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Leveraging Curiosity for Competitive Advantage

Read Time: 3 minutes, 5 seconds

One of the most valuable character traits an entrepreneur can have is curiosity.

It seems so simple, but asking why and listening to understand instead of listening to respond has made me millions; let me explain.

So many businesses operate just like everyone else in their industry. They have similar prices, they run the same business models, they have similar policies — why? Because that is how it's done, or that's how we've always done it.

Those excuses are used to justify all kinds of low performance or to simply ignore issues in business. In extreme cases, not being curious can lead to going out of business.

Lack of curiosity is one reason Blockbuster, Toys R Us, and Borders books are gone. Accepting the status quo allowed Uber and Lyft to decimate the taxi industry. In New York City alone, in 2016–2017, cab drivers saw a 15% decline in rides. All of the above businesses have one thing in common: They got fat and lazy.

One of my favorite sayings is pigs get fat and hogs get slaughtered.

Recently, I've had to make some changes to the way we hire, train, and handle quality control

at Newsletter Pro because of an issue that was discovered in the last few months.

The issue came to light because one client complained. There is a book called “A Complaint Is a Gift” by Claus Moller and Janelle Barlow that discusses how you can use complaints to get in front of problems, find opportunities, and understand that when one person complains, there are typically many other people who have the same issue but have just stayed silent.

“**With so much change on its way, it's important to be curious and not fearful.**”

A study conducted by Esteban Kolsky and published in June 2023 found that for every one person who complains, 26 more say nothing. I know I have silently left companies because

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complaining felt like a hassle, or other issues I'd brought up previously weren't handled well, so this time I just stopped spending money with that company.

When you look at complaints from that lens, and you infuse curiosity into the equation, you can discover issues before they are problems, find opportunities, or maybe just have a deeper understanding of that issue, which could help you down the road.

The mid-2020s remind me a lot of the early 2000s. The internet was taking off, technology was moving very rapidly, and 20 years later, even someone in their 40s is called a boomer by teens, lol.

One major difference I see today compared to the early 2000s is that change is coming from so many more directions than before.

We have AI, crypto, and genetics, just to name a few areas of massive change and opportunity. With so much change on its way, it's important to be curious and not fearful.

We've all seen fear make people act in strange ways, make out-of-character decisions. One of the most common decisions I see people make in times of change or fear is the decision to do nothing. While deciding to do nothing isn't in and of itself the wrong choice, you can find thousands of small businesses for sale all over the country that have taken minimal steps to keep up with the rapid pace of change, and they are now either having a difficult time selling their businesses or simply closing up shop because no one wants to buy their business.

Curiosity can protect you from the fate that befalls many other entrepreneurs when you want to sell. Curiosity can help you grow your business, provide better customer service, and, at least for me, keeps my mind sharp. It's a mini superpower that any of us can use to be better and one that has served me well throughout my life.

-Shawn



"A false balance is an abomination to the LORD, but a just weight is his delight."

Proverbs 11:1



Customers and prospects are drowning in a sea of options and, in many cases, feel overwhelmed by choices and paralyzed by the fear of picking the wrong one. This is the harsh reality in today's market, where competition has soared by 141.5% since 1990 (yes, that's not a typo!). Reviews and referrals, while helpful, often lack the personal touch needed to cut through the noise and build trust. This is where lead nurturing becomes your secret weapon.

Think of it like cultivating a garden. You wouldn't expect a single watering to yield a harvest, right? Nurturing leads is similar. It's not about a one-time interaction; it's about consistently providing valuable content and building genuine relationships. The proof is in the numbers: Companies excelling at this see 50% more sales at 33% lower costs, with nurtured leads spending 47% more! It's not just about closing deals; it's about fostering trust and creating loyal customers who become passionate advocates for your brand.

But let's be honest, entrepreneurs wear many hats, and concerns about ROI, content creation, and finding trustworthy creators can hold them back. Here's how to address these head-on.

Content: Know Your Audience, Speak Their Language

Feeling lost in the content creation jungle? Start by understanding your target audience: their pain points, interests, and buying journey stages. Then, tailor your content to resonate with them at each stage.

- **Awareness:** Educate with newsletters (physical and digital ideally), infographics, videos, and ebooks. In your content, focus on building relationships by letting them get to know you, your employees, industry trends, and challenges. Be real. No business or industry is perfect, and it's okay to share wins and failures.
- **Consideration:** Showcase your expertise and solutions with case studies, webinars, and

product demos. Don't just stop there, though. Make sure you show why and how you, your business, and solution uniquely stand out from the competition.

- **Decision:** Help prospects make informed choices through free trials, consultations, and personalized offers. With the adjustments Google and Yahoo have made to email deliverability, personalized offers are going to become more and more important in 2024.

Remember, repurposing existing content and collaborating with industry experts and customers to tell their before and after stories can save time and resources while still delivering high-quality content.

Content Creator Trust: Building Bridges, Not Walls

Let prospects and customers take a peek behind the curtain and get to know you and your team. Consistency and transparency build trust.

Remember, fostering genuine relationships isn't a fad; it's the foundation of sustainable business growth. Aim for consistency: Sending valuable content 4-8 times a month builds trust, increases sales, lowers acquisition costs, and boosts profits. It's an investment in building a loyal customer base, not just acquiring one-time buyers.

Bonus Tip: Offer gated content like white papers, books, software tools, and exclusive videos or guides in exchange for contact information. This allows you to personalize future communications and nurture leads based on their specific interests.

By implementing these strategies, you can transform your lead nurturing efforts from a guessing game to a growth engine. In a crowded marketplace, trust becomes your competitive advantage, and nurturing becomes the bridge that connects you to loyal customers who are not just buyers but true believers in your brand.

Decode the Push vs. Pull Marketing Dilemma

Which Marketing Strategy Suits Your Business Best?

Read Time: 3 minutes, 15 seconds

Marketing must constantly evolve to meet consumers' changing needs and preferences. Two fundamental approaches to marketing are push and pull marketing strategies. Each approach has advantages and disadvantages, making it suitable for different circumstances and business objectives. We'll explore the differences between push and pull marketing, examine their pros and cons, and provide examples to help you decipher which tactic is best for your next marketing campaign.

Push Marketing

Push marketing is a traditional marketing strategy where businesses actively promote their products or services to a wide audience. This approach relies on pushing messages, advertisements, and promotions to potential customers, often through interruptive and outbound channels. Three key characteristics of push marketing include:

- **Outbound Messaging:** Push marketing involves sending out promotional messages, often without prior consent from the recipients. These messages include advertisements, email campaigns, telemarketing, and physical mailings.
- **Product-Centric:** Push marketing tends to focus on the features and benefits of a product or service. The emphasis is on convincing customers to purchase based on the product's merits.
- **Brand Control:** Businesses have greater control over the message and its delivery in push marketing, allowing them to craft a specific image and maintain consistency.

Like any marketing strategy, push marketing has pros and cons. One positive aspect of this strategy is its widespread reach. Push marketing can quickly reach a large audience, making it suitable for product launches and time-sensitive promotions. It also can improve brand visibility and awareness, especially for new or lesser-known products or brands. So, for those looking for immediate sales, push marketing is a great way to clear out excess inventory or achieve short-term revenue goals.

As for the cons, push marketing often involves higher costs. Running extensive advertising campaigns and maintaining outbound communication

channels is expensive. Meanwhile, as the name suggests, consumers might find this marketing too pushy. Since consumers aren't searching or asking for this advertising, push marketing can be seen as intrusive and annoying if not appropriately targeted. Lastly, push marketing may mean limited engagement. This marketing may not foster deep customer engagement or brand loyalty, as the focus is often on one-time transactions.

A few examples of push marketing include:

- **Television Commercials:** Advertisements aired during TV shows or sporting events actively push products or services to viewers.
- **Email Marketing Campaigns:** Promotional emails sent to a subscriber list without prior interaction.
- **Direct Mail Flyers:** Physical mailings with promotional content sent to residential addresses.

Pull Marketing

Pull marketing, on the other hand, is a more customer-centric approach that aims to attract consumers by providing valuable content, information, or experiences. It focuses on creating a demand for products or services by drawing customers in rather than pushing messages onto them. Three characteristics of pull marketing are:

- **Inbound Approach:** Pull marketing relies on inbound strategies, where businesses create content or experiences that naturally attract potential customers.



- **Customer-Centric:** It emphasizes understanding customer needs, preferences, and pain points, tailoring content accordingly.
- **Education and Engagement:** Pull marketing seeks to educate and engage consumers, often providing valuable information or entertainment.

When it comes to the pros of pull marketing, you can rest assured you're gaining high-quality leads. Pull marketing tends to attract more engaged and interested leads since they are actively seeking out more information.

Another positive element of this approach is that it's often more cost-efficient. While it may require initial investments in content creation, pull marketing can be cost-effective in the long run, as content has a longer lifespan and can continue to attract leads over time. Finally, this tactic can build trust and loyalty between your brand and consumers.

Of course, pull marketing isn't perfect, and there are setbacks to be aware of. One major con of pull marketing is that it may take time to build an audience and see significant results, making it less suitable for short-term goals. Additionally, creating high-quality content and maintaining inbound channels can require considerable resources.

Not sure what pull marketing looks like? A few examples include:

- **Content Marketing:** Creating blog posts, articles, videos, or infographics that provide valuable information and draw organic traffic to a website.
- **Search Engine Optimization (SEO):** Optimizing website content to rank higher in search engine results, attracting users actively searching for specific information or products.
- **Social Media Engagement:** Building a strong social media presence by sharing relevant content, engaging with followers, and fostering community.

Push and pull marketing are distinct approaches with their own strengths and weaknesses. The choice between them depends on your business goals, target audience, and available resources. In many cases, a balanced marketing strategy that incorporates both push and pull marketing elements can be the most effective approach, allowing you to reach a wide audience while nurturing meaningful customer relationships.

Heinz Proves You're Never Too Old to Change Your Marketing

Read Time: 2 minutes, 10 seconds

There has always been a demand for ketchup and canned goods, but when the pandemic struck, panic swept through the nation. All of our favorite products were in such short supply that some were wiped clean off the shelves. During this time, many businesses slowed their marketing strategies, but Heinz saw an opportunity to enhance its own.

Finding Success in Every Bottle

As a result of the pandemic, Heinz noticed a 337% increase in sales from March 2019 to March 2020. This sparked the geniuses at Heinz to come up with a new idea.

Today, the global company has a variety of products, including barbecue sauce, steak sauce, mayonnaise, beans, soups, and even vinegar. Rather than flooding the weary grocery store chains with hungry patrons, Heinz introduced its United Kingdom consumers to “Heinz to Home,” a delivery service that brought everyone’s favorite Heinz products right to their doors.

‘Heinz to Home’ — Adapting Their Marketing in the Crisis

For the U.S. equivalent of \$17, U.K. consumers could receive 16 cans of cream of tomato soup, beans, and Heinz Hoops — similar to Chef Boyardee SpaghettiOs — via delivery. The project has also partnered with an organization that supports the U.K. military and health services programs, providing free shipping costs to those who made orders.

The world has gone through some major shifts within the last few years, and one might think it’s too late for a company to pivot its business model to something that provides resources to the public. But we are in the midst of a changing world, and inevitably, more crises will likely arise.

But, instead of worrying about these changes, businesses should plan for potential pivots during a



crisis. By developing this brilliant pandemic strategy, Heinz positioned itself as a leader in two simple ways:

Getting Goods to Consumers

Many recall the shortages of nonperishables, toilet paper, and paper towels during the beginning of the pandemic, but Heinz made sure their loyal customers never had to go without. Customers didn’t even have to consider another company because Heinz was quick to adapt to their needs.

Supporting Their Community

Heinz joined a community effort by offering discounts to those called upon to serve during the pandemic. It kept the lines of communication open to its customers to make them aware that it was an active community partner. Not only did “Heinz to Home” allow consumers to stay in the safety of their homes, but it also reduced the spread of the virus.

Heinz’s willingness to not follow the status quo has proven beneficial to the community and the brand as a whole. That’s why Henry J. Heinz changed the marketing game and sold his products in clear bottles — so consumers could see his superior product — and why, nearly two centuries later, his company successfully pivoted during the pandemic.

12 WAYS TO EXPLODE YOUR BUSINESS BY \$1 MILLION (OR MORE) IN 12 MONTHS (OR LESS)

Read Time: 2 minutes, 40 seconds

Remember: These are just starting points, and the best approach depends on your specific business and market. Adapt, experiment, and be strategic!

1. High-Impact Launches:

- **Premium product:** Create a limited-edition, high-priced offering with exclusive benefits. Target your most loyal customers or a new premium segment.
- **Membership program:** Offer tiered memberships with exclusive content, discounts, or early access, generating recurring revenue.
- **Virtual summit/event:** Host an online event featuring industry experts, attracting paying attendees and boosting brand awareness.

2. Strategic Partnerships:

- **Joint venture:** Collaborate with a complementary business on a new product, service, or marketing campaign, leveraging each other’s audiences.
- **Affiliate marketing:** Partner with relevant influencers or businesses to promote your products for a commission, reaching new audiences.
- **Strategic acquisition:** Acquire a smaller competitor, expanding your market share and product/service offerings.

3. Sales & Marketing Optimization:

- **Conversion rate optimization (CRO):** Analyze and improve your website/funnel to convert more visitors into paying customers.
- **Personalization:** Use data to personalize marketing messages and offers, driving higher engagement and sales.
- **Retargeting campaigns:** Target past website visitors or abandoned cart users with compelling offers to recapture lost revenue.

4. Expand Your Reach:

- **Enter new markets:** Explore geographical or demographic expansion for increased customer base and sales potential.

- **Localization:** Adapt your product/service and marketing to new languages and cultural nuances for international audiences.
- **Offer additional languages:** Make your website and customer support multilingual to cater to a wider audience.

5. Leverage Existing Assets:

- **Upselling and cross-selling:** Offer complimentary products or upgrades to existing customers, increasing average order value.
- **Content monetization:** Generate revenue from your existing content through subscriptions, sponsored content, or online courses.
- **Repurpose successful content:** Transform popular blog posts, webinars, or videos into paid, downloadable resources or courses.

6. Unlock Efficiency:

- **Outsource non-core tasks:** Free up your team’s time for high-impact activities by outsourcing administrative or technical tasks.
- **Automate repetitive processes:** Leverage automation tools to streamline workflows and save time and resources.
- **Negotiate better deals:** Renegotiate supplier contracts, optimize marketing spend, and seek cost-saving opportunities.

7. Embrace Emerging Trends:

- **Live video shopping:** Host live shopping events to showcase products, interact with customers, and drive real-time sales.
- **Voice commerce:** Optimize your website and products for voice search to capture the growing voice shopping market.
- **Artificial intelligence (AI):** Explore AI-powered tools for targeted marketing, customer service chatbots, or product recommendations.

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8. Build a Community:

- **Create a forum/community:** Foster a vibrant online community around your brand, boosting engagement and customer loyalty.
- **Host online/offline events:** Connect with your community through meetups, conferences, or webinars, strengthening relationships and brand advocacy.
- **Offer exclusive community benefits:** Reward community members with discounts, early access, or special offers to incentivize participation.

9. Gamification & Incentives:

- **Loyalty programs:** Implement rewards programs with points, tiers, and exclusive benefits to motivate repeat purchases.
- **Contests and giveaways:** Organize exciting contests with valuable prizes to generate buzz and attract new customers.
- **Gamified experiences:** Integrate gamification elements into your website or app to increase engagement and user activity.

10. Subscription Models:

- **Subscription Box:** Offer curated product deliveries on a recurring basis, creating predictable revenue and customer loyalty.

- **Software-as-a-Service (SaaS):** Convert your product into a subscription-based service for recurring revenue and customer lock-in.
- **Membership model:** Provide exclusive access to content, resources, or services through a paid membership for consistent income.

11. Influencer Marketing:

- **Collaborate with micro-influencers:** Partner with relevant influencers in your niche to reach targeted audiences authentically.
- **Create influencer marketing campaigns:** Run targeted campaigns with influencers to promote your brand and products to their engaged followers.
- **Track and measure results:** Utilize analytics tools to track campaign performance and optimize your influencer marketing strategy.

12. Think Outside the Box:

- **Host a live challenge:** Launch a limited-time challenge (e.g., fitness, productivity) with paid participation, generating revenue and engagement.
- **Offer limited-edition experiences:** Create unique, exclusive experiences (e.g., workshops, consultations) for high-paying customers.