

Marketing one to one

Perhaps this post should be called Marketing 101, but it is about marketing one to one, person to person. It is perhaps the most basic of marketing techniques, yet the most dismissed.

Companies spend lots of time and money and effort coming up with brilliant marketing/communications plans. They develop beautiful websites, and attention-grabbing ads. They do media outreach and get great publicity. And then the potential customer walks in the door, and the surly receptionist (or clerk or bank teller or any other frontline person) ruins the experience. He or she makes the customer feel unwelcome, unwanted, unserved. And guess what, the customer either walks away never to come back, or he/she becomes a NEGATIVE brand ambassador, sharing negative stories about your organization wherever he/she goes.

You see, many, if not all organizations, forget that marketing is really about getting people to buy your products or services or mission. It is about making it easy for them to realize how your product/service/mission fits in with their lifestyle and needs. **It is about people.**

People want to be treated nicely and politely. It really is that simple. I would argue that part of your marketing plan should be to train your frontline employees to treat people nicely and politely. If your sales are down, perhaps you should try to figure out what is going on at the point of contact. We've discussed the four "Ps" here before: price, product, promotion, place. What is the place of contact with your customer? What is happening there?

With the rise of Internet commerce, we are losing the sense of the importance of people—their feelings, their needs—when making a purchase. But in a bricks-and-mortar world it should

definitely be front and center.

I am writing this post because of two positive (gasp, right?) interactions I had today on the phone. I was making a doctor's appointment at an office I have not been to, and the receptionist was helpful, informative and friendly. She made me feel confident that I will get professional service when I arrive there. The other was the reminder phone call from the hair salon where I have an appointment tomorrow. The receptionist was polite (called me Ms. Brody) and friendly. I asked a question and he nicely answered me. It shows me that the salon VALUES its customers.

Are you showing your customers you value them? Are you treating them as people? Are you making sure that the one on one interactions with your organization are positive?

