

5 Ways You Aren't Showing Love for Your Customers



On this day in which we celebrate love and friendship (by buying overpriced roses and boxes of chocolate natch), I wish that more marketers would show love for their customers. Instead, we see many of the following behaviors :

1. Not delivering what you promise

Special discount? “Free” consultation? These are some of the promises that marketers make and then don't deliver on. Another is the “bait and switch” blog post/article, in which the marketer tells you that you will learn something or get something, but instead it's a sales pitch for a webinar or a product. And one that I have been seeing a lot is when you go to the “fees” tab on a website only to find some gobbledygook about value or some such, but nothing showing firm numbers.

When you don't deliver what you promise you are not showing love for your customers, but rather the opposite.

2. Not providing essential information or making it very hard to find

I am talking about restaurant websites that don't include hours or menus, businesses that don't list customer service numbers or emails, brochures or business cards without addresses, telephones, website URLs or other essential contact information.

When you don't provide information your customers need to do business with you, it shows you don't value them at all.

3. Using small or otherwise hard to read fonts

Even if you have a wonderfully informative website or brochure, which includes all the right information, if your customer can't read it, it's for naught. It's a waste, and it shows that you haven't taken your customers needs into consideration.

4. Sending too many emails

How many times are you going to tell your customers about your sale? I'd say twice a day every day is probably too much. So is sending ten emails urging potential donors to please give before some deadline (end of the year, your fiscal year, full moon). I'd add that too many asks in general are not good business (I am looking at you PBS with the constant pledge weeks that in reality are pledge months).

When you don't consider that you are overwhelming your customers with information, you are showing very little regard for them. That's not loving.

5. Not remembering who already is a customer

Have you ever received an email, clicked on a link on that email which takes you to a website that has a form as a gatekeeper? The marketer who sent that email didn't care that you were already a customer and had already signed up for emails. That's lazy and uncaring. Also, it isn't very effective because it doesn't promote more signups, in fact, it could do the opposite.

This is by no means a complete list of ways in which marketers fail to show their love for customers. Which would you add?

With that, I wish my dear readers a very happy Valentine's Day. May it be full of all that makes you happy.

Happy holidays (and that is not a political statement)

Here we are, a couple days before Christmas or Festivus or Kwanzaa. Or perhaps it's a few days after Hanukkah. Whatever you celebrate, this time of the year is full of holidays. And it's time that's devoted to friends and family more so than to work. So in that spirit, and no matter what you celebrate, I wish you all very happy holidays! Have a wonderful time and enjoy some well-earned rest.

I am working on a year-in-review post and could use your help. What things did you learn this year? What did you resolved to do differently next year? What were your pet peeves or major

aggravations (communications-wise!)? Let me know in the comments or send me an email.

And on to Plan C

Last week, my “new” laptop was in the shop. Apparently, the hard drive was failing and I couldn’t start up or use the computer in any way. I had already deployed my Plan B– using my old laptop (which is really ancient by computer standards). Then, on Friday morning, the old laptop spontaneously decided to shut itself off. I turned it back on, and after a couple of minutes, it turned off again. Suddenly, I had no way of sending out a document I had to send or finish the blog post I was writing (it is in the drafts, and will be published soon).

Now what? I hadn’t heard back from the repair people to let me know what was wrong with the new computer, so I didn’t know if it could be fixed or how long it would take.

What could I do until I got a working computer back? Develop a Plan C.

Where could I access a computer? There’s always the computers at the library. In a pinch, that would do. But not as a real solution. First of all, you can’t be there for unlimited hours and there’s no privacy.

Then, I decided to look up computer rentals (using my smartphone). There are several companies that will rent you computers and AV equipment. For a daily/weekly/monthly fee they will ship you a laptop that has Microsoft Office and boom, you are back in business. It’s not cheap, but it is certainly better than losing business because you can’t work.

Knowing the option to rent a laptop was available, I felt more in control. Then I remembered my former Plan B mini-laptop from a few years ago when I had a similar problem. I dusted it off, and started it up. It needed updates, but I was able to at least access the Internet on a bigger screen than my smartphone.

By the end of the day on Friday, the computer repair people called to let me know what was wrong. By Saturday I would have my computer back, with a new hard drive installed.

The moral of the story is simple: you must have backup plans. Not just Plan B, but Plan C and maybe even Plan D. You never know what can happen, especially with technology. A few weeks ago I told you about how Verizon cut off my cable and Internet. Plan B then was the smartphone, and Plan C was the library.

Having two computers be down at the same time has made me re-think my technology needs. Here are my new resolutions:

- Find an IT person to be on call for me. For years, I had a techie friend who would help me out, but that's not a solid solution.

- Backup files regularly. Always. For the record, I did do this, but not as conscientiously as I could.

- Get another computer. You must always have a secondary option, especially if like me, you work for yourself and your work requires a computer.

It's going to take some time to get everything back to normal, so if I haven't written you back, be patient or write me again!

Happy Independence Day!

To readers in the United States, I wish you a very happy Fourth of July! However you celebrate, I hope you have an enjoyable holiday.

I'll be back next week to share some caffeinated views and to issue a challenge. Stay tuned!

Time to give thanks

It's Thanksgiving (and for some us, also Hanukkah, in a once in 70,000 year phenomenon!), and it's time to express our gratitude. It's amazing that we have a holiday devoted to giving thanks, and it is too bad it has devolved into a holiday for shopping and watching football (but I digress). Hanukkah is a holiday that celebrates redemption and miracles,

and it is quite lovely that it coincides with Thanksgiving this year.



Turkeys from Boston Public Library on Flickr

In honor of Thanksgiving, and of Hanukkah, I'd like to thank you, my readers on the blog. I am truly grateful that you take a couple of minutes out of your day to read my musings. For those of you who have taken the time to comment and discuss, thank you too! Great comments are very rewarding.

I would also like to thank my Twitter friends. Over the years, I've been able to build relationships with several people on Twitter (too many people to mention, but you know who you are right?). These relationships have led to learning, discussion and camaraderie, and I am truly grateful for that.

So, Happy Thanksgiving to all and Happy Hanukkah to those celebrate it!

Here's a video from the *a capella* group The Maccabeats, for your listening (and viewing) pleasure:

Bonus video (and one of my favorites)

The Leevees: How Do You Spell Channukkahh

The 6 Truths of Content Creation

Between content marketing and content strategy and content creation, content is everywhere. These days, it seems like the one thing that will solve your communications and marketing problems is content. And really, who hasn't heard the phrase "content is king?"

The truth is it's not enough to write some stuff, call it content, and post it on your website and social networks. You've got to work a wee bit harder than that.

Here are the six (hard) truths of content creation:

1. It's not enough to create content—you have to have a **reason behind it** (also called "content strategy").
2. It's not enough to create content—you need to have **quality content**, which means that it should be useful and/or relevant and/or interesting. And don't forget, it **MUST** be well-written (yes, grammar matters).
3. It's not enough to create content—you want **content that attracts attention** and gets shared. Boring, irrelevant stuff is not going viral any time soon.
4. It's not enough to create content—you need to make sure

that people can **find it** (thought about SEO lately?) and can **share it** (where is your “tweet this” button?).

5. It’s not enough to create content—your content should **help** (answer questions, give relevant information) your customers, supporters or advocates.

6. It’s not enough to create content—you need to **measure** it (don’t you want to know what is working and what isn’t?).

What rings true to you? Let me know in the comments.

*Want to have a more effective blog? Attend the next **How to Write Your Blog** workshop on November 12 in Washington, DC. Learn more and register today!*

Test post October 6 - need feedback

So, Feedly is not uploading my latest posts. I am trying out alternatives. If you are seeing this on your reader, please comment and tell me what reader you use. Thanks!

Test post

This is a test post. I apologize for any inconvenience.

We're off for the week!

Caffeinated views is taking a break this week, so there will be no posts. We'll be back next week with our usual marketing and communications insights.

Happy Independence Day and Fourth of July holiday!

Happy Thanksgiving!

In case you haven't signed up for my newsletter (the sign up is on the top right), you can read the Fall/Thanksgiving one right here.

Wishing you and yours a Happy Thanksgiving!