them). I want to know something that they don't.

I want to be able to cook something for the neighborhood potluck that everyone will drooooool over... so much so that snooty little Mrs. UppityPants loathes me for bringing a better dish than she did.

I want to cook my future Mother-in-Law's favorite restaurant dish to get in her good graces so that maybe --just maybe -- some day she'll view me as good enough for her son.

I want to throw a dinner party and have guests freak out over how GOOD everything tastes. Then when they ask me for the recipe I'll just smile and say, "sorry, I have to keep this one close to the vest."

I want all this and more...

Can you see how I attempted to get inside the potential customer's head and tap into their deeper desires? While it's true that the customer may want to save money and they're interested in getting their hands on "secret" recipes, chances are their desires are much deeper than that.

Notice how I mentioned the ego stroke. Very often if you can appeal to someone's ego, they'll open their wallet to buy your product.

Sometimes (as is the case above) you have to paint a picture that enables them to imagine their friends and family being impressed, complimenting them, etc.

Let me give you another example. Last year I was browsing the keyword tool Wordtracker when I ran across some interesting results for arbor and pergolas (these are things you put in a garden). Now from a functional standpoint people often use arbors as "ladders" for plants to grow on. But I'm willing to bet very few people buy these items from a purely functional standpoint.

Think about it. To begin with, the garden itself is something the gardener is proud of. So when he or she goes out to buy something like an arbor for the entrance, that arbor needs to be beautiful and worthy of compliments from admiring friends, family, and even the UPS guy.

So let's suppose you were selling an arbor. Perhaps you build very solid, long-lasting arbors with a 20 year guarantee. That's a big selling point, but that's not the main selling point and that's not even the point that will get the customer to take out her credit card. Instead – just like the recipe book – you need to appeal to her ego.

Specifically, in your sales literature you need to use your words to gently guide her into imagining the arbor is already in her garden. She needs to be able to daydream about her neighbor looking over the fence admiring the arbor and maybe being a little jealous. When this potential customer can imagine the jealous looks and admiring glances of others, you've made the sale.

Let's have a look at one final example: vehicles. The auto manufacturers truly understand the desires of their market, which is why even one car company puts out so many different types of cars. These car makers know that while everyone NEEDS a car to get from Point A to Point B, that's not the only reason they WANT a car (we're generalizing here). In other words, the vehicle's main selling point isn't that it's a mode of transportation.

So what's the main selling point of a car? It depends on who you're selling it to. For example:

If you're selling it to an elderly couple, it's very likely that they're interested in comfort and safety. You'll make the sale if you can tap into their desire to have a comfortable trip to see their kids who live in the next state over.

If you're selling it to an 18 to 24 year old, they're likely to want something fast, flashy, and yet affordable for their college budgets. If you can enable the young person to daydream about being "cool" while cruising around on a Friday night, you'll make the sale.

If you're selling to a young man, the vehicle might be an accessory for him that enhances his sex appeal and helps him attract beautiful women. You tap into that desire and yes, he'll buy your car.

A rancher needs and wants something that is rugged enough to drive into the fields, and powerful enough to pull a horse trailer. You tap into his desire to make his work easier, and you'll win him over.

An environmentally conscious couple wants something economical and preferably a hybrid or even an electric car. If you can appeal to this couple's ego by letting them know they're doing their part to save the planet (yet preferably they aren't sacrificing quality or style), they'll buy your car.

Those are just a few examples, but they give you a good idea about how to appeal to different markets. The obvious selling point is usually not the main selling point. In order to find the main selling point, you need to examine your market's deepest desires and motivations.

If you are a part of the target market or know someone who is, think about what makes you buy these niche products. If you cannot do this, then find a few people from the niche, talk to them, and find out what makes them tick with regards to their spending habits in this niche. And remember that the desire that they express to you may in reality be rooted to a deeper desire (e.g., they SAY they want whiter teeth, but what they actually want is a nice smile to attract potential mates).

Your next step is to take out a piece of paper and start making a few lists.

First think about your ideal customer. Picture one person. Is this person a male or female? What does she/he look like (for simplicity sake I am going to use "he" in this example)? How old is he? Where does he live? What does he wear? What does he drive? What does he do for a living? What does he do in his free time? What does he need? What does he want? What thing does he want that he won't admit to? What thing does he say he wants but in reality he doesn't?

What are his friends like? What's a typical week like for this gentleman? Is he married or single? Gay or straight? Religious or not?

And perhaps more importantly: why? Why does he drive the car he drives? Why does he live where he lives, wear what he wears, and work where he works? Why does he buy the things he does and do the things he does? (Hint: there's a big difference in attitude between someone who drives a Hummer and someone who drives a Toyota Prius hybrid car).

Ok, so what do we have on this list? We have your ideal customer, and if you spent some time just writing everything about this person that came into your head, you probably also have a list of his desires. Now let's look at your product and see how its benefits coincide with your ideal customer's desires...

List out the features, benefits and outcomes of your product (e.g., what will happen if someone uses your product). Don't accept the surface benefit – go deeper to get at your target market's true desires.

For example, a dog training product may help your customer get a well-mannered dog who doesn't chew or bark inappropriately, the dog comes when called, and knows other obedience commands.

These are what I call "surface" benefits. Your job is to dig deeper. Ask yourself WHY would someone want a well-mannered dog? When you ask this question, you may find yourself listing a whole other set of benefits (deeper benefits, or desires).

For example, a dog owner might want a well-mannered dog so that they can leave for the day and not worry about the neighbors complaining about the barking. Or perhaps they want to protect their \$5000 leather furniture from the destructive chewer..

Perhaps the potential customer wants a well-mannered dog in part because of the compliments she receives when she's in public with the dog. "Oh wow, your dog is so well-behaved" will put a smile on any dog owner's face.

Yet another dog owner may use his dog to help attract women. If he has a well-mannered dog, he'll likely do better getting phone numbers the next time he walks his dog at the park. Dogs – and particularly puppies – are like magnets and great conversation starters!

Do you see how we're tapping into the customer's deeper desires? On the surface the owner may want a dog who doesn't jump on people, but the deeper desire is to have a well-mannered dog that will help him land a few dates with attractive women.

A Word about the Sales Letter: I versus You

(NOTE: the following assumes you have a basic understanding of how to write sales literature. This is just mainly a reminder of an important element...)

By now you've spent so much time thinking about your customer's wants and needs that it's likely you'll be able to write the ads, sales letters and other marketing materials with ease. However, one of the major beginners mistakes I see repeatedly is the marketer using "I" instead of "you."

Remember that you are writing to your target market, and they are selfish. They don't care about you at all. The only time they even think about you is when they wonder if you're trustworthy. Other than that, they don't care.

Even if they did care about you, when you write your sales letter you wouldn't want to spend time talking too much about yourself because you need to keep the reader focused on him or herself. Not only will using the word "you" help keep the reader's attention, it will also help them focus on themselves so that you can get them to imagine using your product and seeing wonderful results.

Sure, there are times when you might talk about yourself. However, you should only do this if you can then tie the story about yourself to the product in such a way that the reader can visualize the benefits of the product.

For example, for a weight loss product it may be very beneficial for me to tell you a little story about how I lost 40 pounds...and if you get the idea that I'm just like you, then you can imagine yourself doing the same thing.

That's the correct way to use the word "I" in a sales letter. There are other acceptable uses as well, but generally you want to take all the "I's", "me's" and similar words out of your marketing materials and replace them with "you."

It's hard to just spot these sorts of mistakes when you're the one who wrote the material. Your best bet is to run a search through your document (on a PC hit "control f") and see where the word "I" comes up. Wherever possible, change the focus of that sentence to the reader.

For example, instead of:

"I'm going to teach you"

Say,

“You’ll discover how to...”

See the difference? The first sentence injects the marketer into the mix, while the second one focuses on the potential buyer.

Focusing on the other person doesn’t just apply to customers. It’s equally important if you want to start forming joint ventures or affiliate partnerships with other marketers...

How to REALLY Attract JV Partners

First things first – if you are looking for JV partners you need to form relationships. Sure, sometimes you may get lucky by creating an extraordinary product or service that get people so excited that they’re willing to take a chance and work with you. Or perhaps you are starting to get some recognition already in your field, and your good reputation and good name can help you attract partners.

But for most people they are starting from scratch. So just how can a no-name person start doing joint ventures with the top guns in a niche? By forming relationships first.

There are various types of relationships you can form. For example, you may become a customer first and then enter into a dialogue with the marketer. You may become that person’s affiliate (if you make money for that person, they may be more likely to notice you). Perhaps you hang out on forums that this person frequents, and so get their attention in that manner through thoughtful posts (which can lead to private messaging, emailing or calling the person). Or perhaps you attend the conferences and seminars in your field so that you can meet these people in person.

Here are the two main keys:

1. Develop a relationship first. Marketers are bombarded with offers every day and likely need to pass on most of them. If you’re developing a relationship with a marketer and in the future you propose a JV, they’re more likely to listen.

Think about this...who are you more likely to give a ride to: a stranger on the street or your coworker? You’d probably give a ride to your coworker without hardly thinking about it since you know and trust him. As for the stranger: no matter how you look at it you’d be taking a chance giving him a ride. Plus you don’t feel like you have any “obligation” since you don’t know this stranger.

The same goes for your potential JV partners. No matter how good your offer some people will turn you down or ignore you altogether simply because they don't know you. Develop a relationship first and they'll likely at least take your offer into consideration.

Now let's assume that you've somehow developed a relationship already. Perhaps you met a few marketers at live conferences, formed friendships, chatted on the phone, exchanged emails, etc. You've from time to time asked them the all important question: what can I do for you?

Then you decide to approach this marketer (or these marketers) with a joint venture offer.

Don't do this carelessly. One of the common errors I see is that people assume that since they have a relationship, they can make a joint venture request sort of haphazardly. You can't. Forming the relationship HELPS in getting your offer read and helps during the consideration process, but if you prepare a sloppy proposal you're just shooting yourself in the foot.

The main thing you need to do is once again take the focus off yourself, and focus on your potential joint venture partner's wants and needs. This also means that you need to focus on the needs and wants of your JV partner's newsletter readers.

Don't kid yourself. Preparing a joint venture proposal is just as important as preparing your sales offer. Indeed, a JV proposal is just another form of a sales letter. That means in order to sell your potential partner on JV'ing with you, you need to get inside her head. What motivates her? What does she want?

Many of the JV letters that cross my desk make two mistakes. First, they are focused on the author of the letter (I see a lot of the word "I" instead of the word "you" that would keep my attention). Secondly, most often these letters attempt to attract me mainly by telling me how much money I'll make.

But here's the thing: if you are trying to attract a successful marketer, they likely already make a lot of money. They also get TONS of similar offers across their desks every day. And if they don't promote your offer, they'll STILL make a ton of money.

In other words, this person doesn't need you or your product.

It sounds harsh but it's true. We like to kid ourselves when we do JV's or affiliate partnerships. We like to think that our product will be responsible for making our partners oodles of money. But they made those oodles before we came along and they'll make those oodles after.

So if the big marketer doesn't need our products, why would they promote them?

Why indeed. Answer that question correctly, and you WILL get plenty of joint venture partners and affiliates.

First off let me say this: in the above paragraphs I'm not saying that money isn't important to the marketer. It is...obviously! As such, you still need to offer a sweet monetary deal. But in most cases the commission won't be the main selling point. As I mentioned before, these marketers can easily make money without your product, so telling them how much money they'll make likely won't be what attracts them to your offer.

If you stop and think about it you'll see that's true. I personally promote everything from \$10 items (where I get a \$5 commission) to \$2000 items. Most of the products are below \$100. Most marketers give me 50%, while others give less and some give more (usually up to 75%).

If money was my main motivator or any marketer's main motivator, we would only pitch the higher priced, highest converting items with the big commissions.

But most marketers don't do that. You see them promote a variety of stuff and likely make a bundle on some JV deals and relatively little on other deals. The reason is because usually there is something else driving the marketer other than money.

If they're thinking like a TRUE marketer – that is, they aren't thinking of themselves and rather they're thinking of their list members – then they'll put their list members' needs and wants first. What this means to you is that when you approach them for a JV, you need to tell the marketer how it benefits not only them but their readers.

Indeed, here's where you can get at the marketer's deeper desires plus make a beneficial offer to their subscribers.

How?

By offering this potential affiliate or JV partner a special deal.

What does this marketer want? Perhaps one of their deeper desires is to be appreciated by their readers. Or perhaps they revel in being the first to tell their readers about some new tool. Or maybe they enjoy being known as someone powerful enough to pull a few strings so that their readers get a discount from you.

Your job is to figure out that deeper desire and focus on it when you prepare your offer. For example, perhaps you tell the marketer how your product will benefit

his readers (thereby also demonstrating that you understand what his readers want – to do this, you should read his newsletter for a few weeks or months to get an idea of his target market and what sort of offers he makes to them).

As you spell out these benefits that his readers will get, you also begin painting the subtle picture of how all of this benefits him. Perhaps his ego gets a stroke when his readers write to him and thank him for recommending such a wonderful product. Or maybe his newsletter subscriber base increases by word-of-mouth when people here that subs get special discounts.

These are just examples. Some of these may work for particular marketers, and some of them will totally bomb with other marketers. Again, your job is to figure out what makes your JV partners tick.

Several years ago I wrote to potential JV partners to ask them to contribute an article to an ebook. I pulled an amazing conversion rate and got everything from college professors to famous marketers to newspaper columnists to contribute to the ebook.

How did I pull this off?

By writing individual JV letters that “spoke” to each person.

For example, I persuaded the college professor to join the project by emphasizing the prestige that goes along with having your name published alongside other experts.

The newspaper columnist was interested in getting increased name recognition. The marketer was interested in getting increased exposure plus backend sales. In both cases I focused on the appropriate points when proposing my offer.

Here’s another thing – in nearly all cases I appealed to the writer’s ego on some level. I made them feel special by negotiating special deals with them. I made them feel special by asking to interview and “feature” them in a new book. I had them envision their name in print alongside some of the most well-known experts in the field. That’s social proof, yes...but it’s also a tactic that appeals to the ego.

The bottom line – your JV partners care about themselves and not you. Tap into their desires – especially their deeper desires that go beyond the obvious monetary gain – and you’ll likely secure an affiliation.

And beyond that...?

Let's suppose you've formed relationships and figured out what motivates your potential partners. You've also studied their target market so that you know what benefits of your product will appeal to them. So what else should you do? Here are a few ideas (most of these refer to affiliate partnerships rather than other sorts of joint ventures):

1. Make a unique landing page for your affiliate partners. That means you greet his reader's in such a way that they know this page is only for people on that marketer's list. And along those same lines...
2. Give this marketer's readers an exclusive deal, such as a discount, extra bonuses, etc.
3. Avoid any means of siphoning off traffic or stealing affiliate commissions. That means that the traffic your partners send shouldn't be able to click a link and sign up to be an affiliate (e.g., no "webmasters make money" links should be on this sales page). There shouldn't be alternative methods of ordering unless they are explicitly tracked so that the partner gets credit for them. There shouldn't be pop ups, banners or links of any kind to other people's products where your partner doesn't get any credit if the visitor clicks away (you wouldn't do this anyway, right? It would kill your conversion rate).
4. Do some testing before hand so you can tell your potential partner your conversion rate.
5. Offer various marketing tools such as text ads and the like. To make it even easier, sign the partner up into the program yourself and send her the login info and her affiliate link.
6. Yes money still matters! Give your special partners a special commission rate.
7. If you are doing a big promo, limit the number of partners so that they know not everyone and their brother are doing promos for the same product. This gives your JV offer even more exclusivity.
8. Keep your partners updated and motivated. Do as much as you can for them to make their jobs as easy as possible.
9. Always give a complimentary review copy of the product or free membership into the site you're selling. Marketers with integrity won't recommend products sight unseen, and if you approach them you should offer their review copy upfront.
10. Take care of your partners even after the promo is over. That means that you help them any way you can, stay in touch, etc. Let them know how much

you appreciate them. Personal thank you notes sent via postal notes are nice touch.

Those are just a few pointers, but by no means an exhaustive list. Treat your JV partners just as you treat your customers – like gold. Make them feel special. Make them feel appreciated.

Making the Sale: Do You Hate Bothering People?

We've talked about things like creating a product people want, attracting joint venture partners, and crafting a sales letter based on your potential customer's deeper desires. Now if you're getting your marketing plan in order, it's also likely that you've started a newsletter or are at least considering starting one.

As with all topics we've discussed so far, this is yet another place where you need to keep your reader's needs and wants in mind. However, that doesn't mean that you put their wants so far ahead of your own that you discount your wants.

Here's what I mean: in theory, many of your customers likely want as much information as possible for as little money. Makes sense. Even people who aren't particularly thrifty enjoy getting free stuff. Even people who buy very expensive items enjoy getting freebies.

From a Universal perspective (and a business perspective for that matter), you also likely know that you need to give to receive. So you give away ebooks, reports, audios, interviews, newsletter content and more. Yes you do get an email address in exchange for these freebies, but you are also looking to develop a relationship with these people so that they trust you and eventually become your customer.

Here's the problem: some people go overboard with the freebies to such a degree that their list soon fills up with tire-kickers (freebie seekers) who will never buy. The marketer makes matters worse by loading on even more freebies and focusing on "free stuff." Then when the marketer pitches a paid product, all he hears are crickets chirping.

What happened? If this marketer gave –just look at all those freebies! – why didn't he then "receive" when he pitched a product?

In other words – why does it seem like some people can give away the store and STILL make a killing when it comes time to pitch a paid product, while others give away a few freebies and then seem to acquire a list straight out of Freebie Seekers Hell?

Perhaps the underlying problem is the marketer's subconscious attitude. It oozes into everything he does. Maybe it feels like he's "bothering" people or being too pushy when he asks for a sale. So instead of asking for sales, he gives away freebies in hopes of getting into the good graces of his list members.

Instead of the list members seeing these freebies as chances to sample his product before they buy, they become conditioned to receive free stuff from this marketer ...and when he asks for the sale they are downright appalled.

"How DARE he ask me to buy something! I thought we had an understanding that I'd bleed him dry of freebies and then move on to the next host!"

Perhaps the marketer expected this. Indeed, perhaps the marketer was so afraid of offending people by "pitching" a paid product that his delivery was weak. Instead of confidently closing a sale, he hesitantly tells people about a paid product and then practically apologizes about the fact that it's a paid product and not a freebie.

If he feels like he's bothering people and he already has the expectation that people won't buy from him, why SHOULD people buy from him?

They probably won't. Indeed, this fictional marketer's list is likely populated with people who can't or won't buy, simply because his weak delivery ATTRACTED those sorts of people.

If you're running a hobby site that's fine. But if you're running a business to make money you have a problem.

If you've ever had this problem or you've felt like you are bothering people by asking for the sale, let me ask you this: the last time you went to a shoe store and the sales clerk helped you find your size, how did you feel towards that clerk?

When you went to McDonalds to order a cheeseburger and the clerk asked you if you wanted fries with that, how did you feel about the clerk?

Chances are in both cases you felt that the clerk was being helpful (and indeed they WERE being helpful). Did you feel "bothered?" Probably not. You wanted something and the clerk helped you get what you want.

The same is true with you and your customers. Stop worrying about bothering people, and start viewing yourself as **helping** people. When you shift your attitude, your potential customers will become customers because their attitudes will shift as well. Those who want everything for free will go elsewhere, and you will be left with people who appreciate the freebies that you DO give away, but at the same time they'll happily buy the products that you recommend to them. They'll view you as a trusted friend – someone who helps them.

The beauty of this is that you are STILL putting your customer's needs and wants ahead of your own. That's because you are still giving away suitable freebies – but now you are giving them away as *samples* rather than as “bribes” for someone to stay on your list. And yes you are putting your customers' wants and needs ahead of your own when you go out and review products for them without bias. If you like it and recommend it, then yes, it's ok to receive compensation (a commission) for the work you do.

Even the most holy people and those with the purest of intentions get compensated for the work they do, so why not you? Do your local ministers get paid? You bet they do. Teachers? Of course. Doctors? Yep, and they're paid well, too.

The reason I'm telling you this is because if you condition your list to only expect freebies (and remember, it's all in your attitude), there will be people who will complain the first time you pitch a paid product. Just remember that no matter what the crybabies say to you, you DO deserve to get paid for what you do.

OK, so how do you apply this to your situation?

Maybe at this point you're wondering how to actually apply this bit of wisdom I've shared. For example, what do I mean by “attitude?” And what do I mean by “conditioning your list to expect freebies?” In other words, how can you help people, give stuff away when you desire, and still get paid well for what you do?

First off, as mentioned before change your attitude if need be. Be confident. Treat your business like a business and not a hobby. Know that you are helping people and that they are grateful. Know that you should get paid for the help. Know that you in fact deserve to be compensated for what you do.

Next, feel free to give away freebies on your site, but make them relevant. Don't give away 47 ebooks just to get someone to give you their email address. Sell someone on signing up to your free newsletter just as you would pitch them if your newsletter was a paid newsletter. Include free reports or ebooks as a bonus if you'd like.

Here's the key: word this sales letter in such a way that people realize you are doing them a favor by giving away something valuable. Let them know that this freebie is a sample of your other work...it's a way for them to try you out totally risk free.

Think about those free samples of food you get in supermarkets. First off, the people offering these samples are offering them to a targeted market. For example, if you see a woman offering free samples of pizza, you likely won't see her sitting in the toilet paper aisle. Nope, she will be in the grocery section of the store – and likely she will be standing right next to the case that holds the pizza.

Second, you'll notice that this free sample isn't a "take as much as you want" type of sample. This isn't the store giving you a free lunch as a thank you for shopping in their store. Indeed, in our example we have a woman there encouraging you to take a sample (just one, maybe two) – and she's also prepared to tell you how to buy if you want more.

When you walk up to claim your free sample of this pizza, you are beginning this experience with an expectation. You know that you are sampling the food as a serious buyer who might just buy the pizza if you like it. In fact, you actually expect the person offering the samples to ask you to buy the pizza – even though you know that you are not obligated to buy, you are still sampling under the non-spoken agreement that if you do like the sample you will buy an entire pizza.

Do you get upset at her if she doesn't give you an entire regular size piece or the entire pizza for free? Of course not. You are grateful for the sample she gave you, and if the pizza fits into your grocery budget you're more than happy to buy one to take home.

This is exactly how it should work when you start a newsletter and offer freebies in exchange for email addresses. You are the one offering a "taste" for potential buyers. And yes, after they've consumed their sample, you tell them how to buy... just like the woman in the supermarket who suggests you buy the pizza.

If these potential buyers come to you with an expectation that you are offering a free sample, they won't be upset or surprised when you ask for the sale. In fact, they'll EXPECT you to ask for the sale. And better yet, when they know they are getting a highly valued freebie under the unspoken agreement that they're a serious buyer, they WILL buy if they like your sample. For example, if they like your free report they'll buy the related ebook.

Again let me stress this – make your freebies relevant to what you're selling. Don't give away tons of only partially related freebies just to get an email address. Make the freebies relevant, make them samples of what you're actually selling, and yes...SELL people on exchanging their email address for one solid free report and your free newsletter.

After all, if you can't sell someone on signing up for your newsletter without also giving away tons of bribes, then you'll have a hard time convincing anyone to take out their credit card to purchase a related paid product.

Side note: I have several niche newsletters, and in many cases I don't even give away free reports in order to get email addresses. The newsletter itself IS the freebie, and I write a short sales letter to convince people to give me their email addresses. I start "soft selling" in the first message. That way people get good free content (a sample), but they also come to expect me to recommend paid products while I'm still building my relationship with them (and they're learning to trust me).

Visualizing Your Customer's Success

The point of this report is to show you how to put your customer's wants and needs first, and in doing so you will get what you want. This is perhaps one of the most important sections of this entire report, as it ties everything together.

You see, sometimes it's easy for a marketer to "slip" and fall back into an egocentric viewpoint. You start thinking about what you want instead of what the customer's wants.

For example, I can't tell you how many times I've seen people send me newsletters practically begging me to buy something because they need to make their mortgage payment. The buyer doesn't care about your mortgage payment. The buyer only cares about his or her wants and needs. The buyer only cares about solutions to HIS problems, not your problems.

As such, no matter what's going on in your life and no matter how desperately you need the money, you must still put your customer's first. Forget about your own problems and focus on providing solutions for your customer's problems, and soon enough you will find that you get what you want too.

The easiest way to do this is to frequently practice visualizing your customers' success.

I'll explain this in more detail in a moment, but first I wanted to clarify something. You can use this technique purely as a straightforward business tool where you learn to get into your customer's heads so that you can better serve them. Or if you are someone who enjoys spiritual and universal theories, you can use this technique alongside any affirmations or other positive thinking that you do.

For example, I had a friend who used this technique when he sold advertising for a magazine. He'd sit back and consciously visualize his customer's success as a result of them placing an ad in his magazine. Then what generally happened is that the client called him to place an ad...he never even had to "chase" the customer!

Coincidence? Perhaps. It all depends on what you believe with regards to putting your intentions out there to the Universe. Regardless of what you believe, it certainly can't hurt!

Now let's look at visualizing your customer's success...

You'll want to put yourself in your customer's shoes when you first start developing your product. For example, let's suppose you have a weight loss product aimed at women who're trying to lose the extra weight they're still carrying from having a baby.

Now if you're a woman and you've been pregnant, it's likely easier for you to get inside your customer's head. If you're a man or you're a woman who's never been pregnant, then the next best thing you can do is imagine a close friend of yours who has been pregnant.

Sit back, relax, and clear your mind. It's important to clear your mind, because you want your thoughts to flow freely (doing these exercises often result in breakthroughs – great additions to your products, a new marketing angle, etc). Breathe deeply to induce relaxation.

When you're relaxed and calm, close your eyes and imagine your potential customer. Feel her pain, her happiness...be her. Feel her joy at having the baby...but also feel her frustration at being unable to lose the weight. She feels "fat." She feels like her husband isn't attracted to her any more. She feels unsexy, unglamorous. She feels like a mother rather than an alluring woman. Instead of seeing a bombshell when she looks in the mirror, she sees a fat woman with stretch marks on her belly and breasts, and baby spit-up on her shoulder.

Now imagine her holding your book. Her eyes light up as she reads the table of contents. What is exciting her? What is it about her book that makes her want to buy it?

Now fast forward a few months and imagine the results of her using your product. She's slimmer. She has more energy. She's getting plenty of compliments from others about how great she looks for having just recently given birth. She feels sexy again. She's turning heads (including her husband's). She feels great.

An aside: at this point I typically like to take out a pen or paper (or hop on the computer) and start dumping all these ideas down on paper. Just start writing anything that pops into your head, and don't censor anything. Imagine yourself as this customer and write from HER point of view. As you do this brain dump, use the word "I" (but it's not actually YOU, it's the customer).

For example, as you use this written exercise to get into your head, perhaps a line or two will look like this, "I got disgusted today when I saw the belly rolls and even my back fat in the mirror today. None of my clothes fit. John gave me a funny look today and I wondered if he noticed that I'm not losing the baby fat..."

Remember, don't censor anything. Keep writing as long as you can, but at least three to five pages. Write as if you ARE the customer. Talk about how you feel. Talk about what you want and need. Then pretend you've already used the product, lost the weight, and write a testimonial about how well the product worked.

End result? You've gotten into your customer's head to tap into her desires. Now you have a better idea of what to put in your book since you know what the end result should be for your customers.

Another good step to take before you even create the product is to write the sales letter. Why should you write the sales letter before you even create the product?

For starters, it keeps you thinking about the customer and helps clarify for you what benefits you want your customers to receive when they use your product. For example, if you realize that your customers don't just want to lose weight but they also want more energy, then you'll want to be sure to address this in your product (e.g., by having a section in the book about which foods provide both short term and long term energy).

Second, a sales letter should be crisp and exciting. If you start crafting your sales letter AFTER you've just written a 200 page book, your sales letter will likely be dull and flat. What a yawner. No one buys a product from a letter that bores them to tears. If the marketer can't get excited about the product, the potential customer won't either.

If instead you write a draft of the sales letter first, you're excited about the product and your enthusiasm will spill over into the letter. People who read the letter will be able to sense your energy and passion. In turn they'll get excited too – and they'll want to buy!

And finally, writing the sales letter first helps you stay inside your customer's head. Remember, you are writing the book for a very specific audience. If you

stay inside the customer's head even as you write the book, you will have a better product on your hands...and this means fewer refunds and more repeat customers!

And now a final word about visualizing your customer's success...

For the purposes of this report I'm assuming that you're building a business and not just throwing a single product at your customer. In other words, you are suggesting more products to current customers, right? You have a backend sales system in place?

After all, it's far easier to sell something to an existing customer than it is to find a new customer. As such, if you haven't created a way to keep in touch with your current customers (whether by email, phone or regular postal mail), start as soon as possible if you don't want to leave money laying on the table.

You've spent all this time tapping in your customer's wants and deeper desires to create an excellent product and a superb sales letter that speaks to your target market. However, nearly every niche market has more wants beyond just one product.

Indeed, various fanatics in certain niches will buy everything they can get their hands on. For example, I love reading about dogs and dog training. If you look at my online books marks you'll realize that instantly. But if you look at my credit card statements you'll see that it's almost like I can't help myself. I can't stop with just one dog training book – instead, I have half a dozen books that say nearly the same thing. I can't even stop with just one book about the different dog breeds – I probably have a half a dozen of those as well. And the amazing thing is that every time a new dog book comes along, I'm first in line to buy it.

This is the sort of customer you hope to get – the type that not only buys everything you put out, but loves you for it too! If you focus on these fanatics in your business (e.g., repeat buyers who are generally easy-going customers), you will find that building your business is much easier.

So let's step back a moment. You were visualizing your customer's success in order to create the product. Now what ELSE does this customer want?

For example, the new mother who wants to lose weight buys your diet book to help her with her goal. How else can you help her? What else does she want? Perhaps she's a busy woman (after all, she has a new baby!), so you can sell her a diet cookbook full of quick and easy dishes. Or perhaps you can sell her a "calorie counter" product. Or maybe sell her an exercise book or a piece of

exercise equipment. Or perhaps sell her energy bars that she can eat when she's on the run.

Those are all great backend items to help you turn this existing customer into a repeat customer.

But let's suppose that she's lost all the weight she wants to lose. Now what?

Perhaps you want to sell her a product about how to get rid of stretchmarks. Or maybe you want to sell her a book about how to eat for more energy. Perhaps a book about maintaining your weight when you're too busy to cook might work. Again, a cookbook with quick and easy meals might be a good product.

The point is, your product should be good enough to solve her problems. However, just because you solve her problem doesn't mean that she doesn't have other wants and needs. If you have a customer list, you can sell these sorts of additional items to these customers.

Also, don't be afraid to sell similar items that seem to compete with your own product. Remember a moment ago how I said I buy up all sorts of dog books that practically say the same thing? The fanatics on your customer list will do the same thing. They will buy a similar product to ones they already have just because they enjoy reading about it (and also because the other books may say something just slightly different, which is enough to justify the cost).

If you don't believe this, look at your own bookshelves. You don't really need all those cookbooks, gardening books, hunting books, etc...do you?

Back to the example -- you can tell your existing customers about a new "how to lose the baby fat" book that just hit the market. Chances are, the fanatics on your list will buy the product anyway...so why not have them buy it from your link so that you make a commission?

Now before you start pitching additional products to your customers, get inside their heads again. Put yourself in their shoes. Feel them, be them. And then once again visualize their success.

Now when you start crafting your email newsletter to them or writing a review of the product you want to recommend, you've already taken yourself out of the egocentric viewpoint and put yourself in their heads. So instead of thinking, "gee, I'll make \$XXX if just 1% of my list buys this product from my affiliate link,"...you are now thinking about how to solve your customer's problems.

Trust me, this attitude flows through your writing. If your customers know that you are genuinely (from the heart) recommending something because you truly believe it will help them, they will trust you and likely buy.

On the other hand, people can smell desperation from a mile away. If all you are doing is thinking about how much money you can make from your list, that attitude will ooze in your email newsletter...and believe me, that sort of attitude stinks. Your readers will pick up on it and be turned off. Maybe you'll get a few sales – perhaps from people who feel sorry for you, or perhaps from people who are so desperate for their own solution that they'll buy anything.

But if you continue these “desperate” newsletters where you are thinking of yourself rather than your customers (e.g., more money for me!), your conversion rate will plummet. Your readership will decrease. Each time you send an email to your readers, you will make less money because people aren't paying attention since they've grown tired of your egocentric newsletters. They won't trust you because they think you'll peddle anything as long as you can make a few bucks.

Slowly but surely, the one asset you have will deteriorate – your reputation. Lose that and it will truly be an uphill battle to reclaim a good standing in your niche. You may even get nasty names attached to you like “affiliate whore.”

Sounds horrifying? It is.

But you can avoid it. All you have to do is put your customer's wants and needs in front of your own...and then watch as (almost magically) you get everything you ever wanted too...

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