

## **How to be Marketing Focused and Get More Customers**

by Dr. Dennis Rosen

Let me ask a question. As marketers of products and services, do we create needs for our products? Did we create the need for Nintendo, designer clothes, satellite TV and cell phones with cameras. No! We don't create needs. Our customers *have* needs. It is our job to understand these needs and use that understanding to create a "want" or preference for our products, services and business. This is the key to good marketing and improving sales.

For example, we didn't create the need for video games. Kids have the need for entertainment, excitement and competition. They can fulfill these needs in a variety of ways. Today, many of them choose to satisfy these needs through videos game. In other words, the games meet needs that exist. If they do a better job of this than other alternatives, then they will create a "want" or preference for that product, service or brand.

### **The Marketing Concept**

This philosophy of generating more sales by focusing on customer needs is often referred to as the "marketing concept." This is different from having a "sales emphasis." When our emphasis is simply on sales, we tend to push our products on our customers. Unfortunately, many businesses (maybe even yours) place their emphasis on sales. Despite the lip service they provide of "satisfying the customer," their focus is instead on their products. They think they can create needs for these products through promotion and sell them to (i.e., push them on) their customers. Instead, you want to have a marketing focus. Place your emphasis on understanding your customers' needs and then use this understanding to offer the proper products and communicate with the proper message so your customers will *want* to buy from you.

Now, here's a little secret. It's not just how well you satisfy customer needs that is important. Equally important is the number of needs you satisfy. Think about it. If you were the customer and had the choice between two similar businesses, but one satisfied more of your needs than the other, where would you go. Obviously, you would tend to go to the one that did well satisfying more of your needs. You should consider how to do this for your customers.

### **Two Kinds of Needs**

It's important to realize that your customers' needs fall into two major categories—those that are physical and those that are emotional. As business people, we are more likely to concentrate on the physical needs of our customers because these often define the core of our business. These include such things as convenience, time saving, comfort, product availability, etc. These are reflected though store hours, product offerings, speed of service and so on. However, we tend to forget about our customers' emotional needs. These include such things as their need for respect, appreciation, freedom from stress, freedom from worry, entertainment, individuality and control. These needs can be met through the way we interact with our customers, what we say, how we thank customers for their purchase, the decisions we let our customers make, how we design our store or shopping environment, etc. The more customer needs you can satisfy, both physical and emotional, the stronger "want" you will create in your customers for your business.

### **An Example, Please**

Let's take an example. Car-rental agencies have long concentrated on meeting the physical need for temporary transportation that defines their business. Over the years they have also worked on ways to save customers time (a physical need) in the check-out process. But several years ago, National became the first major car-rental firm to let customers select their own car from any in the payment category (e.g., mid-size) rather than having one assigned. Did this meet a physical customer need? No. It met an emotional need—the need for control. If you were the traveler faced with choosing among several rental agencies equally convenient at similar prices, wouldn't you be more likely to choose the one that *also* provides you freedom of choice and thus, more control over your situation? Okay, so maybe control is not important to you, or you may have a lot of loyalty points with another agency. But meeting this additional need certainly became a point of difference for National with the potential to gain customers.

### **It's Your Turn**

Now think about your own business. How can you do a better job of meeting your customers' needs and satisfy more of them? Don't worry. This doesn't have to be an expensive process. Small changes can have a large effect. If you don't know what additional needs to satisfy or how to do a better job of it, just ask your customers. They'll tell you.

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Dr. Dennis Rosen, "The WinFluence® Expert," helps retailers, service providers and professionals overcome roadblocks to improving service and sales through his customer WinFluence® strategies. He is author of the book, *Create Devoted Customers*. For information on keynotes, training and educational materials, contact Dennis at **800-804-4034** or visit [www.winfluencesolutions.com](http://www.winfluencesolutions.com). © 2013-2008 by Dennis L. Rosen. All rights reserved. This article may be freely distributed if in its entirety with author information and copyright included.