


Guidelines for Communicating Effectively



Many of us have witnessed someone trying to communicate with a person who simply isn't "getting" what the speaker is saying. I have often observed that the speaker will try saying the same thing repeatedly, but each time with an increasingly louder voice, sometimes more slowly and usually with some marginally controlled frustration. Same words, same confusion, same results. To the speaker, the message is obvious. To the listener, the message is confusing and possibly even irrelevant.

As salespeople feel more pressure to compete and close deals and as e-mail blasts fly through cyberspace, how often is the communication more of the same, but louder and more frequent? Maybe even a little frantic?

Or worse, communications with your market have been postponed (making you silent!) with the excuse of the tight economy? How effective are these strategies with your current or prospective customers? Are they hearing what you are intending or are you creating confusion? Or, gulp, are you dropping off their radar and not being heard at all?

Here are some guidelines that will help ensure that your important message gets heard by your intended audience.

When creating marketing materials, ads or proposals, be clear and specific about your message.

More is not better. Many sales pieces, including e-mail blasts, try to say or show too much. Messages get diluted or worse, don't get read at all. Keep it simple and direct.

Have a plan and strategy when developing any communication.

Know what you want to say and don't make the customer work at finding your real message. Otherwise, you are leaving your messaging to chance interpretation.

Just because they are cost effective isn't a good reason to inundate your marketplace with e-mails.

Staying in front of your audience is a good idea but not if your communication rambles, doesn't really have a pointed message and is not graphically well designed. It only takes a couple of poorly conceived e-mails before you get blocked or systematically deleted.

Be sure that what your sales materials say is consistent with what your salespeople are saying.

A Corporate Visions' March 2009 survey of salespeople revealed that 74% admitted to rewriting or altering sales materials before actually using them in the field.



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Sales materials should support your salespeople, the way they work and to further the sales process.

They should be current and designed to reinforce the many different conversations that take place in a lengthy strategic sale. Hint: One corporate brochure won't do the trick.

Be sure your message(s) resonates with and addresses the concerns of your audience.

Just because your message sounds good to you doesn't necessarily mean it will resonate with them. Hint: Reread the first paragraph of this article.

Be wary of corporate chest pounding.

Don't be afraid of injecting passion and emotion into your sales messaging.

If you aren't enthusiastic about your products and services, why should your customers be?

Don't play it safe.

Take some creative risks to set your dealership apart and get attention.

Don't believe you are saving money and getting the job done by using boring "anyone can get" clip art.

Photos of drones smiling blindly at the camera or shaking hands don't make your presentations and materials interesting.

Whether it's an ad, sales materials, web site or bid response, make it beautiful, interesting and something that your audience will want to read (and your salespeople will want to use).

Don't underestimate the power of visually stunning materials, especially if you are working with the A&D community.

Are you innovative or boring?

Representing innovative products and offering novel solutions with boring or ill conceived materials sends conflicting messages to your market.

Inform, educate, inspire and motivate your customers!

Remember that "how" you say it is as important as "what" you say.

It's not an overstatement to suggest that your dealership can be defined by your customers' point of view. What messages are you sending to your market and are they being received as you intended? Do your communications help further the sales process, or are your salespeople acting as "free agents" and creating their own? Are they authentic and meaningful to prospective buyers? Do they stand out from your competitors'?

Investing the time and effort to develop effective communications that resonate with your market creates opportunity for the growth of your business. Yes, even in this economic climate.

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