

## CUSTOMER PERSONALITY TYPES: DOES IT MATTER?

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By Bob McElwain

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Marketing types are fond of classifying people into categories. Here are four which I took from "Differentiate Or Die," by Jack Trout with Steve Rivkin. (John Wiley & Sons, New York, 2000, p15.) Only the first few words of each are included here.

- > Intuitives ... use intuition. Concentrate on the possibilities. They avoid the details and tend to look at the big picture.
- > Thinkers ... analytical, precise, and logical. They process a lot of information, often ignoring the emotional or feeling aspects of a situation.
- > Feelers ... interested in the feelings of others. They dislike intellectual analysis and follow their own likes and dislikes.
- > Sensors ... see things as they are and have great respect for facts. They have an enormous capacity for detail and seldom make errors.

#### Which Best Suits You?

Texts in psychology also often break people into types as above. I have seen several dozen such definitions. Each is often quite different from others. With apologies to Stout and Rivkin (and many others), I don't find such groupings helpful.

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While many of the people I have known might seem best suited to one definition, each includes key characteristics from the others. Did you find one that suited you? Or are you one who is some combination of two or more categories?

The reason for defining such categories in marketing is to get a better focus on your Perfect Customer. If you can do so, no doubt your dialog will be stronger. It is because of this possibility that I included the above. Most, however, will not want to slice things so thin.

### Situations Vary As Much As People Do

If you are selling a computer, complete details will fill a large book. Even the most dedicated fact finder doesn't want that much information. On the other hand, if you're selling balloons, what details are available?

Visitors to your website may be predominantly one type or another, but this depends to a large extent upon what you are offering. If you are selling lures to fisherman, you are going to meet all of these types, and combinations of them.

As buyers, personality types may not hold. Thoughtful, introspective people may buy after just a glance, particularly if they're in a hurry. The impulsive type who generally buys with little thought, may become engrossed in the tiniest details and refuse to make a decision until all questions have been answered.

### Other Models

As suggested, there are other sets of categories into which people can be grouped. Hundreds have been published. Here's one that works pretty well for me.

Show–Me – This type doesn't care how it works. They only want to know what it does, and specifically what it will do for them. Pictures and drawing work well with this type. Simple descriptions of what the product does also work.

Prove–It – These people are not content until you have provided evidence to support every assertion made. If you say something about your product you can not demonstrate, you will lose this customer.

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How–It–Works – This type wants only to know how it works; they will make their own decision as to whether or not it works well enough. Details make this type happy. And they want a clear definition of each product feature.

### A Better Course

Build your own definition of categories as I did above, based on what you have learned about your target. If most interested in your product want details, provide them. If most want facts, list them all. If they want only an overview, give one that is brief and to the point.

If you can add these kinds of characteristics to your definition of your Perfect Customer, so much the better. Most, however, will find this difficult to do, even impossible. So

unless dictated by your product or other specific conditions, here is the better plan for presenting information.

### Cover The Bases

Ignore personality types, and think in terms of behavior. When your Perfect Customer hits your site, chances are more than a dozen sites have already been visited, and briefly. You have only seconds to capture attention and draw this person into your page and site.

You need a dandy first impression which immediately lends a sense of credibility and expertise. Next, you need a great headline that grabs attention and provides a great benefit to your Perfect Customer. You need captivating sub–headings throughout the page, for most visitors will see only these initially. And you need a clear link to an order form.

This of itself takes care of those in a hurry, regardless of personality type. If anything on the page grabs attention and reading begins, you can then provide other kinds of information.

Rather than deciding whether or not your Perfect Customer wants details, proofs, drawing, or whatever, the better plan is to have all available. That is, let the headline and sub–headings give a brief but comprehensive overview, for all need this. Include further details and benefits under each

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sub-heading. For extended details and "proofs," offer links to a new page.

### Summing Up

As you can see, I'm not convinced any personality traits need to be added to your definition of your Perfect Customer. Unless your target is clearly only one type, the better plan may be to offer the essence of your product in the page, with links to other information some may need.

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Abstracted from "Your Path To Success"

### **Caring for Your Customers**

**By Terri Seymour**

You probably think I am going to say something like, "The customer is always right." Right?? Wrong.

I have many philosophies when dealing with customers, but I definitely do not believe that the customer is always right. However, when the customer is wrong, you must handle the situation delicately.

There are many types of customers and each one needs to be treated with respect and consideration no matter how difficult they may be. I have found that most (not all) people can be soothed out of their "nastiness".

I used to work at our local casino and I would get all kinds of customers to deal with. Most of them were very pleasant as in the IM business, but there were a few that were very difficult. There was this one night when I came in contact with this particularly difficult lady who, of course, was having bad luck. She was just a bit\*\*in" and blaming the casino!!

I calmly yet firmly talked to her in a reassuring and respectful manner each and every time I came around. I noticed that each time I did talk to her she became more and more relaxed and controlled. Until finally, later in the evening, I went into the Ladies Room and who should be there, but the difficult lady! Well, as I came in, she burst out, " There she is. There's that girl who was so nice to me all night long and made me feel so much better"! She could not have been more grateful. ;-)

Now this will not happen everytime you run into a difficult customer, but it could happen often. Treat people with respect, kindness and consideration and more often then not, you will be able to calm down a dissatisfied, belligerent customer. Listen to the customer and let them know you will do everything possible to get the problem resolved. Show them that you care!

You need to actually care about your customer and care about making sure they are satisfied with you

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and your service and/or product. Do not just think of the customer as another sale.

If you get the eternally nasty customer who will not be consoled no matter what you do, do not lose control or sink to their level. Remain calm but firm. The customer is not always right no matter how much they think they are. Be courteous and polite.

Since I have been online, I have only encountered about three customers of the eternally nasty type. ;-)  
I did my best, but to no avail. So I had no choice but to send them on their way. I stood up for myself and for MOE and did not insult them in any way. But as we know, there is just no pleasing some people.

I would say that 99% of the people I have encountered online have been absolutely wonderful! They make it easy to treat them with respect and courtesy. I, who has been painfully shy most of my life, love working with people and enjoy interacting with them online and offline. I think all (well, almost all)

people are good in one way or another and deserve to be treated as such.

This is why I do business by the motto: Treat others as you would like to be treated and Be true to yourself and your customers!

Terri Seymour owns and operates

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You can contact Terri at

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Encourage Personality Testing  
The Personality of Leadership  
Add Personality And Stir 3 Times!  
Customer Loyalty

How to Gain and Retain More Customers  
About Niches  
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