

THE BUZZ NEWSLETTER

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Message from the Partners...

It's now officially summer, and we are seeing lots of Maple Leaf flags in windows and flagpoles. Canada Day was a big blast of red-and-white and a wonderful way to kick off the season.

Summer is always planning time for us, and we give ourselves permission to take time out of our client management projects to focus on what we need to do in the fall. Doesn't September feel like the start of a new year to you? And it's a lot more fun to have a planning meeting on the patio with a long, cool drink.

A shady hammock under a tree is a great place for a good read, too. We really like "Who's Got Your Back - the breakthrough program to build deep, trusting relationships that create success - and won't let you fail" by Keith Ferrazzi.

This month, we're talking about why you should never, ever talk about your business to a prospect. Before you discount this idea, have a look at the article, "Questions That Sell" for some surprising ideas on how to turbo-charge your sales.

Wishing you good business



Liz & Ken

Questions That Sell

We are working on a new campaign for a client and spent a few hours today looking at competitive sites, ads and

What our clients say...

"Working with Ken and Liz has helped our whole team to look at what we do in a new light. With all the doom and gloom out there, an inspiring vision and upbeat happening are nice to have on our side."

Tom Hanmer
President, Kitchen Classics

"Wow! Wonderful Job! Looks Fantastic! It is an absolutely marvelous piece of work - I knew it would be special, but this is a knockout."

Patricia Commins,
Chair, 150th Anniversary of
Victoria Hall Grand Ball

"Really useful stuff - in particular with regards to focusing efforts solely on those with returns. It's something very close to the heart of any small or start up company - balancing the day to day tasks with the need to be focused around activities that truly drive the business forward."

Nikkole Couture
Marketing Manager,
Streamlogics Inc.

"When Elizabeth talks I always sit up and listen. She has a wealth of marketing and business development knowledge that she delivers with an edge. More importantly she is a wonderfully warm human being and a privilege to know."

Rob Sloane,
Author & Professional Speaker,
Rob Sloane Marketing

"After spending three months

brochures.

After about three hours we looked at each other and said, "Can you remember anything any of these companies said that stands out?" Ken said, "I bet if I took all these brochures, and removed the company name and logo, even our client couldn't tell them apart!"

Every single firm started their pitch with a description of their products and services, and lots of detail on how they work. Then they added thrilling descriptions of their plants (usually with a picture of the parking lot) and a price list.

No-one acknowledged any of the pain, concerns, questions or worries prospects or customers might have. It was all me! me! me!

It's too easy these days to build your marketing around what you want to offer. The real trick is to package products customers want to buy.

People make buying decisions in ways that we may find hard to imagine. The mental, logical process and the emotional, feel good process come together at some point in every sale. The problem is that this process is invisible to the marketer.

The questions prospects ask are clues to what matters to them. So, forget about the new shiny features of your gizmo and address what's really on their mind. Do it now, because some of your prospects won't think to actually ask, they'll just move on.

Every time a prospect or client asks a question, write it down. Collect these questions on an ongoing basis, and make every sales person note the questions they receive. In a very short time you will see patterns develop. If you are getting some of the same questions over and over again you can bet that your marketing materials need to address the answers.

FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions) pages are popular on web sites. Create one for your sales team as well. Make a game out of getting good questions. Ask everyone in your organization to bring a client or prospect question to a weekly sales meeting. This can and should include everyone who has any contact with clients.

Develop the art of asking questions too. Every sales trainee has been schooled at some point to ask probing questions to find a prospect's pain, but really successful sales folks go beyond that fully understand what a prospect is thinking.

Don't take a prospect's question at face value – your job is to help them understand what they really need to know. Sometimes all you need to do is ask them to "tell you more".

For example, a stock question is "What is your customer service policy?". The temptation is to launch into how great your service is (just like everyone else), but a more valuable step is to find out what good service is to them or what bad experience they may have had, so you can customize your answer.

If you really want to make massive improvements in your sales, service and communications technique, buy a mini digital recorder and record several sales calls. Some clients and prospects will be a little nervous about this practice so

with the Duct Tape Marketing® System we really improved the way we market and sell to our customers. The seven step approach gave us the focus we needed and it helped develop some great systems to increase sales and focus our marketing efforts."

Peter Lorenz,
President,
Lorenz Manufacturing

"(You) make me think logically and critically. Most of all, you force me to focus. When we need a set of fresh eyes looking in from the outside, you're there."

John D'Amico,
Manager Marketing,
Network & Computer Services,
Plexis Inc.

"In the first four hours, I learned more about marketing than I had over the entire previous year of scouring the internet, reading books, and through trial and error. Before I met her I had a bag full of tactics, now I have a system."

Andrew Wittchell
ProServe IT

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you will need to choose wisely and respect boundaries, but do this once or twice and you may make some pretty interesting discoveries.

Another great thing about gathering your list of questions is that it arms you with the questions and answers that your prospects may not ask but are thinking.

Our mentor John Jantsch suggests that every organization should create a marketing page and web page that is titled something like "Questions you should ask." In some cases your prospect may not really know how to analyze a purchase from you. If you educate them on the best way to think about your product or service, give them the questions to pose to competitors, you get to frame the buying decision in a way that plays to your strengths.

Online surveys have become a powerful tool for the small business. By asking your clients everything from "How much should I charge?" to "What's the best color for our logo?", you can test your assumptions before you push something out to the market.

Creating simple satisfaction survey and serving them up to each individual customer allows you to find holes in your customer service and collect comments, good and bad, from the street.

Planning what your readers would like to hear more about in your next five newsletter issues is as simple as proposing topics in a survey.

Journalists love survey results and will often take great interest in the results of research conducted by an industry expert – that means you! Conducting some basic research about trends and habits in your industry is a great way to add some expert status to your brand and could land your results in a publication or two about your industry.

Sharing your survey results with prospects is a great way to help educate them on important information that may impact their buying decisions.

Resources

Survey tools come in several flavors and a broad range of prices from free to not so free. Online stand alone versions like [Survey Monkey](#) and [Survey Gizmo](#) are nice options for the small business. (Survey Gizmo also features a WordPress Plugin and Mac desktop widget.)

Email marketing services like [iContact](#) and [Constant Contact](#) also offer survey tools right inside their core offerings.

Hot off the Press

We are thrilled to have been asked to work with [Infusionsoft](#), a leader in fixing "follow-up failure" and growing your business. We will be bringing you tools to automate your lead capture and prospect follow up – done right, you can actually double your sales in a year! Stay tuned for more news and upcoming seminars.

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