

The Last Ditch Sales Pitch

By Heather Reimer

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So, you made your best pitch to a potential client, delivered all the top selling points, answered their follow-up questions, waited by the phone and finally it rang and... they said no.

"Thanks, but no thanks."

They don't have the budget, they got cold feet, something in your proposal didn't sit right. Whatever the reason, you lost the sale.

Or did you?

I recently encountered a young web entrepreneur who understands that in business, "no" doesn't necessarily mean "never", and that a last ditch sales pitch can pay off - maybe not today or tomorrow, but some day.

I contacted Jamie Kiley at Kianta.com to get an estimate on building a website. Correspondence went back and forth to determine my needs and soon the quote came in. I'm sure it was a very fair, competitive price but it was beyond my budget and honestly, I was just researching at the time.

So I wrote Kianta the business equivalent of a "Dear John"

letter. You know, "It just isn't going to work out, it's not your fault, I'm not ready to move so fast," etc.

But Jamie wasn't ready to let me go so easily. She replied with an absolutely masterful last ditch sales pitch letter.

OFFER ALTERNATIVES

First, she commiserated with me on my sticker shock. "I understand your surprise." But instead of lowering her price, she told me about the cheaper template options available, saying she'd be happy to recommend one. (She's prepared to help me find a cheaper option elsewhere? Wow.)

BUT... she immediately followed up with an explanation of the limitations of templates and their generic, unprofessional appearance. In other words, they're cheap for a reason.

BACK UP YOUR CLAIMS

Just in case I still had doubts, she backed up her point with a quote from a search engine optimization expert who eschews cheap do-it-yourself sites in favor of spending some dough on a professional site built to attract the search engines, get a higher ranking and more traffic.

Okay, that makes perfect sense. Still don't have the money to pay her fee but she's got me thinking.

DEFLECT OBJECTIONS

At this point, she offered me an extended payment plan. I don't have to pay the fee all in one chunk, it can be spread over time. Hmmm, maybe I could handle that.

But it was her closing that convinced me I was dealing with a real pro:

"Whatever you decide, I wish you well. And whether you decide to have our company build your site or not, you can always feel free to ask any questions. That's what we're here for."

So she recognizes that our business relationship may never be consummated but she's there for me anyway. Like a flash-in-the-pan romance that evolves into a nice, comfy friendship, she's keeping the door open to future possibilities.

If I ever do hire a designer, her company will come first to mind because of her masterful last ditch sales pitch disguised as friendly advice.

HOW TO STAY IN THE GAME

When facing a client's hesitation or outright rejection, try Jamie's approach:

-Don't take no as a final answer. Send one more letter or phone them to alleviate any concerns that may be holding them back. Answer every possible objection they may have with a sound argument.

-Reiterate the benefits they will enjoy from your product/service. Offer proof to back up your claims.

-Outline your money-back guarantee.

-Mention alternatives to your product but be sure to explain why they are inferior.

-Make it as easy as possible for them to purchase.

-Leave the door open to future dealings by being warm, friendly and helpful. But don't overdo it... one last ditch pitch is enough.

If you're pressed for time or feel you just don't have the persuasive writing skills needed, hire a professional writer to prepare your sales letters - first ditch to last ditch! It's a wise investment because one sales letter can be adapted and personalized for many different uses over time. And it can help you retrieve prospects you thought you had lost!

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