

Marketing does not work if your operations aren't up to the task

Marketing is not just about promotion, sales, or pricing. Marketing is also customer service and customer communication. Marketing is about operations and logistics. In other words, can you fulfill the orders? If your operations are not working well, no amount of marketing is going to close a sale.

Where is my order?

A couple of weeks ago, a friend recommended some face masks (I am not going to give this company any other publicity, so I will refer to it as the company). She even had a promotional discount to share with me. I went to the company website, and I bought a set of three masks.

At 2:51 p.m., I got an email with my receipt.

At 3:01 p.m. got another email confirming my order, which said there would be a one to three day processing time before shipping.

At 3:03 p.m. I got another email, this one thanking me for my order and asking me to submit a review to Facebook. Mind you, I don't yet have the product.

At 3:05 p.m. I got an email with the subject line: "Deborah, You Forgot Your Filters!" (I didn't forget the filters, I just chose not to order them.)

At 3:08 p.m., I got a fifth email with the subject line: "You Forgot Your Filters."

In the space of 15 minutes, I got FIVE emails. That's too

many.

The next day, I got two emails:

“Your Orders (sic) About To Ship Out...Don’t Forget Your Filters”

And

“Deborah, Your Orders (sic) About To Ship...Don’t Forget Your Filters.”

Now, I am getting very irritated. Clearly, they want me to order filters before they ship out my order, and they are not being subtle about it.

One week later, I still hadn’t gotten a shipment notification. I email the company asking where my order is. I get this email reply:

Greetings Deborah,

Thank you so much for taking the time to reach out to us ☐

We would like to thank you for your patience and we sincerely apologize for any delays in delivering your order!

I will personally reach out to our fulfillment team and ensure that your order gets expedited and sent out for delivery ASAP.

Once your order has shipped, you will automatically receive an email containing the tracking information.

Thank you for being so patient with us, it has not gone unnoticed <3

If there is anything else we can ever help you with, please, just let us know – it would be our pleasure to serve you.

Okay. Nice enough email, but no answer to my query, "Where is my order?"

I replied telling the customer service agent that if my order was not shipping that day, I wanted it cancelled. The agent replied:

Hello Deborah,

Thank you so much for your reply and apologies for the inconvenience.

I have reached out to our fulfilment (sic) team and found that there are orders that haven't been shipped due to courier delays affected by the pandemic. I've refunded your last order as requested.

Please allow 5-10 business days for the refund to be processed. Reimbursement of funds will be allocated back to the original form of payment used for purchase.

Again, we are truly sorry about the delays.

One full year into the pandemic, this company is blaming it for shipping delays!

Wow. If this were happening sometime in 2020, perhaps this excuse would ring true. Or even during the USPS breakdown in December. But in March of 2021? This is just a stupid excuse.

There are plenty of other mask providers

I got my refund, but then I went to another mask maker, where I ordered masks on Sunday, got a confirmation email (just one email, not five), and then on Tuesday, got an email saying my masks shipped. I got my new masks yesterday. No muss, no fuss. Just the way any other transaction should be. I have gotten no marketing emails. And actually, if I did get a promotional email now, I would most likely buy from this company, since I

had a positive experience.

How to fail at marketing

The first company does not understand marketing.

Here's just some of the issues:

- Focusing on its needs or goals (in this case, selling filters), not the customer's
- Not delivering what it promised.
- Blaming an external circumstance instead of taking responsibility.
- Communicating aggressively to sell and not to service.

And how to succeed

The second company just did what anyone expects from any sales transaction: take an order and then fulfill it. It is that simple.

Bottom line

Before you blame your marketing efforts for lackluster sales, take a look at your operations. Are you fulfilling orders in a timely manner? Is customer service working well? Are you communicating any issues to your customers? Marketing can't solve operational issues.