

Arrogant Marketing



by Curtis N. Bingham

MOST MARKETERS ARE arrogant. They spend their time telling others how wonderful their products are or how superior their company is. Marketing materials are replete with claims that don't mean anything.

Market to solve customer pain. Stop trying to sell your products, expertise, credentials, or track record. Arrogant marketers are too busy with puffery, gloss, and slick sales tactics to understand what the customers want—a way to make a problem go away. This is the only reason customers buy.

What are the symptoms of arrogant, "me-centric" marketing? How can you create "you-centric" marketing that clearly addresses the pain customers feel and compellingly describes how it will be made to "go away" and will help quickly fill the pipeline with qualified prospects, clinch a sale, win a new customer, and bring in revenue?

Arrogant "Me-centric" Marketing

Arrogance is pride manifest in exorbitant claims of rank, dignity, estimation, or power. Arrogance exalts the worth or importance of the person to an undue degree and incites contempt of others, haughtiness, self-assumption, and presumption.

An IT consulting firm asked me to identify reasons why sales were flagging and help them reverse the trend. I needed look no further than their me-centric web site. It was littered with statements such as "We are the premier IT consulting firm," "we have the most outstanding staff" and "we pride ourselves on our track record." After 10 minutes of reading their home page, I couldn't find a concise description of the problems they solved and for whom. Sadly, a prospect visiting their site would ultimately leave without even knowing whether or not this firm had anything to offer. The arrogant, "me-centered" marketing may have cost this company millions of dollars.

Arrogant marketers suffer from the "if you build it, they will come" mentality and assume that their products

and services alone are sufficient draw for customers. Other arrogant marketers mistakenly assume they can create demand for their products or services as a result of effective advertising, fancy products, or even great customer service. In truth, while all of these may influence a customer purchase, none of these explains the primary reason for purchase. Customers purchase products, consume goods, or avail themselves of a service for one reason only: to make a problem go away!

To be successful, marketers must put the customer at the center and focus on developing long-term relationships with customers by proactively creating and delivering solutions that profitably meet continually evol-



ving customer needs. The core focus is on involving customers and prospects in the delivery of products and services that customers want, need, and are willing to pay for—not strictly upon what the company has to offer.

To survive in this new era, marketers must understand their customers and prospects better than anyone else—perhaps even their customers themselves—integrating their thoughts, attitudes, needs, and desires into everything they do as they proactively solve customer (and prospect) pain. Marketers must become "you-centric," clearly articulating how they solve specific customer pain and use messages, phrases, and terms that prospects resonate with.

Tips for "You-Centric" Marketing

Imagine yourself as a marketer separated from a prospect by a bridge representing prospect awareness. On

your side, you have a product or service to sell. Your prospect has a need to fulfill or a problem to resolve. If you make the prospect cross the bridge to meet you by forcing the prospect to dig through your rhetoric to understand how your offering will satisfy their needs, you will usually lose the battle for awareness and lose the prospect.

However, if you can cross the bridge and describe the specific ways in which your product or service can fulfill the prospect's exact needs or resolve their exact problem, you ease the prospect's burden of finding a solution and speed the relationship to a profitable close.

There are five guidelines to consider in marketing to solve customer pain.

- **Remember why customers purchase.** Customers purchase solutions to make problems go away. Your marketing messages must clearly describe which problems you can make go away.

- **Identify prospects' pain points or key issues.** Interview a selection of customers and prospects to find out what the issues are, how severe they are and how they describe them. Ask, "What are your pain points?", "What keeps you awake at night?", or "What problem, if made to go away, would most help you achieve your goals?"

- **Articulate it in "you-centric" terms.** Describe the pain that prospects feel, your solution, and the justification for it in one or two sentences. You-centric terms clearly address the clients' pain, articulate the solution, and provide a basis for the claim.

- **Apply the "immediate-benefit" criteria.** Prospects quickly scan the material and discard it if there is no immediate, discernable benefit. So, clearly identify a unique solution to a problem the prospect has.

- **Customer-test.** Review the "you-centric" messages with some of your best customers. Ask them, "Would it capture your attention? How would you improve it?"

Listen to your customers and prospects to discover their key pain points. Using their words, create marketing messages and collateral that clearly articulate your understanding of their problem and the availability of a solution custom-tailored to mitigate their pain. Justify your solution using the "best of breed" jargon, and let your customers dote upon you. You'll fill your pipeline faster with better prospects and bring in more revenue. **SME**

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ACTION: Adopt you-centric marketing.