

You won't know until you try

My nieces are a bit fussy when it comes to food. They don't really want to try foods they haven't had before. I once made a pasta dish, and my four-year old niece looked at it with absolute horror. I told her she had to try it, and if she didn't like it, she didn't have to finish eating it. She tried it and she didn't like it (it had spinach in it, and she is not a fan since as she put it "I don't like the green stuff").

Sometimes you just don't know until you try, yet we seem to work hard to avoid finding out for ourselves. If we are researching hotels, we read reviews on travel advice sites. If we are looking for a service professional, we check out ratings. We ask around. We want information before we make a decision.

Just today, I noticed what someone posted in a networking group in which I belong. She wanted to know about people's experiences with the group because she was considering joining. In my opinion, networking is personal. You will have your own experiences and it is always worth it to attend a meeting or two to get a sense of the people and if it is a right fit for you. What others feel is almost completely irrelevant.

You just have to try it for yourself. Word of mouth and reviews can provide insight, but ultimately, what matters is how your experience goes.

The experience counts more

Several weeks ago, I asked my Facebook friends if they had any handyman recommendations. My long-time handyman had retired due to injury and I needed someone to do a few things around the house. A friend passed on the name of someone who had done some work in his house. I contacted the handyman. He asked me to send him an email detailing what I needed done. He didn't

respond. I called again. He assured me he would respond. He didn't. I called again. He was on vacation. Normally, I would have never contacted him again, but because he was recommended I did.

Finally, about three months after my initial contact, the handyman came to give me an estimate for the work. It seemed quite high but I scheduled the work since by this time I was desperate to get it done. The handyman sent two of his guys to do the work. They were nice enough but not highly skilled. They did not even have a tool kit with them (I had to give them a screwdriver!). They finished doing the work. The main handyman stuck with his original estimate. I questioned it and I ended up paying almost \$200 less than he estimated (the work took one and a half hours and he had estimated five). I tried working with this handyman based on a trusted friend's recommendation but the actual experience of working with him was not to my liking. I will not hire him again.

The marketing dilemma

Many marketers spend time on getting positive reviews and referrals, and those can stimulate people to try a product or service. But ultimately, the customer/client experience is what counts. People will stick with something and recommend it only if the experience itself is good.

The dilemma for many marketers is that many times we are hired to stimulate interest, but have no control over the user experience. If a company has hired many marketers to try and drum up interest for a product or service, chances are it is not the marketing that is lacking. It may well be that the product or service is not living up to the marketing.

What are your experiences with this? How does can marketing be better tied to user experience?