Are you beating your customers over the head?

Have you ever gone to a new (to you) website or blog and before you can read anything you get a pop up ad or form DEMANDING that you fill it out? It happened to me today as I was following a link from someone on Twitter. And what was worse, there was no opting out, no little “thanks but no thanks” box I could click. It was either sign up for my newsletter or you can’t read my blog.

Can you imagine if a bricks and mortar store did that? You would walk in, ready to browse (and perhaps you were ready to buy something), and there would be someone standing in the doorway, demanding that you fill out a survey or a customer sign up sheet. If you didn’t want to comply, then you would not be allowed to enter the store. You know what would happen to that store? It would lose all sorts of potential customers/business.

I understand that blog and websites want to have something tangible from visitors: a sign up or a purchase. But making it a condition for reading your website/blog’s content, guarantees you will lose some potential readers. Why would I want to sign up for your newsletter if I can’t even read about you?

Don’t beat your customers over the head. Ask them to sign up, but don’t make it a precondition for a relationship unless you want to destroy relationships before they start.