

Wishing is not a marketing tactic

Several weeks ago, I started getting a weekly newspaper in the mail. It was supposed to be a four-week free subscription to thank me for some volunteering I had done. The enclosed note said that they hoped I would consider subscribing.

I would consider subscribing, but I haven't been given the chance. I keep getting this newspaper, even though it has been more than eight weeks (twice what was originally offered) and never once has a subscription card come along with it. I guess they are wishing I call them and say "please charge me for the paper you are already sending me for free!"

Wishing is not a good marketing tactic.



Gran blows out her candles on her 80th birthday cake by Ben Sutherland on Flickr

Instead, ask for what you want or give potential customers a pathway to becoming paying customers. In this case, the newspaper could send me a card saying that they hope I have enjoyed my free trial subscription, and if I would like to continue getting this newspaper, then please send a check in

the enclosed envelope or call some phone number with my credit card information.

We see this with many other situations. Another common example is failing to ask for referrals. Does your hair or beauty salon ever ask you specifically to refer people? They probably wish you did, but they don't make it easy or worth your while. Say they said to you when you were checking out: We hope you like your new hair do. Perhaps you know someone else who wants a new haircut. If you do, we have a referral program. Just tell your friend to call us the number on this card, and we will give you a discount on your next service.

Sometimes you have to ask very specifically for what you want. A few days ago, I read that the tweets that get the most traction are the ones that have an ask in them: please retweet, please help, please donate, etc. You can't wish for things to happen...you have to make them happen!

Thoughts?