

How to Weave More Empathy Into Your Marketing for Better Connections With Potential Buyers

August 25, 2020 6 min read

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Here's an example scenario I'm sure you're familiar with: You walk into a shop prepared to buy. This time, it's organic moisturizing soap. You already know what you want and you're 100 percent sure you're going to walk out of the shop with it.

But when you enter, you're greeted by a saleslady with a bright yellow dress and gigantic grin. "Can I help you?" she asks.

You politely wave her off, telling her you already know what you want. But she stays at your elbow, upselling the shop's best products in her bright, cheery voice. "How about adding moisturizing cream to your purchase? Have you tried our latest conditioners? You will love our all-new bath gels."

In the end, frustrated and annoyed, you leave the shop without making your purchase.

It's easy to laugh this off as a common, old-fashioned brick-and-mortar sales gaffe, but surprisingly too many marketers still use this tactic today. They shove their products down their prospects' throats. They make a beeline for the sale, whether or not their customers will benefit from it. They care more about "closing" prospects and hitting quotas than they do

about serving.

This lack of empathy in marketing is costly.

In fact, according to Forrester's 2019 Research, 65 percent of consumers say they get too much useless material from marketers. If your prospects feel this way about you, it won't be long before they abandon you for your competition.

To address this problem, you need to take the important step of weaving empathy into all your marketing campaigns. Here are five ways to do it.

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1. Step into your prospects' shoes.

Empathizing goes far beyond sympathizing, which simply means feeling compassion for someone else. Empathizing is stepping into other people's shoes, seeing the world from their eyes and imagining yourself in their place.

When you empathize with your prospects, you get into character with them. You discover their biggest (and smallest) dreams, their 2am-thoughts, their fears, and their desires. You unravel their beliefs, preferences and personalities. Learn how to create an audience persona – this can be a great task to add to your list to get to know your prospect better.

From there, you ask yourself: how can my product solve their problems, fulfil their dreams, and alleviate their fears? How can I talk to them in a way that fits their beliefs, personalities, and preferences?

Let's go back to the example above and approach the organic soap buyer from a place of empathy. By now, we know that she:

- Wants natural, healthy ingredients for her skin
- Is a thrifty buyer

- Feels annoyed with upselling and pressure

By knowing her and empathizing with her, it'll be easier to create a marketing campaign she will love.

2. Make your marketing about serving.

These days, traditional advertising no longer works the way it used to. People hate ads so much, they pay to get rid of them. Not surprisingly, the total cost of ad blockers in the U.S. alone is \$12,1 million in 2020.

The bottom line is that the new generation of buyers dislike disruptive marketing. They don't want to feel pushed into a sale, and do everything they can to avoid feeling "sold" or "closed." If this says anything to you as a marketer, it's that you should avoid pushy mass marketing tactics at all costs.

What you should do instead is make your marketing about serving first and selling second. Dive deep into the benefits your brand offers, and make it a point to solve your prospects' problems. For example, if you sell SEO services, your goal should be helping clients get in front of their audience first, and making money from subscriptions second.

To succeed in marketing today, it's essential to find out what your audience needs, then make it your mission to fulfil that need. The sales you make will only be the natural outcome of your empathy and service.

3. Accentuate positivity in all your interactions with prospects.

Your brand's biggest goal is to improve lives. This is true whether you sell tiny knickknacks or comprehensive business

solutions.

To convey this mission to your prospects, it's a good idea to accentuate a positive vibe in all your marketing efforts. Here are three ways to show positivity in your marketing.

- Use positive words in your captions, content and site copy. Words like "incredible," "win" and "possible" make your audience feel good.
- Focus on positive outcomes. This doesn't mean hiding the problems your prospects are facing, but showing them it's possible to overcome these problems.
- Use smiling, candid photos of yourself in your content, along with a mix of professional photography. By doing so, you portray yourself as a real person instead of only a money-making brand.

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4. Listen to what your current customers are saying.

As your business grows, it's natural for you to get negative reviews. Instead of sweeping them under a rug, it's important to take a moment to really listen to them. Ask yourself:

- Why are customers reacting negatively to my brand?
- How would I feel if I were in their shoes?
- Is there any way I can exceed their expectations when solving their problems?

An excellent example of showing empathy while solving problems is Airbnb's Open Doors Policy. This policy was created after a guest experienced racial discrimination, and focuses on providing equal treatment to all customers.

5. Pay attention to emotional triggers.

When making purchases, people don't only buy for the functional benefits of a product. They buy for the emotional benefits as well. For instance, a middle-aged man won't buy a two-door coupe only to get him to work every day, but also to make him feel sexy, smart and young. A mother of five won't get a financial service only to save up for her kids' college, but also to make her feel secure, responsible, and loving.

When you feel empathy towards your customers' emotional triggers, it'll be easier for you to craft marketing messages that touch them personally.

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