

Reducing Customer Resistance to Your Product or Service

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Resistance has to do with putting up blocks that prevent us from doing, being, or accomplishing what we want for our business. There are many reasons for feeling resistance including fear of new things or change, fear of failure or success or even fear of not being perfect.

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There is a high price for resisting things, for resisting change. It costs us time, money, and energy. It can lead to misused resources, poor performance and decreased productivity as our energies are used to resist rather than to accept change.

Moving through resistance is all about having a strong vision for what you want for your business and then taking intentional action steps to consciously move towards that goal. What are you resisting in your business when it comes to marketing your products and services? And, what can you do today to move through it?

1. Look at your own resistance. Often times, looking within ourselves provides us the answers to situations that occur outside of us. The very things we may be having trouble accomplishing in our business might directly correlate to our own internal blocks. We need to take the time and be introspective. One of the best ways to get clear on what we resist is to write down what we resist, why, what it prevents us from accomplishing, and one or two things we can do to break through that resistance. This work plan not only provides us with clarity around what keeps us stuck, but it may provide us with a way to move through it. And, just as important, by examining our own resistance, we become more aware of what types of resistance our current and prospective customers may face. Some of the techniques we use with ourselves may also prove helpful to them.

2. Listen to what the customer needs. Humans need to be acknowledged. By listening closely and carefully to your customers, needs, you'll be better able to provide solutions that speak to their desires. We can't solve a problem until we know fully what the problem is. Ask lots of questions, come from a place of curiosity, and practice silence so that you give others the space they need to express themselves. People have a critical need to be heard. When you are the one giving them that opportunity, they will automatically be more receptive to what you have to say. Reduce customer resistance by giving them an opportunity to talk.

3. Educate the customer. The more people know, the more confident they are about making good decisions. If you want to make sales, make sure that you provide as much relevant information as possible. Ask the prospect what problems they have. Then, showcase your product's features and benefits, giving plenty of examples, testimonials, and other types of information that supports the claims you are making. If you're offering a tangible product, you might consider giving them a sample; if you're offering a service, you might give them a complimentary experience. Anything that you can do to give the prospect a real-life idea experience of how it will look and feel will serve to create a more receptive buying environment.

4. Practice relationship skills. No matter what anyone says, business is personal. Everything we do is personal because it impacts people - others as well as ourselves. Practicing relationship skills is critical to achieving business success. People buy from people they know, like, and trust. The only way these concepts can be experienced is by taking the time to build relationships with others. We need to invest our time and energy in others, before they will consider investing their money with us. There are many different relating skills, but among the most important are listening, acknowledging, coming from a place of curiosity, sharing of yourself (vulnerability), and having the mindset that your purpose is to serve others. These simple, yet powerful skills will do more to create a buyer than any product or service ever could.

5. Be responsive. Being responsive is all about putting the customer first. It is about creating an environment where the customer is served promptly. Make sure that you are well prepared for any encounter whether it is with a prospect or a current customer. Be confident in all of your communications. Know the features and benefits of your products or services. Have client testimonials or references readily available. Return telephone calls and answer email promptly. Always have a smile on your face, whatever you're doing. Our attitude has a way of showing through even when no one can see us. By being responsive, prospects and customers, alike, will feel that they are valued. There is no better way to build a long-term customer relationship than by putting others first.

6. Make it easy. One of the easiest ways to reduce buyer resistance is to make it easy. That starts with the very first encounter that you have. If you're meeting someone in person, make sure your sales presentation is easy to understand. Make it clear what you are offering and what the next steps are should the prospect show interest. If you're presenting something in another media, like through a flyer, brochure, advertisement, or even your website, make sure that you clearly spell out the features and benefits. If appropriate provide various pricing options. Make sure everything is easily explained and backed up by appropriate references, testimonials, complete contact information and other substantive content. Most importantly, make sure it's easy for someone to figure out how to buy from you - by calling a number or by clicking a button to buy. Believe it or not, many folks have great products and programs, but they make it nearly impossible to buy from them. If a consumer has to spend one more second than they deem necessary to make a buying decision, most likely they'll buy

from someone else. Don't hand off sales to your competition - instead, make it simple for folks to buy from you.

7. Guide the customer. Building on the prior point, it's important to guide the customer through the entire buying process. It is basic human nature that we like to be led versus being the leader. That being said, make sure your sales presentation is logically organized in a step-by-step process. The sales process basically includes three steps - initial contact, presentation, and the close. During the contact phase, you need to establish the relationship by connecting on a person-to-person level. Ask questions, allow them to talk, and practice your relationship building skills. During the presentation, present the features and benefits of your product or service in terms of it satisfying the prospect's needs. Tailor the conversation to addressing the needs and concerns that they expressed to you through your initial contact. Finally, during the close, reiterate your key points, overcome any objections and confidently ask for the sale. While the sales process is more complex than this, the main point is that you need to guide the prospect through the process with care and concern for meeting their needs. With this approach, you'll be certain to reduce buyer resistance and increase your chances of making a sale.

8. Manage expectations. Managing expectations is about predicting the actions and reactions of prospects or customers and being able to react to them in the most productive way possible. Can you predict the types of questions that they might ask about your products or services? Do you have answers readily available? Do you know the types of concerns they might have with respect to service after they've made a purchase? Being 100% prepared for your customers will give them confidence in doing business with you now and in the future.

9. Create a call to action. You might have the best product or service in the world yet no one will buy it - unless you ask for the sale. That's true for anything in your business. If you want a prospect or current customer to act, you need to give them a reason. Referred to as a call to action, you need to tell the prospect what you want them to do. Do you want them to call you for a complimentary consultation? If so, ask them to call. Do you want them to sign up for a free report or for your newsletter? If so, offer them something in return for them giving you their name and email address? Do you want them to buy your product or service? Make an offer where you can give them a free sample or complimentary experience. All of these things will help lessen any resistance that they might otherwise have. Remember, folks need to be led to the logical conclusion. If you want them to do business with you, let them know that in an obvious way.

10. Emphasize the features and benefits. A surefire way to reduce buyer resistance is to focus in on how you will solve the prospect's problem or issue. After all, the only reason they've sought you out is because they think you can. To accomplish this, you need to be very clear about the features and benefits of your product or service. A feature is the unique aspect of its use or design. A benefit, on the other hand, is how it will specifically add value to the client, how it will solve their particular problem. Take the time to craft a one-page summary of the features, benefits, and the specific problems that your product or service will solve. Copyright 2004 by Alicia Smith