



Relationship Marketing

TACTICS



Relationship Marketing Tactics

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Introduction

You have set up your business online. You've done your marketing and now you're waiting for the sales to happen. Then you wait and you wait some more. That's about the time you start to realize your products are not selling like you thought they would.

You're confused because the products you're promoting are the best there are. You've used the best marketing techniques out there. Not to mention, you've created the best website with the most tantalizing web copy online. So, why aren't those products being snatched up like you thought they would?

The reason is pretty simple. You may have covered all the bases you thought should be covered, but guess what? You're missing the most important part of selling products online. Before you ever try to sell your products...

You Must First Sell Yourself!

Let's talk about a number of ways to do just that. We'll discuss building trust, credibility and rapport with your prospects. All of these things put together are what is known as relationship marketing. It's almost a lost art in some businesses you find today, but it doesn't have to be that way in yours.

Let's get started shall we?

Gaining Trust

The advent of the Internet has been a wonderful thing. It has brought us a way to get information, pictures, videos and shop for items all from the comfort of our own space. If you can't find the items you're looking for locally, then you can get more options by going globally and shopping over the Internet.

This is what brings most people to start their own online businesses. All for the chance to sell their products and services online and gain hundreds or even thousands more customers than they ever could have gotten locally.

There's nothing wrong with that line of thinking, but there is one huge roadblock in your way. While it's true that the Internet has given us so many great things, it's also true that there's a bad side to it as well. It's also an easy route for those unscrupulous people who are out only to scam you from your money.

Hundreds, if not thousands, of people have been scammed out of a ton of money over the years. This has hit online business owners hard, because now they have a huge mountain to climb in order to gain the trust of their customers. When someone doesn't trust you, they aren't comfortable with handing you their money.

You can't make sales happen if prospects are not willing to hand over some money to purchase your products. This defeats the purpose of having your business to begin with. You want to make sales, so you're going to have to prepare yourself to gain the trust of your potential customers before those sales can happen.

In order to do this, you're going to have to:

- Build rapport
- Gain credibility
- Be seen as an expert in the subject or field your business is in

Don't despair, however. It is hard work and you will need to put ongoing effort into getting their trust, but it's all necessary if you want your business to be a success. Selling your products is the ultimate goal for your business, but you can't achieve that without first selling yourself.

Building Rapport

The first step to selling yourself will come from building rapport with your potential customers. Rapport is when you establish a relationship with your target market. You're essentially constructing friendships.

When you think about it, those you tend to trust the most are your family members, friends and maybe even people you've worked with before. You trust them because, over a period of time, you have gotten to know what made them tick. You learned what made them think and feel the way they do about certain things.

The more you got to know these people, the more trust you built with them. You were able to trust and respect their judgment because of the rapport you built with them. After awhile, you felt comfortable asking them for their opinions on different things and were able to take those views into consideration when you needed to make a decision about someone or something.

It's really no different with those in your target audience online. They want to know that you're not going to scam them. They need the security of feeling comfortable enough with you to trust that you're not going to just take their money and run. They don't want to be left without getting what they paid for.

You would feel the same way as them if you were in their shoes, so why should you expect them to feel any different? You can now see why establishing rapport with your target market is important if you ever want to sell any of your products to them.

Establishing Rapport through the Internet

Gaining rapport with your neighbor, in person, is much easier than gaining rapport with your target market over the Internet. When establishing a relationship in person you have more options.

You can open the lines of communication with someone using:

- Eye contact
- Facial expressions
- Hand gestures
- Body language

The Internet doesn't give you many options like these. We have the wonderful technology of web cams and other video formats, but quite often, our business budgets don't allow for much room to use them.

Therefore, we take the resources that are available to us and use them to their absolute fullest. These resources come mainly in the way of the written format. Online we communicate using things like:

1. Emails
2. Chat rooms
3. Blogs
4. Forums
5. Social networking sites

Because these options don't give much in the way of face to face contact we have to really step it up when it comes to relationship marketing. Selling yourself is more important than ever as an online business owner.

The Rewards Rapport Can Bring You

We know that rapport is an essential part of selling yourself to your potential customers. There are other things the act of connecting can bring which can be quite rewarding to you and your business.

Building Business Contacts

As you start your building rapport efforts, you are well on your way to gaining trust with your customers and possibly gaining some business contacts as well. You can find people who share the same interests as you that may be willing to help you in your endeavor.

They might be in the same business as you and could be willing to share some of the things they did to get to the level of success they have reached in their own business. They may know other people that could help you out in the way of things like web design, software tools or even marketing secrets.

Gaining Insight Into Your Target Market

When your target audience starts to gain a little faith in you, they're sometimes willing to share things about themselves. They could let you know their likes, dislikes, what they look for in products and even problems they have which they need a solution for.

This helps you, as a product owner or service provider, by giving you an insight into your prospects' minds. When this happens it makes it easier for you to know what to provide them and what things to avoid. You can even plan for future products creations, because you might know what kinds of things they're looking for, so you can figure out a way to give that to them based on their feedback.

Increasing Your Customer Base

You have a certain number of people in your target audience to market your products and/or services to directly. Keep in mind, however, these people also know other people. If you keep your direct contacts happy, they will start referring other people they know to your site.

This can increase your customer base. The rapport you build with just one person can stretch and reach out to a whole audience of people.

This will only be successful for you if your target audience has enough faith in you to begin with.

To make your relationship marketing successful in this area you will need to make sure you are yourself. Don't try to become someone that you're not. If you fail here then you won't be able to establish a high-level of credibility, which is what we are going to talk about next.

Build Credibility

You've begun the relationship building process and have built some excellent relationships with your potential customers. Now, the next step to gaining trust from them and start making sales is to build some credibility as a business owner.

Think about this:

Let's say there are two business owners selling the same product competing with each other to get one customer to buy from them.

Business owner A spent all of his time building rapport with his customers. He has gained a high level of confidence as a person that's on the same level with his target group. This owner has proven that his business is well in tune with what his customers are thinking and feeling.

Business owner B has done the same. She built excellent rapport with her customer, but she also went one step further. She has shown that she can be viewed as a professional and knows her products well.

The customer has decided they need a certain product and both business owners above provide it. The customer is now faced with choosing which business owner to buy from. Which owner do you think will essentially get their business?

While rapport is important to have with your target market so is having some credibility as a business owner and a professional. Therefore, *Business owner B* will more than likely get the final sale from the customer.

The reason is because that business owner took the next step and showed the customer that she knows her stuff. If you don't show your prospects you know your products or the subject related to your business, how are they supposed to know you're trustworthy enough to hand their money over to?

If you needed some plumbing work done in your house, would you hire a plumber that has only shown that they know you, or would you hire a plumber that has shown they not only know you, but they also know plumbing?

You will most likely go with the one that has knowledge in his field. True, both plumbers may know their stuff, but if only one proves it to you then the other one probably will be left in the dust.

That should go for your business as well. You need to establish rapport with your potential customers, but you also need to show that you know your business as well as the products you're selling.

How Is Credibility Established?

There are some things you can utilize to help gain credibility with your target audience. These should be used, along with your rapport building techniques, to strategically gain trust with your prospects.

Website

Your website should show professionalism. For instance, professional real estate websites focus their creations around the real estate theme and not on clowns frolicking in fields of sunflowers. You need to show that the topic of your site is something you actually possess knowledge of. Why damage your credibility in the real estate business by providing website visitors with a bunch of clowns and sunflower graphics?

Articles

These are an excellent way to show credibility in your business. Write articles that relate to your business topic. If you're in the business of real estate you can create articles that range from 'How to Find the Right Piece of Property for Your Needs' to 'The Top 10 Mistakes People Make When Looking for a New Home'.

Articles show that you have some level of knowledge about your business. People may already have some trust with you, but by gaining some credibility with them, you can increase that trust and get one step closer to a sale.

Blogs

With a blog, you can provide shorter articles relating to your business. The difference with a blog, though, is that you are providing these types of articles on an ongoing, more frequent basis.

You continually drive home to your potential customers that you have a complete knowledge of your products or services. This helps them to see you as a viable, professional business owner with whom they should consider doing business with.

How Easily Credibility Can Be Damaged?

Relationship marketing can happen easily when gaining credibility with your potential customers. However, we need to flip the coin and show you how easy it can be to damage that credibility if you don't nurture it well.

It can happen many ways, but here are a few of those ways to show you how you can damage your credibility if you're not careful.

Linking to Bad Sites

We know that links to other sites placed on our own sites can be helpful to in terms of search engine rankings. The biggest mistake a lot of business owners have made is that they link to sites that are unrelated to their business theme or that are considered questionable.

If the other site is problematic then your site becomes questionable as well - even if you're on the up and up. On the same token, if your site is in real estate and you, for whatever reason, choose to link to a gambling site, you can pretty much bet that any credibility as a real estate professional will be gone.

Customer Satisfaction

While it's true, that you can't satisfy every single customer that comes to you, you still have to do your best to make their purchasing experience with you a good one. One dissatisfied customer may not make too much of an impact with your other customers, but several unhappy ones can.

Make sure you do your best to provide the best possible service to all your customers - no matter what. You don't want too many of your customers spreading the word that your business 'ripped them off' or whatever. If this happens, your credibility as a business owner will be gone and you probably won't be able to get it back too easily.

Taking but Not Giving

This is seen a lot with forums and social networking sites. There are business owners who tend to take from their community members, but never, or rarely ever, give back. A professional is always seen as someone who not only can take from others, but can also give back to those who have helped them.

When you're visiting forums or social sites, make sure you're offering advice and giving tips to others as well as receiving them. Those who only take and never give are seen as annoying pests. That's not a good view for someone who is attempting to be seen as a professional. Who wants to do business with those kinds of people?

Creating Awful Articles

We previously discussed how articles can be an excellent way to establish credibility. Well, they can be an excellent way to destroy your credibility too if you don't create quality ones. Your articles are supposed to show how well you know a subject.

If your articles show a ton of spelling errors, false facts and content that just doesn't make sense, then all the credibility you may have built up for yourself is going to end up down the drain. The only things you can show with that kind of content is that you're unprofessional and don't know diddly about the focus of your business.

Watch What You Say Online

Believe it or not, some business owners have made huge mistakes with this. They write articles or blog posts that show how they support something and then are caught saying the complete opposite somewhere else.

For example, an owner might publish an article on their site claiming that he is all for using a particular software tool. Then he goes somewhere else and makes a comment or publishes a blog post claiming that same software is the worst tool ever. Your target market isn't stupid. They can catch you and then your credibility as an honest business person is gone.

If you support something and then later on decide to disagree with it, simply state that. Tell whoever reads it that you once supported it, but have since found information that has made you change your mind.

Establishing Yourself As An Expert In Your Business Niche

Gaining credibility with your target audience shows that you know something about your business or products. Now, it's time to establish yourself as an expert in your field.

The reason for this is because your competitors are probably doing the same by gaining credibility with the same target audience. You have to stand out from all of your competitors and show that you are the one to choose from when those potential customers decide they want to buy what you're offering.

This doesn't mean you have to be the most knowledgeable about the whole topic of your business. It does mean, however, you should have some level of expertise in some area of your business. For example, those in the real estate business can choose to show their expertise in appraisals rather than in the entire real estate field. Specialization is a wonderful thing because it keeps you focused and builds you up as an expert in one specific area.

This allows you to narrow down your field of knowledge in your business and increase your professional status as an expert in that particular topic. Your expert status can also come from other sources besides just your knowledge on a subject.

It could be from your experience too. Maybe you've been in the real estate business for 30 years and you're just opening your online business doors now. The fact that you have so much experience in one field shows your customers you are an expert when they're looking to buy.

Education can also play a part in your expert status. Maybe you have a master's or doctorate degree in a chosen field that relates to your business. This can show potential customers you have been well

educated in a particular topic and can provide them with the best service possible because of your education.

If you don't have years of experience in your field or any educational degrees, then your knowledge of the subject will be key. If you only have a minimal amount of knowledge in one area, plan on studying up on that topic intensely. You will need to gain as much knowledge as possible to help build your expertise and credibility.

Promoting Your 'Expertise'

It is one thing to have some level of expertise in your business field, but it's another to actually let people know that you have this know-how. You will need to promote your expert status, so your customers will see you are the one to go to.

There are many ways this can be done, but we'll explore only a few of them here to get you started.

Your Website

You need to show your expert status somewhere prominent on your website. It could be your business brand or tagline. Some website owners will state something like, "In business for 25 years."

Any visitor stumbling onto your site can easily see that you are an expert in that particular field and they will be more willing to listen to you versus someone who isn't established as an expert in some way.

Article Directories

Any business owner can publish an article on one of these sites. These articles easily help to portray someone as an expert on specific topic. Plan to periodically publish your quality articles to the more popular article directories. The more you have published in your name, the more you will be seen as an expert.

It's important to make sure your article is written on a topic related to your business. An article written on recycling isn't going to show you're an expert in real estate. That is unless, of course, you can

somehow link the two subjects together. Just make sure your business topic relates to the content of your article.

Write an eBook

This is probably one of the best ways to establish yourself as a guru or expert. The eBook can be purchased on your site and helps your customers learn about your business topic. Make sure the eBook you create is well written and reflects the knowledge you have on the topic.

A poorly written one can easily lead to you losing your professional status and credibility almost instantly. Put time, effort and thought into creating an eBook that will help you stand out from your competitors.

Join the Internet Marketing Communities

Find out where other Internet marketers are hanging out and join them. Build some rapport with them and they can possibly help you in the long run. They can have you write guest blog posts on their business blog or they may provide testimonials for you. If they're well known on the Internet, this can help boost your expert status.

The point is this, other marketers can have the power to get your name out there and set you up as an expert in some aspect of your business that you may never have even thought to try. As an example, certain rock stars have achieved some fame just by being associated with another rock idol or celebrity. The sky's the limit, even online.

In Conclusion

Relationship marketing is an important step you should take when building your business online. Your products aren't going to sell well at all if people don't trust you enough to give you their money. Internet scammers are the ones to thank for that.

The mountain we have to climb to gain the trust of our prospects is quite high now, but the climb to the top doesn't have to be that difficult. You just have to remember that you're in the business of selling yourself first before you ever begin to sell your products.

Gaining the needed trust from your target market consists of building rapport with them, gaining credibility as a business owner and establishing yourself as some kind of guru or expert. Once you have these things in place, it will be necessary to keep them going throughout your time as a business owner.

If you choose to gain them all and all of the sudden stop doing the work to keep that trust, you will probably have a tough time gaining it back when your customers lose the trust they had with you in the first place. Your sales will suffer and so will your bottom line.

Set yourself apart from your competitors and gain the trust of your potential customers before they do. Promote yourself as the one who can be trusted and customers will come to you instead of all the people you're competing with.

Now That You've Read This Guide...Building Relationships Will Be Even Easier To Do

This guide is a great starting point, and will certainly help you on your way to establishing a successful and long-term business online, but

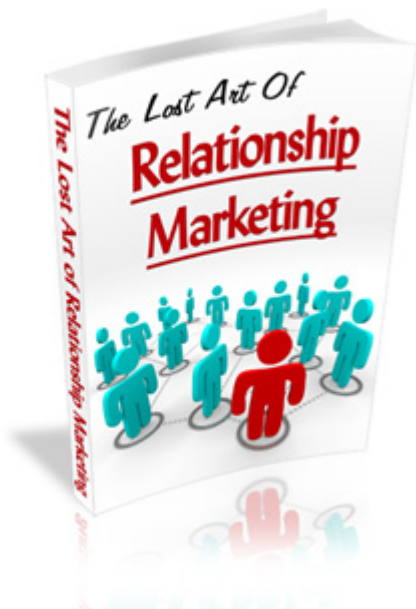
you're not quite there yet. That's why you need to get your hands on this "must have" e-book on Internet relationship marketing.

The Lost Art Of Relationship Marketing

This "meaty, no-fluff" e-book gives you a **step-by-step formula** for getting your market to trust you and ultimately building a profitable online business. It's different than anything else on marketing you've seen.

You'll Discover:

- **A simple technique for gaining market trust**
- Why building rapport with your market will give you the edge over your competition



- **An easy 3-step system for building rapport with your prospects**
- The A-B-C formula for gaining expert status
- **How to get more referrals without resorting to nagging or trickery**
- The correct way to market your business through your website
- **4 ways to slash your advertising costs to zero**
- The amazing secret of getting new customers for your business
- **How to quickly and easily create sales using this simple technique**

- The truth about your online reputation
- **The no lose way to building a great relationship with your prospects**

Click [here](#) for more information.