

Price Isn't Everything, But...

By Bob Osgoodby

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Some people equate the cost of an item to its value. Others comparison shop to try to find the best price. Maybe both are correct in a way, but most try to look at the whole picture.

If someone jumped out of a dark alley, and tried to sell you a Rolex watch for fourteen dollars, you might look askance at the offer. But if that's what you wanted, you would do your homework, find out the going rate, and then shop around a bit.

Would you necessarily purchase the one at the lowest cost? Maybe likely you wouldn't. What factors would you weigh in your decision making process?

Probably one of the strongest would be the reputation of the seller. How long have they been in business? What is their background? What is their refund policy? Do they give the appearance of a business, or do they look like that guy who jumped out of the dark alley?

If you hope to have any chance of succeeding on the web, you must address this issue. You can't expect people to buy from someone they don't know and have never met. When you deal with someone in a retail "brick and mortar" business, you are in "face to face" contact. You can also see the product offered. Since you don't have this capability when buying on the web, sellers have to address that issue in a different way.

Your name, picture, a short "bio" and phone number go a long way to allay fears a prospective customer might have. But that should not be the focus of your website - your product or service should. However, it is important to include an obvious link, that takes prospects to where they can get that information.

It is extremely important that your whole operation reeks of "professionalism". This includes not only your web site, but also all the ads that try to entice people to visit you there.

Your ads should be concise and powerful, with only one purpose, and that is to get them to your web site where you will hope to make the ultimate sale. Bad links in your ad, misspelled words, poor grammar and ads that are too long will only guarantee one thing - failure. People are bombarded with so many ads on the web, that they quickly recognize the "weekend hucksters", and learn to avoid them.

I visit several dozen web sites every day constructed by people who submit ads to us, and am appalled at the "crudity" of some. If your web site looks like it was thrown up with little effort or

forethought, you really have no chance of doing business.

In the same vein, if your web site is recognizable as an affiliate program, you also have little hope of doing a decent business. Most of these ads, to put it bluntly are "tired" and are immediately recognizable from their URL. This is why it is so important for you to have your own web site. You can have links to the affiliate sites, but the whole purpose is to first sell yourself. If you do that, selling your product or service is a whole lot easier.

If your product is highly overpriced, and don't forget that shipping and handling add to the bottom line, you will quickly recognize the error of your ways. Now, price isn't everything, but you must be competitive. If someone can get the exact same thing at a lesser price, and all other things being equal, they will shop there.

You must have a guarantee! If someone is dissatisfied with your product or service, you must be prepared to refund their money. And, you must also present an image where they will believe your guarantee. If they have a way to contact you directly, your guarantee will be a whole lot more believable.

Price isn't everything if you have all the other "ducks in order". Most people are willing to pay a bit more if they are comfortable with the seller. If they aren't, price doesn't matter.

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