

Four Dynamite Marketing Tactics in Action

By Joe Gracia

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One of our most favorite activities while on vacation is eating! Here are a few marketing observations related to that universal need, during our recent vacation in Washington, DC.

1. WHICH HOT DOG VENDOR?

After completing a morning tour, we were ready for a quick bite to eat before moving on to our next destination. We saw a row of street food vendors a short distance away.

As we walked past the first hot dog vendor, I noticed that he was absorbed in reading his newspaper. He didn't even notice us walking by. I knew that there were a few more hot dog vendors along the path so we continued walking.

As we approached a second hot dog vendor, he looked directly at Maria and I and asked with a big smile, 'How are you today?'

'Fine,' we said.

Then he said, 'Are you ready to try one of the best hot dogs in all of Washington?'

I smiled and looked at Maria, she nodded her head enthusiastically, and a sale was made.

Why did we walk past the first hot dog vendor, and why didn't we walk past the second?

Because the second knows a lot about effective marketing, and the first knows very little -- or is independently wealthy and doesn't need the money.

The hot dog marketer knows something about Give to Get --

our marketing philosophy and strategy. He gave a little bit of attention to us and made us feel important. The first one made us feel -- invisible.

Were they the 'best' hot dogs in all of Washington? Probably not. But when you're hungry, and they're served with a smile, they sure taste good.

People buy things they want from people they know, like and trust! If you want your customers to like you, and buy from you, then treat them as though they are the most important people in the world. You don't have to go an extra mile. Sometimes just an inch will do.

2. HOW ABOUT A PRETZEL?

Now, this didn't happen, but I wish it would have. Our savvy hot dog marketer still has room for improvement.

Also available at his hot dog stand were delicious looking hot pretzels. But he never asked us if we would like one to go with our hot dogs.

Now, you may say, he probably assumed that if we wanted a pretzel, we would have asked for one. Or you may think he would have been pushy suggesting more products.

Folks, if you have such thoughts, please listen carefully, because those thoughts are costing you thousands of dollars in lost sales.

The only way you can know if a person wants something you have is by making an offer. Then they will have to make a decision -- yes, or no. You are not being pushy by offering your customers something else that you know they will enjoy or benefit by. Customers want you to suggest.

Your customers are not always thinking of your products. They have a million other things on their minds.

For instance, once I had ordered our hot dogs, I had to think about what we wanted on our hot dogs; what we wanted to drink and how I was going to hold everything and pay him at the same time. Plus, I had to think about a place for Maria and I to sit down to enjoy our meal. I wasn't thinking about his pretzels at that time.

But, I can guarantee you, that if he had said to me, 'I can give you a special price on pretzels today -- fifty cents off! How many would you like -- one or two?' I would have said, 'Sounds great! Give me two!'

Maria and I would have been happy, and he would have been

happy.

But he didn't offer, so I didn't buy. Oh well, nobody's perfect. There's always room for improvement.

There is no better time to sell your customers something more, than when they are already in a buying mood. Give your customers a special offer on another related product or service that will benefit them, when they are already in the process of buying something from you.

You may wonder, 'Why should I give them a discount on this second product or service? Shouldn't I make them pay full price?'

You can test it and see. But, more often than not, by giving your customers a 'special' deal for the moment, you will get many more accepting your offer. Keep in mind, that the profit on this additional sale is profit that you wouldn't have had.

3. DO YOU KNOW OF A GOOD RESTAURANT?

On another day, at the end of a tour of a colonial home, we asked our guide if she could recommend a local restaurant.

She did better than that. In addition to her hearty recommendation, she gave us two coupons for the local eatery.

Pretty impressive. This is called a Joint Venture.

The local restaurant owner obviously knows something about Give to Get and knew that tourists get hungry after a morning tour. So he approached the tour guides and asked if they would like a supply of discount coupons to pass on to their tour groups who might be looking for a casual, but comfortable dining experience.

And why wouldn't the guides want to provide their guests with recommendations and coupons to a restaurant that they enjoy themselves? Perhaps the guides get a free meal once a week for their recommendations.

Joint Ventures, where two or more companies help one another, are an excellent way to attract business that you would not have otherwise gotten.

4. YUMMY! YUMMY! GOOD FOR YOUR TUMMY!

I'm not making that line up. We must have heard the owner of a Washington vendor repeat that line a hundred times as he handed out samples of his delicious Bourbon Chicken.

We've mentioned in past articles that a Bourbon Chicken vendor at one of our local malls attracts the lion's share of lunch customers by simply handing out free samples of his bourbon chicken. It is so delicious, that it is difficult to keep walking past his stand without buying.

Well, apparently, bourbon chicken vendors in Washington, DC are aware of the power of samples too. Because as we searched for a place for lunch in the huge Union Station food court, we could hear in the distance, 'Yummy! Yummy! Good for Your Tummy!'

We were so hungry by this time that we were drawn like a magnet to this unusual and hilarious chant.

It was difficult to see where this chant was coming from because there was such a large crowd surrounding the stand. You can imagine our surprise as we edged our way through the crowd to see a smiling, enthusiastic bourbon chicken vendor passing out sample after sample of bourbon chicken while repeating his slogan.

I feel sorry for the other vendors in his vicinity, because they hardly stand a chance. The only bigger crowd than the one around him and his samples, was the one at his cash register ordering the full meal.

Samples help you sell. Give people what they want. Think of how much easier it is for a person to decide if they want your product or not, when they can sample it.

We provide hundreds of marketing samples on our Web site and in our Newsletter so our potential customers can get to know, like, and trust us.

Ice cream stands provide free samples, America Online provides hundreds of hours of their service for free so you can sample it.

How are you using free samples to help sell your products and services? With a little creative thought, you can use this powerful technique to explode your sales.

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