

What & Why – Strategy – Part I



Demand Generation with Stronger Messaging using CustomerSensing™ Skills “WHAT” and “Why” Part 1, with “How” and “When” Covered in Part 2

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One of the requested topics identified in the Vision Group May 2009 survey was “Demand Generation”. Demand generation programs require good ‘market messages’ designed to gain interest and curiosity with potential buyers. Let’s start with the “what” and “why” of stronger messaging within collateral and other demand generation programs, and then drill down into the tactics around the “how” and “when” in “part 2”.

Let’s begin with the definition of “CustomerSensing™”. If “Market Sensing” is defined as listening to the market to gather information to stay ahead of the competition¹, we believe that to be customer-centric, we may need to use what we are now calling “customer sensing skills”?

“CustomerSensing™” means that we are focused on listening to the “customer”, (the company), via all of the committee members involved in a buying decision. As we listen to them, we are also trying to anticipate their requirements and needs. Our sensing should also be about either determining or discussing with them potential needs for our “unique” capabilities which can allow us to stay ahead of the competition and be perceived as the best solution.

Why should we consider changing or altering our “marketing messages”? We feel it was best said by the “Messaging Forum of the American Marketing Association”:

- “90% of marketing materials are not used by sales personnel”

If that is the case, then an examination of an approach to providing marketing messages seems in order³.

What: One of the first places to start as we review customer market messaging is to have a common sales process and a common language around how our customers make their buying decisions² and how we work with them through their buying process.

Why: With a common sales process and language focused on how customers/clients make buying decisions, the company can begin shifting towards how products & services help the customer change their business operations, compared to a product/feature environment which is primarily focused on what the product is.

What: A second step in coming up with stronger “market messages” is the conversion of the products and services, features and benefits, into a language the customer will understand. Namely, building potential capabilities of “HOW” products & services help the customer achieve their goals by title/function within the market/industries we serve.

Why: It is this ability to comprehend the usage of products/services by customers, which can allow them to arrive at “value propositions”. The business usage of the product is what drives the realization of potential value for the customer, not “what” feature of the product is used.

What: The third step is to make a short list of the potential capabilities, flagging those which are the most unique to our products

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and services and/or provide the highest potential value to our customers.

Why: Using the short list of unique and/or the highest potential value allows us to build collateral and sales conversations that focus on our competitive advantages. If these messages do provide value to our customers and differentiation from our competitors, then we may find that our company becomes the favored vendor.

What: The fourth step in the planning phase is to come to agreement around marketing plans, demand generation programs, collateral deliverables and how marketing materials will be used by revenue generating and customer facing personnel.

Why: With an agreed upon plan, we can meet as a team to monitor and measure agreed upon deliverables, and results, and adjust the plans as our markets and customers continue to evolve in their needs. Use market sensing skills to monitor the “market” and “CustomerSensing™” skills to anticipate and shape your “customers” needs for your unique capabilities.

More on this subject in future newsletters!!

If you would like to begin a dialogue around customer sensing skills or stronger market messaging, drop us an email or give us a call.

Ken Jondahl



Reference material

¹McGraw-Hill, “Business Marketing: Connecting Strategy, Relationships, and Learning”/ F. Robert Dwyer, Hohn F. Tanner, Jr., 4th Edition

²CustomerCentric Selling®-by [Michael T. Bosworth](#) (Author), [John R. Holland](#) (Author)

³*Customer Message Management Forum - American Marketing Association*