

HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW YOUR PERFECT CUSTOMER?

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By Bob McElwain

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Your Perfect Customer is real only in your mind. He or she is the one individual most representative of your target. The one to whom you always speak one-on-one in your newsletter and on your site.

To bring this person to the forefront of your mind in crystal clarity, here are examples of the kinds of questions you need to answer. And your answers need to be reevaluated now and then, as your understanding of your customers grows.

Male Or Female

Your Perfect Customer is male or female, but not both.

Consider an oil additive. It doesn't take long to decide your Perfect Customer is male. Consider face creams. Female.

Name it, then put a sex to it. Even if your target is roughly split between male and female, you need to add a sex to your Perfect Customer.

Why? Because regardless of your sex, you can talk more effectively to men or to women than you can to both. It's a matter of voice, which includes tone and words selected.

A person selling a car to a married couple talks to both at the same time. But the key dialog is directed at the decision maker, male or female. That directed to the spouse is quite different, and is intended to specifically address his or her

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concerns.

On the Web, we can't switch between two modes of dialog. Thus we need to settle on male or female.

### There's No Loss In This

In the end, there is no loss in making this decision. If you decide to address males, females will listen without reservation provided they are also interested in what your product can do for them. And conversely.

All you need to do is avoid sexist related dialog. "Men just don't get it," will cost you the male vote. "Women just don't understand these things," will cost you the female vote. Avoid such blunders at all times. They put your business at risk.

In deciding between using "he" or "she" when speaking to both genders, use "she" exclusively if your target is into political correctness. Use "he" with those over say 55. You'll have to do some figuring for a target in the middle somewhere.

Your decision will probably be the gender most likely to buy your product. But do make a decision. The "s/he" bit annoys all.

### Turning To Age

You need to assign an age to your Perfect Customer. Again, so long as the dialog is authentic, people older or younger will follow along without difficulty. Confusion arises only when we try to speak across too great a range. In doing so, we lose authenticity. And all fails.

### The Demographics

Is your Perfect Customer single? If so, is marriage likely? In either case, are there children? Or have the children left to build their own lives?

What career is being pursued? Is it a work-at-home bit? Caring for a home and raising kids? (While certainly the latter is a career, I'd refrain from using "housewife;" many women don't like this label much.)

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What is the household income? Is the dwelling owned or rented? What part of income is committed to the dwelling? How much discretionary income is available?

What level of formal education has been achieved? Is there a continuing effort to achieve more?

Is your Perfect Customer a member of a specific culture? If so, which one? What languages are used? Do you expect any buyers from other cultures?

What does your Perfect Customer do in their free time? Watch TV? Travel? Go fishing?

Is religion a factor? If so, which one? To what degree is

it significant relative to selling your product?

Actually, there is no end to questions such as the above. The answers to many of them mean more with some products than with others. Consider hot water heaters, for example. Only home owners will even be potentially interested. But many products do not depend upon specifics. We all bath, and do whatever we do with our hair, regardless of where we live or what we do each day.

### What Of Hopes And Dreams?

You want to trigger a need for your product by tapping into the hopes and dreams of your Perfect Customer. The needs to address are a function of your product and who your Perfect Customer is.

To see how best to make this happen, there's no better approach than to study TV ads. A typical commercial grabs immediately at a specific hope or dream common to the target. And there is only about 30 seconds to a minute to get the message across.

Sure, some commercials are better than others. So focus on the best of them. However, major bucks were spent in the production of most of them. You'll be exploring the results of the thinking of many of the most successful promoters in the world. It's difficult to imagine a better forum from which to learn.

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### Getting It Done

The more you know about your Perfect Customer, the better you will be able to communicate. You'll come to know what does not need saying. And what needs to be spelled out in detail. Take the time to come to know this person as well as you know your best friend, and the effectiveness of your messages will increase accordingly.

### **Make Sure You Get The Customer Perspective**

#### **By Erwin Stenecker**

Businesses that fail, often forget to seek out the customer perspective. I have talked to some folks at businesses that were less than successful, and when asked if they actively seek out customer comments, the answer invariably is no. Why don't they do that? Why not get the customer perspective?

Oftentimes, the company is overconfident, and thinks they know what customers want. This myth, because that's what it is, can be upheld as long as the customer is not involved. However, the customer has a strong vote in the buying process, and in the end it will become crystal clear how the customer feels! At that point, of course, it's too late to do anything about it.

Another reason for not asking the customer is fear. From the customer perspective you might not be doing so well as you thought you were. For insecure persons that may come as a blow! In order to protect themselves, some folks just don't want to hear it and simply don't ask. On the other hand, they could be missing out on a whole lot of uplifting comments.

Get real! Would you rather get the customer's votes in your wallet, or in your mailbox?

The sooner you know how the customer feels about your business, the sooner you can start to correct any shortcomings that may emerge. But you have to act. There is no use in hiding the remarks you don't like. This doesn't change the reality. Put your customer in the centre of your business and let the rest follow in tune.

This can only improve your bottom line.

Erwin Stenecker is a senior support consultant with over 13 years of experience in both sales and IT support. Check out his website at

Make Sure You Get The Customer Perspective

Handling Customer Complaints

Don't Let Negative Feedback On Ebay Get You Down

Get Your Customers to Say "YES"

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Remembering to Listen: Making the Most of Communication

The First and Second Adam  
Stamp Collector Software  
Postcard Collector Software  
Palmistry  
Affiliate Organizer



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