

Luxury Experience Company

The Online Marketplace Has Changed How We Deal With A Customer One-On-One

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It seems that the pendulum has definitely swung over to the online marketplace as the driving force for how to engage a customer even with respect to how you engage them when they walk into your office or retail store.

There is no mistake that one-on-one communications with a customer has always been the sacred ground of marketing and sales. The concept of one-on-one communications was not lost on the developers of Internet marketing solutions such as Social Networks, which have become prominent for businesses. It seemed that many companies, who were very successful building relationships with customers before the Internet, have now methodically woven Internet Marketing solutions, targeted to creating one-on-one communications, into their overall Marketing Strategy.

So, why do I believe that the pendulum has swung towards the online marketplace as the driving force for how to engage a customer?

The Internet has evolved into a medium that is controlled by the customer concerning what they do, how they do it, and what they see. Trying to stay a few steps ahead of the consumer continues to be the challenge for new Internet Marketing solutions as well as for companies trying to anticipate where they will find their customers. Thus, for a company to succeed online, they had to support the customer's desire for Internet control through solutions like Facebook, Twitter, and a host of other Social Network solutions.

I believe that we have created a customer whose thirst for information and control is beyond what a company was use to when someone walked into an office or retail store before the Internet.

For example, customers have been known to walk into retail shops with printouts on products and prices and they want the retail store to meet or beat the pricing; they do not care that if they purchased online there would be a shipping cost, or that to maintain a retail store there is overhead involved, the customer is in control and they know what they want. Businesses say that the customer that comes through their door to talk about services is vastly more informed than in the past; in some cases they may be misinformed, but they definitely come in with convictions. They may be misinformed via their interpretation of information they found on the Internet, but in that the customer has interpreted information that they found, they feel empowered.

Today, working face-to-face with a customer has become 50% knowledge of your products or services, 50% psychologist to deal with a very empowered customer, and 100% good listener; it all adds up to being a chameleon.

Now that we have matured our understanding of a customer within the digital medium, we need to transpose that understanding into our everyday interactions with a customer. If you are in retail, you are not just waiting on the customer, you must be ready to provide cohesive responses to questions that they will pose. Concerning businesses who call on customers, they need to understand the challenges that the customer is under and not just with respect to the company's specific expertise, but also concerning the customer's industry and other business and personal influences.

The Internet created an opportunity to interact and connect with a customer on many different levels, regardless that you may never meet. The power of the Internet allows for extensive amount of information to be made readily available to meet anticipated questions and inquiries, and to show the customer that you care and understand their concerns.

Businesses still struggle with developing a progressive Internet presence that is dynamic and responsive to a customer's needs and inquiries, but they are starting to understand the meaning of being "social" and communicating with the customer. In addition, they understand that they can create an extensive interactive Internet presence while being available 24x7 for the customer.

The challenge now is to provide a framework for employees when they directly interact with a customer who is accustomed to obtaining information and answers to questions as well as being "social" at the click of a mouse. This may change the way companies hire employees who will be interacting with customers; the company may look beyond pure technical prowess or direct understanding of a product or service, and start to look for a balance of knowledge along with being a good listener with outstanding people skills.

For the entrepreneur or business that created a brick-and-mortar presence after a successful online presence the transition may be easier than for a company that had a powerful presence before the Internet and is now just catching up with a complementary online presence. The change in the customer has been a methodical evolution that will continue to evolve as more and more control and information is provided to lure a customer's online persona to a decision.

The important point is that we need to anticipate a different customer when we meet with them one-on-one and not become intimidated or taken back by their presence or convictions. Unlike the Internet, there are no software solutions or tools that you can invoke to help you out; the best course of action is to be patient and learn to listen more before responding.

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