

Are you scaring away potential customers?

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By Chris Rawluk

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Since the launch of showtheplanet.com we have been regularly inundated by sales pitches from Internet and technology firms from all over the globe. We would think it a positive thing – since the world is obviously finding us – except that its quite apparent from most of the messages we've received that the person on the other end of the phone (or fax, or e-mail) has no idea what we're about. Even worse, most of these Internet companies seem have no idea how to do business on the Internet. Here are some actual examples of contact from sales people to our office within the last month:

Salesperson from an internet company calls and leaves a message followed by 10 minutes of office background noise and conversations. Apparently this person hadn't hung up the phone. This happened two days in a row from the same person.

Salesperson calls and introduces their product. This product obviously has nothing in common with what we do. We ask: "Have you been to our site?" They respond: "Uh...no, but...."

Salesperson from an Internet company calls. We are interested and ask about pricing. The response: "Uhh...Actually, this is my first day. Can I get my manager to call you about that?"

Salesperson from an Internet company calls. We ask that information be e-mailed to us. They courier a five pound information package to our office the next day. It contains volumes of information about why they're such a wonderful (public) company, but no detailed information on prices or product.

Similarly, we request pricing information via e-mail from an Internet company. They respond with their own five pound courier package. You guessed it. No information on pricing.

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Salesperson from an Internet company calls and introduces their product. We are interested in learning more and request information be e-mailed to us. They call back three days later and ask for our e-mail address. Our e-mail address and contact information are prominently displayed on our site.

These examples wouldn't seem as absurd if the inquiries had come from traditional firms not yet familiar with the Internet. But ALL of these examples came from Internet firms (Many of them public companies – Watch your money!). The leading edge of the dot com economy? I think not.

Of course there's always a bright side. The more idiots out there trying to do business online, the less competition for you.

Here are three rules of thumb that, in our not-so-humble opinion, can make or break your online sales.

Provide ALL the details of your product on your web site. Include every possible detail and specification. Don't waste the customer's time and they won't waste yours. The Internet is about information on demand and the consumer is more demanding than ever.

Post your prices on your web site. I repeat. Post your prices on your web site. Nobody wants to jump through hoops to buy your product. Most potential customers won't inquire about price unless your product is very specialized.

Know your product and your industry. If you're not an expert, customers will see right through you.

Simple? Absolutely. Yet it's amazing how many companies have no clue. If you play by the rules you will sell more. The Internet consumer can be very generous to those who do.

Chris Rawluk Find straight answers on e-commerce and online business. showtheplanet.com features articles, helpful tutorials, and useful resources for online business. Visit <http://showtheplanet.com> – Your Free E-Business Resource Community

10 Sizzling Offers That Sell Like Crazy!

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One of the best way to increase your sales is to offer

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your potential customers a special offer. It could be trial offers, discounts, purchase awards, etc. Below are ten sizzling offers you could use to sell your products like crazy.

1. You could offer your potential customers a free sample of your product. If the sample proves what you claim, there is a high chance they will buy it.
2. You could give your potential customers a free trial of your product or service. Tell them you won't bill them for 30 days.
3. You could offer your potential customers a rebate after they buy your product or service. They will feel they are getting a good deal.
4. You could offer your potential customers a monthly payment plan. Tell them they can pay for your product or service with three easy monthly payments.
5. You could reward your potential customers if they buy a specific number of products. Tell them if they buy 3 or more products, they will get one free.
6. You could reward your potential customers if they spend over a specific dollar amount. Tell them if they spend over \$100, they get a 10% discount.
7. You could hold a holiday sale for your potential customers. Tell them everything on your web site is discounted up to 50% on Thanksgiving Day.
8. You could hold a buy one get one free sale for your potential customers. Tell them if they buy one product, they get another product for free at the same value.
9. You could hold a special \$1 sale for your potential customers. They'll come to your web site to buy your product for only a dollar, but may buy other products.
10. You could offer your potential customers a bonus coupon when they buy one of your products. It could be a coupon for another product you sell.

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