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**Impair Healthy Healing In People Over The Age Of 30!**

**What Do Your Customers Really Want? Ask Your Competition**

**By Karon Thackston**

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What Do Your Customers Really Want? Ask Your Competition  
by Karon Thackston © 2004  
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It's not always an easy task. Sometimes discovering what your customers really want is like pulling teeth. It is imperative for any business owner who hopes to develop new products/services or to write effective advertising copy to know what is important to his customers. But when direct questions don't deliver the results you need, what's the next step?

Actually, your competition can often lend a hand in this area... and without even knowing it! Many marketing pieces such as brochures, sales letters, or Web sites include testimonials. I've found over the years that this is an untapped source for "customer intelligence."

Look at this example from a Web-design site:

"I'm truly speechless! I knew my site design was in need of revamping, but I never imagined how exceptional it could look. You have done an amazing job! The colors, the graphics, the layout... everything shows that you have a good understanding of my business and my target audience. You've made me look as professional as IBM! I often bring the site up in my browser just to remind myself that this really IS my site. I am a loyal customer and would not hesitate to recommend you to anyone in need of professional Web design services."

What do you think this customer wanted based on his comments? A few things he mentioned were:

1. colors
2. graphics
3. layout
4. his target audience
5. professional

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Here's another one from a copywriting site:

"I just wanted to thank you for everything. Thank you for bringing my vision to life in words. Thank you for "getting" me. And thanks for your patience."

This customer needed:

1. someone to express his vision in words
2. someone who understood what he had to say

Here's one more:

"You had the product I wanted, it was in stock, at the lowest price I could find. There was no shipping charge or sales tax. Your website was easy to use; you followed up immediately by Email; I was able to track the shipment; and the product arrived on time and in good condition. What is there not to like?"

This customer of an appliance–sales Web site was obviously impressed with:

1. item being in stock
2. low price
3. no shipping charges
4. customer service
5. timely arrival

Doing a good bit of research into the testimonials customers give to your competition can shed a bright light on what they're looking for. I'd recommend visiting several sites each week and creating a chart to track what you find.

Just as I did above, jot down specifically what impressed the customer in each case. Then look for trends. The more times a particular service is mentioned, the more importance it will hold.

Now, look back over your own business. Can you offer what your competition offers? Can you offer something better? Is there a way to improve your service in the areas that those who wrote the testimonials mentioned? If so, do it!

Staying in touch with your customers' needs should be top priority. When you take the time to understand what your customers really want, you stand a better chance of improving sales and increasing customer loyalty.

Professional copywriter, Karon Thackston, has over 20 years experience in writing for practically every medium. Visit her site at <http://www.marketingwords.com> for more information. Karon is also the author of *The Step-by-Step Copywriting Course* and *How To Increase Keyword Saturation (Without Destroying the Flow of Your Copy)* <http://www.copywritingcourse.com>.

## Understand the Keywords that Your Target Market Uses

By Mike Sam

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Understanding for which keywords there is heavy competition can help you identify gaps where there is little or no competition. These gaps provide opportunities for marketing your site for substantially lower costs than would otherwise be achieved. For instance, it is often the most obvious terms that attract the most heated competition, while the less obvious terms have little, if any, competition. By matching these gaps with an understanding of which keywords customers actually use, it is possible to locate these significant opportunities.

Once you know the best keywords, the next step is to see what your competitors are currently doing with them. If your sites of your competitors rank higher than yours, or offer more enticement for the customer to visit, then it is more likely that they will be attracting the customers and not you.



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