



## If You Want People to Buy, Remember to Ask

IN LATE AUGUST, THE PRESIDENT OF MY SUBURBAN TOWN'S CITY COUNCIL STOPPED BY THE HOUSE TO ASK ME TO VOTE FOR HER. SHE ALSO WONDERED IF SHE COULD PUT A CAMPAIGN SIGN IN THE YARD.

IN OTHER WORDS, SHE UNDERSTANDS MARKETING.

During the years I worked with marketing guru Ray Jutkins, I noticed that one of his most basic and essential messages involved telling people what you want them to do. Too many of today's websites, emails, and other marketing tools omit the *tell me what you want me to do* part.

The city council president has been a member of council in my suburban city for 20 years and she's been president for a long time. She walks the neighborhood personally whenever she's up for election, talks to anyone she finds at home, and leaves a brochure even if nobody comes to the door.

I'll vote for her and one of her signs will be in my yard. In these contentious times, I don't know whether she's a Republican or a Democrat. Surprisingly, that doesn't matter because I generally approve what the city council does. Maybe she heard an old story about Tip O'Neill, a Democrat who could still sit down with people like Ronald Reagan and talk about the future of the country.

### Tip O'Neill's Lesson

The old story about O'Neill explains how he learned an important lesson in his very first campaign: One of his high school teachers who lived across the street from him said "Tom, I'm going to vote for you tomorrow even though you didn't ask me." O'Neill, who had known the teacher for many years, said he didn't think he needed to ask for her vote. "Tom," she said, "people like to be asked."



**IF YOU WANT PEOPLE TO BUY WHAT YOU'RE SELLING, DON'T CONFUSE THEM AND DON'T FORGET TO EXPLAIN PRECISELY WHAT YOU WANT THEM TO DO.**

PHOTO BY PAULO VICTOR DIAN

Lesson learned, O'Neill served 50 years in public office — 16 in the Massachusetts House of Representatives and 34 in the United States House of Representatives.

Does your marketing message ask people to do business with you or do you forget to sell yourself to those in your "neighborhood"? Are you telling people what you want them to do?

Websites and advertisements may precisely describe the product or service that's being offered. Some even describe the benefits of their product or service, not just the features. But then they stop short of making a call for action. That just doesn't work.

If people don't understand why your product or service will help them, they won't ask. If people do understand why your product

or service might be useful to them, but you don't provide a clear explanation of what you want them to do, they still won't act.

### Be Precise

MARKETING MESSAGES MUST BE SPECIFIC. WHAT DO YOU HAVE? WHY DOES IT MATTER TO THE READER? WHY ARE YOU BETTER THAN THE COMPETITION? AND WHAT DO YOU WANT THE READER TO DO?

When people understand exactly what you're offering, those who aren't interested will self-select themselves out.

Those who might be interested are unlikely to self-select themselves in, though, unless you give them some guidance, so it's up to you to tell them what you want them to do!

The most powerful radio station on the planet is WII-FM (what's in it for me?) because people won't act until they understand how you can help them. The explanation needs to be complete, concise, and quick. If it takes more than 30 seconds for you to explain why your product or service will help the person you're talking to, you've already lost the sale.

That's not to say that your full marketing message can't be longer. People will read anything if it appeals to them, but attracting their interest (aka "setting the hook") must be done quickly.

Build your marketing message with the client in mind. Talk to the client. Talk about the client. Explain how you can help. Be crystal clear. And then explain what you want the reader to do.

Prospective clients who can't figure out what benefit you offer, will just walk away.

Be clear about what you have to offer and what the prospective client needs to do to obtain the benefits you provide. Help people make quick decisions by designing your marketing materials so that they can be understood.

## Keys to The Target Market

IT'S IMPORTANT TO DIFFERENTIATE BETWEEN PEOPLE WHO WILL WASTE YOUR TIME AND THOSE WHO ARE ACTUALLY CANDIDATES TO PURCHASE THE PRODUCT OR SERVICE YOU HAVE TO SELL.

No product or service sells itself, so it's up to you to make what you're selling appeal to the right prospects. Successful marketers understand that they need to present the product or service so that prospective clients will understand why they need it. That requires you to know what customers look like.

Start by creating a customer profile that exactly identifies those who will be interested in what you're selling. Precisely. The more exact your customer profile, the more likely it is that you'll be successful.



"People" is not a profile. "People in Texas" isn't a profile. "Married women who live in Atlanta and who have children under age 8" is a profile. The profile helps you to visualize exactly who might be interested in what you're selling and is also instrumental in guiding the development of your marketing message.

## Who Are Your Buyers?

THINK ABOUT YOUR FAVORITE CLIENTS. WHAT COMMON CRITERIA DEFINE YOUR PERFECT PROSPECT?

Some examples: What are their ages? Do they live in a city, a suburb, a small town, or a rural area? Are they married or single? How much do they earn annually? Do they own a house or rent an apartment? Do they have children at home? What are their aspirations for their own futures and those of their children? And so on.

Because there's no cookie-cutter definition, this is something you'll have to figure out on your own. Trust your instincts to identify the demographics and psychographics of the clients that you would like to work with.

The internet isn't always the best way to find prospects. With the guidelines you've established, you can use direct mail to communicate with the people you want to deal with. Direct mail is expensive, but it's highly targeted and it can be used to drive key prospects to your website.

No matter how you choose to proceed, always remember to ask people to "vote" for you! 🗳️

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## Windows 7 End of Life

WINDOWS 7 SUPPORT WAS SUPPOSED TO END IN 2015, BUT MICROSOFT RELENTED WHEN USERS FOUGHT BACK. NOW THEY MEAN IT.

On 14 January 2020, Microsoft will stop releasing patches and updates for Windows 7 and will no longer offer any support for users.

Those who want to update Windows 7 systems will find that Microsoft has no automated process to migrate from 32-bit Windows 7 systems to 64-bit Windows 10 systems and many Windows 7 systems were 32-bit devices.

Windows 7 was a robust operating system, but it is from a decade ago. Now is the time to start reviewing your options and preparing for next January. 🗳️

