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How to Waste Money and Annoy Potential Customers

By Barry Harrison

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Why do some companies bid on keywords for products they don't even sell? Or fail to provide the basic information people need to make the decision to buy? Here's a cautionary tale— with a happy ending.

Has this ever happened to you?

I'm looking online for lamp shades. I go to Google and click on the top Sponsored Link in the right column: Expo.com. I'm taken to their "Lighting and Fans" page. There are 29 links in the left navigation, but no lamp shades. So I do a keyword search.

Products Found = 0.

All I can do is wonder why they wasted my time and their money, and move on to the next ad.

Close, but no cigar.

Clicking on the second ad takes me to a home page with a "Shades" tab. I click on that and arrive on a page with information about sizes and a link to the lamp shade collection.

I start browsing and find one I'm interested in. The text instructs me to "Click on lamp image for detail." I guess they mean lamp shade image. I click, and to my surprise, I see the exact same thumbnail I was looking at, but now I have four color choices and an "ad to cart" button.

OK, I'm a designer. I can appreciate subtlety. But what's the difference between White, Off-White, Beige and Coffee? All this site shows me is a little grey photo— but "Dirty" isn't one of the color choices.

I see the toll-free phone number at the top of the page. I call (during their normal business hours) and get voicemail. They say my call is very important to them, but I'm not so sure...

Third time's the charm?

Back to Google, click on another ad which takes me to a page with lamp shades (YAY!). I can sort by

nine different criteria, but even so, I don't see exactly what I want.

There's a link to talk to a lighting consultant. I'm skeptical, but I call. Someone answers the phone! I explain what I want and I'm told I need a custom shade. This company doesn't make them, but the consultant refers me to two other sites where I can order custom-made shades.

Even though I didn't find what I was searching for, I really appreciate this experience. I'd be happy to return to this site and do business with this company in the future.

The moral of this story.

Have some respect for your customers. Think about their needs and do everything you can to meet

them. If you're advertising a product for sale it should be available on your site. If you expect people to make a choice, provide the information and pictures they need to feel comfortable making a decision.

And even if you can't make the sale today, you can and should offer a good customer experience because there's always tomorrow.

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10 Sizzling Offers That Sell Like Crazy!

By Larry Dotson

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

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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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