

DON'T Give Your Customers What They Want!

By John Payne

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One of the mantras we hear repeatedly in business is "The customer is always right." I'm here to tell you that if you want to build a thriving business you need to forget that saying, and take note of Payne's Law #1 "The customer is always right- some of the time." I'll explain why in a minute.

The worst kind of business person is the one who cynically tries to force the customer to choose the thing that he has to sell, whether it is best for the customer or not. The old 'hard-sell'. Most of can agree- that is not a good way to do business.

To my mind, there is another, more common failing amongst businesspeople, and that is the lack of desire to do what is best for the customer. Believe me, the customer doesn't always know what they NEED. They might know what they WANT, but it may not be the best answer. It may even be answering the wrong question. Please don't assume that the customer is a lifetime expert in your field, has done a lot of research, or has engaged a firm of consultants to recommend what he is asking for. He probably saw it on TV, or got great advice from his buddy down at the bowling alley.

Let's take an extreme, medical situation. The patient visits his physician, and says "I've got a shocking headache. Prescribe that new painkiller, Fantast-something for me." The physician says "Sure", and sends him of to the drugstore for some Fantastifen. Yes, the physician's given his patient what he WANTS, but it may not be what he NEEDS. Some discussion and some intelligent questioning might have discovered that the real problem is a need for spectacles, or a malignant brain tumor! The physician only does the best for his patient when he tries to discover the real NEED, and advises (and explains) the appropriate course of action. In fact, if he doesn't do that, he is being professionally negligent!

If you want to build a successful, long-term business, you need customer satisfaction, repeat customers and referral business. Will you get those, if you give the customer what he WANTS, but it then fails to do the job he requires, and wastes his money? I think not. Where you have the option, I suggest you take your dealings with your customers an extra step.

Let them know that having them as happy customers of your business is very important to you. That you would like to take a little time to understand their needs a little better. That you like to make sure you give them the most appropriate, best-value answer to their needs. It normally doesn't take much time to gain an understanding of the customers needs, and to work out what the best solutions are. You can then 'play back' to them what you understand about their requirements, and recommend the appropriate solutions. With an explanation. "Product X is \$20 cheaper now, but the refills cost twice as much. At your rate of use it will cost you more inside 12 months" "If you're planning on

vacationing in the tropics, a pure cotton would be cooler than a heavyweight mixture" "That bike will last 20 years, but your son will be too big for it in a year, why not look at the next size?"

If you really care about your customer, it will show. If you really give good advice, most often it will be appreciated. Appreciative customers are happy customers. Happy customers are repeat customers. And happy customers refer other people to you.

Do yourself a favor. DON'T give the customers what they WANT. If you want to be a professional, help them discover what they NEED.

John Payne, a lifetime Marketer, is "The Human Face of Web Marketing". Each week his Web Marketing Ezine shows over 6000 readers in more than 56 countries how to succeed, with a uniquely human emphasis on the business of Web Marketing. To get your free subscription visit <http://www.WebMarketingEzine.com> NOW!

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