The namaste guide to smart marketing

Namaste.

“The light in me honors the light in you.” That’s what *namaste* means in Sanskrit. It’s a beautiful greeting that is often used at the end of a yoga class (or sometimes at the beginning).

Good yoga teachers honor their students. They respect their limitations and seek to teach them to work with their bodies. What does this have to do with marketing? It’s simple. Like yoga teachers, good marketers honor their customers by getting to know them and understanding their needs and then customizing messages (and media) for the customers.

You should know that I have practiced yoga for more than ten years, and have been to many studios and had many teachers. I’ve been taking a break for the past couple years, but yesterday, I attended my first class in a long time at a new-to-me studio.

Not-so-good yoga teacher (no knowledge of students)

The teacher walked in to the studio and although she smiled and said hello to me, she did not introduce herself or ask me my name or more importantly, any questions regarding my knowledge of yoga. She also did not ask the class as a whole if there were any injuries or issues she should be aware of. She started the class (late but that is another story) and pretty much assumed everybody understood everything, to the point she was using the Sanskrit terms for many of the poses. As I mentioned, it’s been a while, and I did not recall the difference between *utasana* (standing forward bend)

and *utkatasana* (chair pose). Everybody seemed to be following, but I could not help but think a real beginner would be completely lost. And forget somebody with injuries although she did offer a few modifications (if your knee hurts, don't do this).

Much better yoga teacher (customizes teachings to students' needs)

Contrast her disinterest with another teacher I had at another studio. He wanted to know how much yoga I had practiced and if I had any physical limitations. I told him that my knee had been bothering me and he made a point of explaining what I could do differently and how to protect myself from injury or further pain. **He tailored his teaching to my needs**. Instead of telling me not to do something because it hurt, he offered alternative poses or different ways of doing the pose. He took into account the levels of knowledge in the class. It was very clear he wanted to teach yoga to people while honoring their bodies and their limitations (there is actually a Sanskrit term for this – *ahimsa*– to not injure).

Good yoga teachers work to understand students' limitations and then offer modifications. Good yoga teachers do not push students to do something that is not within their level of practice. Good yoga teachers practice namaste –honoring others–by understanding those others.

Knowledge + customization = smart marketing

Smart marketers work hard to understand their customers. They know who and where their customers are and what they want and need. Then, with this knowledge, they tailor their marketing messages to the customer's needs.

Think about the last spam email you got. Perhaps you got an email about a "miracle" diet pill or getting listed in a mythical directory. You probably deleted those emails right

away because those messages were not tailored to you. Spam marketers are not smart marketers. They are mass marketers. They send the same message to everyone and hope something sticks.

Honor your customers. Provide messages and offers that make sense for them.

Namaste.