

Small-business Savvy: Good Marketing Answers the ‘Why’ Question

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Why should I read this article? My hope is that it will help your bottom line.

A marketing message, just like a news story, must answer several questions, including who, what, when, where, how and why.

While all the parts are needed, only one element connects with the consumer and gets a person to take action. That part is the “why.”

Although the why question can have many forms, two of the ways it often is expressed are crucial if you, the business owner, are to get a person to buy what you have for sell. The first form is: “Why should I spend my money on product X?”

To answer that question, you need to make a convincing argument of how your item solves a problem the customer has. If the customer has not recognized he or she has a problem, then your marketing job got much harder. In that case, generating action may take several messages.

If customers have recognized the need, you still are faced with helping them understand what they will gain in terms of their individual motivators. This differs for every person, but think quality of life, safety, time with family, time saved or dollars saved. The list is not exhaustive, but these give you a sense of our basic motivators.

The second form of the why question just adds a couple of words: “Why should I spend my money on buying product X from you?” The customer thinks, “You may convince me I need the product, but now you must convince me that your business is the best source.”

A typical response to this question is to offer the best price. But price only works for a short time because someone always will come along with a better price. Instead, here is where the tools of relationship building, trust and service come into play.

Research continually finds that most consumers are not as price-driven as you might imagine. While price cannot be ignored, the total package - the brand, the service and the price - is what gives the customer the greatest satisfaction.

The why question can take other forms, and you cannot ignore the who, what, when, where and how. But focusing on these two forms of why will create a great base to your marketing message.

So does your marketing message answer the why?

For more help, visit our website, www.ag.ndsu.edu/smallbusiness, and sign up for the monthly newsletter.

More information is available at your local Extension office, as well as at <http://powerofbusiness.net> and www.eXtension.org/entrepreneurship.

The Small Business Administration and its related organizations, such as the Small Business Development Centers and Service Corps of Retired Executives, along with many other state agencies, also can be valuable resources.

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