

Magic Words: What Is Your Sales Message?

Finding and communicating value in your marketing and sales message.

“All the king’s horses, and all the king’s men, couldn’t put Humpty Dumpty back together again.”

Humpty Dumpty is a great analogy for most marketing today.

Once it falls flat on the ears of the listener, it’s impossible to get their attention again.

In this age of noise, information overload and 600 satellite channels, what is *interesting* gets listened to. What isn’t gets ignored and has no second chances.

Most of us, and most of our companies, try to compete with all the noise by adding activity – we do more prospecting and cold calling, hire more salespeople, send out more direct mail or spend more on Google Adwords.

We even goal our salespeople on the number of contacts or ‘pitches’ they make in the hopes that they will meet that one person who has ‘just the right connection’ or the right sales opportunity.

To illustrate, let’s eavesdrop on a conversation between Sal, VP of Sales at a big company; Mark, VP of Marketing and the CEO:

- Sal:** Boss, our salespeople had 1,144 appointments this month, made 646 product demonstrations, delivered 418 proposals, and won 60 new clients. So we’ve really goosed our activity.
- CEO:** That’s great Sal. But I’ve promised the board serious growth. So, I need you to double the number of sales calls demos.
- Sal:** Double???
- Mark:** Actually Boss, we could be more effective by making sure we equip the salesforce with the sales message and approach that won those 60 customers, and then making sure they use it on all new prospects.
- CEO:** But twice as many sales calls will do the same thing.
- Mark:** Not necessarily: our sales process isn’t 100% efficient at consistently converting the same number of prospects to customers. Just look at the pipeline report for the last few months.
- CEO:** Sal would disagree with that.
- Mark:** Well, we just added 9 new salespeople. Are we sure they’re saying the right thing to customers? For that matter are we sure the rest of the salesforce is talking to customers using the ‘magic words’ that WON our best customers in the first place?
- Sal:** I don’t know – it seems too touchy feely to me.
- CEO:** I agree. Just go ahead and do twice as many sales demos.
- Mark:** *sighs* Okay... we’ll see.

Dumb.

What the CEO doesn't realize is that he already has the capability to double his sales without adding a single salesperson, changing the product or spending more money on advertising or big-ticket marketing (which I don't recommend anyway).

Cecil Wooten, Executive Vice President of Chicago Bridge and Iron, the famous bridge builder that built J.P. Getty's oil rigs, once said 'Activity does not equal productivity.'

So why do so many companies focus on sales activity, numbers and volume to the exclusion of the sales message?

Because they are easier to measure.

But let me introduce a new metric.

Successful sales and marketing is only about 2 things:

1. Getting the customer's attention (an appointment, phone call, meeting, whatever)
2. What you say to them when you finally have their attention

So 50% of your marketing is about *what you say!!!*

Question: How much time have you spent refining your message to customers?

Too many companies still think, 'A great product sells itself.'

That's garbage.

I know plenty of great products that sit on the shelf because no one can explain what they do in a way that understand and are persuaded to buy. Can you think of any great products that didn't sell?

Worse yet, software and tech companies focus the sales conversation on features, specs, and Techno-latin. All of which confuse prospects. Which means fewer sales.

Want more validation of this simple but powerful concept?

In a 10-year study of roughly 30,000 salespeople, Huthwaite (who provided data for the book *Spin Selling*) looked to discover what distinguished the most effective salespeople who regularly hit their numbers from salespeople who struggled and didn't..

You know what the answer was?

The most successful salespeople were able to communicate the value of how a product or service would help a customer, in the customer's language, throughout the sales cycle.

That's it.

They didn't go on more sales calls. They didn't do more demos. They didn't send out more direct mail. They weren't any better at closing.

They simply spoke to customers in language that meant something to THEM.

CLOSING

So when you ask yourself, 'Why isn't anyone listening to our marketing?', perhaps the answer is, 'Because you don't speak their language' or 'Because you're not talking about what interests them most' (and it ain't your product).

Always remember what your mother said: 'If you don't have anything good to say, don't say anything at all.'

So... do you have something good to say? How well are you saying it?

SALES MESSAGE SCORECARD

If you're evaluating your current sales message and want some help, email us and we'll send you a Sales Message Scorecard. You can reach us at scorecards@product180.com or call 888-361-7536, x81.