

Inform and Educate

*To make a sale
you need to know your stuff*

Why should a prospect pay what your asking for your product? How good is it? Why is it good? What makes it good? What makes the price fair? Why is your product better than your competition's product? Why does it cost more than your competitor's? Why does it cost less?

These are just some of the questions that run through a shopper's mind when they contemplate making a purchase. If you're product is much cheaper than the others guy's, well, that's good - but does this mean it's a lower quality product than the more expensive one? Or what about the opposite situation? What if you're asking a lot more for you product, which seems very similar to your competition's, which costs less? Why should the buyer pay more for yours?

Shoppers need a lot of questions answered, and answered to their satisfaction before they'll let go of their money. Many of these questions may only be subconscious musings in the mind of the potential buyer, but they're still there, bogging down the decision to buy.

Product knowledge is paramount



Thus, the seller who does all he or she can to clear up any and all questions right up front also clears away the resistance to buy. It helps the shopper make a fast and informed decision they can feel good about. This means you should strive to educate your customers about your product -- why it's a high quality product and why the price is a reasonable one. You have to give them 'reasons why'.

Here's an example from a seller of high-end hats:

"From Wainswright, Canada, comes a hat for all seasons, hand sewn with a sail maker's skill. Wainswright is nestled in Canada's Pacific Coast country where the Cascade Mountains roll down to meet the sea, creating a changeable climate that demands a versatile hat. In Wainswright is a small company of dedicated sail makers who produce comfortable, waxed-coated hats that are waterproof, using the traditional formula of sailcloth. Made one at a time, each hat must pass a certified master craftsman's personal

inspection before they're released for sale. A broad flexible brim can easily be shaped to your liking - it protects face and neck from sun and rain, shades your eyes deeply for better vision. Ventilated for comfort, and with genuine band made from carefully selected mountain ram's leather. The inner band is our exclusive TechWear, a leading edge stretch fabric developed by NASA that absorbs moisture and never leaves a crease in your forehead. Our sail maker's hat combines the best of cutting edge technology with the ancient secrets of sea craftsmen..."

The hats sell for almost 100 Canadian dollars. It's clear from the description of this somewhat literary sales copy, that you're getting a lot more than a mass-produced, cheap, synthetic fabric, cranked out by some dreary sweatshop in a Third World country.

In other words, you have to educate your customers and prospects. Tell them about the effort and skill that goes into your product or service. The time taken. The value of it. The features, the benefits and what these benefits mean to them. Even a comparison to similar products or services.

It all adds dimension, value and power to your marketing message.

You don't necessarily have to reproduce the high literary style of the example provided - just let your customer know why your product is quality, why it sells for what it does, and why it makes perfect sense to buy it. Educate your prospects and customers, and if they like and believe what you tell them, they'll buy.

Articulate To Accelerate

Here is a headline from a newspaper that shall remain nameless, and I promise I'm not making this up. The headline read:

"Helicopter powered by human flies"

A headline is like a hook that can reel customers in

Do you see what the problem is? It can be read in two ways. What the editor meant to communicate with the headline was: "A helicopter using a human being as a source of power, perhaps peddling like mad, successfully lifted the craft into the air and flew." But the headline also seems to say that somewhere, there is a monstrous kind of helicopter that uses "human flies" as a source of power!

Be clear about what you are trying to communicate

As you can see, when you don't communicate clearly and carefully, the results can be hilarious. But when you fail to communicate properly with a headline in your expensive print ad or sales copy, you can blow a lot of money and kill a lot of sales - and there's nothing funny about that!

Most of the time, the problem is simply being too indistinct, rather than offering specifics. Look at the following ad headline, for example, which is also not made up:

"We sell car insurance for less."

That headline and the statement it makes is so vague, so general and so clichéd, it's practically invisible to the reader. Everybody claims to be "selling for less." A better headline would be:

"Start paying 15% less for car insurance today!"

Or better yet:

"Keep an average of £128 of your own money and get better coverage on your car!"

Now the shopper can clearly visualise just what they'll save or gain when they come to this broker.

Communicating and spelling out your offer clearly is as important as the offer itself. Specify not only benefits but how those benefits apply and can be utilised by the purchaser.

Getting more specific and articulating exactly what the shopper will get in sales copy is even more important and also easier to communicate because you have more room for the essential details, and it's details you must provide. For example, a U.S. financial adviser selling annuities used this sales pitch in a direct mail piece:

"The average person spends \$2.13 cents per day on snacks, coffee or soft drinks, which means you dish out over \$777 per year on junk food. Over 20 years, that \$2.13 a day adds up to \$15,540. Invest just half the amount per day you blow on junk food, or \$388 per year in a US Mutual annuity plan with get an average 5.9% cumulative interest, and in 20 years you'll have more than \$183,990 in cash to secure your future"

Details, if you articulate them well, help your prospects know exactly how they benefit and exactly how they gain by doing business with you. Articulate well and draw an exact picture, and you motivate people to buy from you right now because doing so makes complete and common sense!