

Need More Customers? Answer These Questions to Find Out if You're Repelling Business

By Marilyn Suttle

When your business isn't doing as well as you'd like, it's easy to blame outside factors like the economy – but don't. And don't waste your time shaming yourself for not having a crystal ball about past decisions. Start attracting quality customers now, by reading and responding to the following questions. Your answers will provide valuable insight.

Who's your ideal customer?

Can you easily define who you are here to serve? Don't fool yourself into believing it's, "Anyone with a pulse." The clearer you are about who your company is designed to help, the easier it will be for those customers to get that "I belong here" feeling that will attract them to your company.

Is your message boring your customers to death?

Are your online-presence, your marketing material and your sales staff focusing on the customer experience? Or are you showing off by droning on and on about your boring "features." I've been guilty of this myself. When "Who's Your Gladys?" came out, I wanted to tell people all about the features of my book – as if they cared! I shared that each chapter has real-life stories – boring! I shared how at the end of each chapter you find a check list of practical points – boring! I shared that there's Q & A and fill-in-the-blank tests – no one cares! What people want to know is: How will reading this book improve my business? How will it bring me more customers? How will it solve my problems? Focusing on the features is like giving them details about the bus that's driving them to Disneyland. Nobody wants to hear about the vehicle. They want to hear about the destination! Tell them about the Disneyland experience that your business offers. Unless you can send a clear message of the results of doing business with you, your message is lost.

Do you focus too much on your customers' needs?

Back in 2000, I attended a conference with a fellow trainer who told me I needed to start, "Wrapping up what your customers need with what they want." They may need better parenting skills. What they want is a happier family. What's going to excite them more – talk of the parenting class or talk of experiencing happier, more connected family relationships? You got it – the want always beats the need. You won't be able to give customers what they need unless you first get in touch with what they want, and how your business satisfies that want. (Did you notice that this point is similar to the point above? Sometimes it helps to ask the same question in a different way.)

Are you at cross purposes?

You may be crystal clear about who your ideal customers are and equally clear about what you're offering. You may have crafted a compelling message. None of that will matter if you're at cross purposes. Are you? If your ideal customers are senior citizens, and the primary way to order your product is through a smart-phone app, you're probably not accessible to your target

market. If you love working with social workers and teachers, but you have Lamborghini prices, you may be stressing out and pushing away the people with whom you want to do business. Consider if what you're offering makes sense to the market you're going after. Create alignment and you'll soar.

Do you practice positive thinking without positive action?

It's easy to get caught up in the belief that if you think positively, business will come. The truth is, business will come if you think positively AND act positively. It takes both. Imagine a young boy with a hairbrush in his hand, singing rock and roll songs in front of his bathroom mirror. He thinks positively of winning a spot on a show like American Idol or the Voice. He might be the best singer in the world, though unless he auditions, he doesn't have a shot. The courage to take inspired action is required.

There are many more questions to uncover areas that may be holding back your business, though your answers to this list may be enough to help you make a quantum leap into the customer attraction zone.

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Marilyn Suttle is the coauthor of [Who's Your Gladys? How to Turn Even the Most Difficult Customer into Your Biggest Fan](#). Marilyn travels internationally to deliver service excellence keynotes and workshops. Marilyn inspires her clients to excel by creating strong, productive relationships in every area of life. She specializes in creating "Suttle Shifts" in the way people think and act to produce massive results. When you need a keynote speaker or success coach, Marilyn can be reached at (248) 348-1023, marilyn@marilynsuttle.com or visit www.whosyourgladys.com.

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