



18 Understanding what people buy

What do people buy?

When people buy goods and services what is it that they are really buying? It is not so much about what the product or service is as about an important outcome getting fulfilled. People buy outcomes. They buy the important result they want at the time. What does someone buy when they get a hair cut? It is not just shorter hair they want, but the ultimate outcome of looking good. What does someone buy when they buy a meal out in a restaurant? It is not just food that they want to eat, but a fun and social interaction with friends or family perhaps. People buy either to satisfy a positive or to avoid a negative outcome. People move towards pleasure or away from pain. Fear of loss can be as big a driving force as pleasure in gain. Here are some examples of outcomes that people buy in a variety of purchasing contexts.

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|-----------------------------|---------------|
| ■ Results | ■ Value |
| ■ Support | ■ Advantages |
| ■ Avoidance of worry | ■ Reliability |
| ■ Escape from pain | ■ Freedom |
| ■ Avoidance of losing money | ■ Fulfilment |
| ■ Answers | ■ Happiness |
| ■ Improvements | ■ Solutions |
| ■ Enhancements | ■ Time-saving |
| ■ Time and effort saving | ■ Pleasure |
| ■ Joy | ■ Prestige |
| ■ Self-respect | ■ Reward |
| ■ Benefits | ■ Protection |

What motivates decisions?

Buying decisions are motivated by what is important to a person. What is important is connected with personal values. A value is something that matters deeply to a person. Your values create mental filters which search for satisfaction when choosing a product or service. In order to influence you will need to address the satisfaction of these values in your presentation. Notice how some of the following marketing messages address customers' values.

Sainsbury's – 'Making life taste better'

Home Base – 'Making a house a home'

Norwich Union Direct – ‘Let us quote you happy’

Audi – ‘In pursuit of perfection’

Printinco – ‘Looking good in print’

Notice how these companies address with a few simple words a promise of something more important being satisfied upon making a positive decision to buy the product or service. There is a promise of a personal outcome being achieved and values being satisfied.

Why is this important?

If you can attach the fundamental outcomes your customers are looking for when they search out your product or service to any marketing message you create, you will have a much greater influence.

Look at the difference between these approaches to the same thing.

- One hair stylist says come and get your hair cut, the other says come and transform your looks.
- One estate agent says come and buy a house, the other says come and buy a home.
- One bank clerk says open a savings account, the other says plan a secure future.

Which one is more motivational? The one that suggests an important value or outcome being satisfied is automatically more appealing than one that just presents the product or service as it is.

Your challenge

Your challenge again is to understand and be able to express the important outcomes people want when buying your goods and services. What outcomes do people get satisfied when they buy your service or product? Do you know? How could you find out? People are all different and will have their own reasons for their purchasing decisions. At a higher level, however, certain outcomes and values will resonate with the majority. You need to get to the outcomes that will resonate with the majority of customers you have.

GREAT QUESTIONS TO ASK POTENTIAL BUYERS – SPECIAL RESPONSE QUESTIONS

Your buyers are a great source of information and, if you ask them the right questions, you can learn a lot more about what really drives their purchasing decisions.

- ▶ What is really important to you when you buy x?
- ▶ What do you expect when you buy x?
- ▶ What is the most important thing to you?
- ▶ Why do you buy x?
- ▶ What does buying x do for you personally?
- ▶ What results do you expect when you buy x?
- ▶ What is the reason you are making the decision to buy x?
- ▶ What is personal to you that motivates you to buy x?
- ▶ What is at the heart of your decision to buy x?

How to use this information

You can use this information to improve your marketing messages, advertising, website copy and your general communication with your customers. The greater your ability to target the exact motivations driving your customers' decisions the quicker you will convert initial interest to a solid sale.

Think outcome and motivate more customers to buy