



SELLING BLIND

This sales training article looks at “Selling Blind”, and how to sell to customers when they don’t yet know what they want.

We know that a benefit isn’t a benefit unless it is matched to a need.

But what if you haven’t spoken to a client? What if you’re selling online? How do you sell ‘blind’? In some cases, the customer may not even know what they want.

Steve Jobs famously said: “It’s really hard to design products by focus groups. A lot of times, people don’t know what they want until you show it to them.”

As such, we often need to meet a customer’s need before they can even articulate them.

Henry Ford put it beautifully:

“If I had asked people what they wanted, they would have said faster horses.”

These quotations relate to product design and innovation, but their sentiments are still relevant. When selling to an unknown need it’s even more important than usual to understand your value proposition i.e. why someone will be moved to buy your product.

There Are 2 main questions to ask when identifying your value proposition

- What’s wrong with doing it the current way
- Why is your way better?

Before the iPod, we all loved the Sony Walkman. What wasn’t there to love? We were wired for sound, and could listen to our favourite CDs on the move. The Walkman, however, was a bulky bit of kit that had to be strapped to your belt. And it only played one CD at a time meaning that if you wanted to play more you had to carry a separate CD wallet. Plus the AA batteries ran out pretty quickly.

Steve Jobs had other ideas though. Apple made a compact, stylish device that could fit into your pocket. And not only did it play one CD; it could store 100s of CDs at the same time. Quite simply, it solved needs that we didn’t even know we had. It clearly exposed the problems with doing it the current way (the Walkman) and delivered a much better way of doing it (the iPod).



A useful tool in selling blind is the 'rhetorical question'

Posing 'What If' Questions will get the customer thinking about the benefits of your products and how they match your needs e.g.

- What if you could double your salary?
- What if you could sell your car today?
- What if you could borrow £5k at 0% interest?

Having a clear understanding of why someone would want to buy your products is useful

As such, a powerful tool in addition to delivering the benefits gained by using your products, you could also deliver the negatives e.g.

- Fed up of not earning your worth?
- Is your car sale taking too long?
- Tired of paying too much interest on your bank loan?

Assuming that these needs resonate with your prospective customers, they will then be receptive to your pitch.

Customers don't always know their needs

Remember, customers don't always know their needs, so you don't need to ask questions to identify them. Having a clear understanding of why someone should buy from you is enough, providing you create a strong enough reason for them to buy.



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