

Chapter 5

Think Like a Customer

■■■ You can be even more successful if you understand what your customers really want. (Hot Buttons can hold the key.)

Do you know what keeps your customers up at night? HINT: It's not the lowest price! Sales are made on an emotional level, and aren't just based on dollars and cents. **Until you know exactly what your clients Value and what their Hot Buttons are, it's difficult to do any kind of effective selling.**

Talk to your customers to learn as much as you can about the business challenges they face every day. Use surveys to learn even more about what their real needs are. **Read how I use both methods to stay on top of my customers' Hot Buttons (their biggest problems and concerns) and make more money!**

What are YOUR customers' Hot Buttons?

- Faster Delivery
- Ease of Purchasing (company store)
- Rapid Employee Turnover
- Safety Issues
- New Competitors
- Time Constraints
- Brand Awareness

Hot Button: Stay ahead of your time

Twenty years ago, when I first started selling promotional products, there were no suppliers offering **fast 24-to-72-hour turnaround on orders**, but there was a tremendous need for this service. The first supplier that provided turnaround times that

beat out everyone else in the business reaped tremendous rewards, and to this day is an industry giant.

Hot Button: Needs that aren't being met

In today's fast-paced society, **anything that makes it easier and faster for your prospects and customers to do business with you** is a Hot Button that can make more money for you. Recently, a national chain of supermarkets in my area started offering online shopping and free home delivery. Just click on their website and you can pick up your order in their store or have it delivered to your home.

Take a lesson from the big guys like this supermarket chain, and look for needs that aren't being met in your target market. **Find your customers' Hot Buttons -- they can be YOUR KEY to more profits.**

Hot Button: Problem solved!

Stay in tune with changes in your customers' business environment. Recently, one of my customers developed a new Hot Button – an inventory problem – that seemed to come out of nowhere! Finding a quick solution to his problem kept me from losing a large repeating order.

My customer no longer had the space to inventory a large order I filled for him every year. When I checked with the manufacturer, I was able to get them to hold the order as inventory for a small additional fee. Had I not been able to provide that service, I would have lost his business. Check with your top suppliers to see how they can help you offer creative solutions to your customers' problems.

Using Hot Buttons to your advantage

Use what you know about your customers' Hot Buttons, even when you're **writing proposals**. Let's look at how two promotional products professionals, Andy and Chris, approach this process and why Andy logs **MORE PROFITS** than Chris.

- **Chris wonders why he doesn't sell more** as he submits his next set of proposals to customers and prospects, relying solely on competitive pricing.
- **Andy adds value to every proposal** by offering quality guarantees, special packaging and faster delivery (Hot Buttons he learned about by talking to his top customers and by surveying them.) In addition, he lets prospects know that he will

follow up, every step of the way (a Hot Button that helps him stand out from his competition.) As a result, his customers can focus on their work, instead of worrying about orders.

Is it surprising that Andy is adding up the profits that Chris only dreams about? Andy has really zeroed in on his customers' key Hot Buttons and always addresses them in his proposals. He uses Hot Buttons very effectively -- to differentiate himself and to show customers why his company is the only logical choice when it comes to promotional products. He understands that his customers' ultimate need is not just for the product, but also for *reassurance and peace of mind (hidden Hot Buttons.)*

Make them your own

How can you stay on top of your customers' current Hot Buttons? Talk to your customers on a regular basis to find out what is most important to them when purchasing promotional items. The more information you have about your current clients and how they do business, the easier it will be to sell to them. **The most successful sales professionals know their customers' needs, as well as they know their own.**

INSIDER Information

Learn from your results

I survey my customers often to learn what is most important to them. I have found that **timely delivery, product knowledge and prompt answers to their questions** are more important than offering the lowest price. A survey conducted by PPAI (Promotional Products Associations International) got similar results. But don't just rely on this information – learn what YOUR customer's value by always asking questions – you may be in for a surprise!

Timing

Pick a **good time to call**, when you know your customer will not have other distractions. Before you begin, always ask: *Is this a good time to speak?*

The right questions

Then ask if they would **answer a few questions over the phone** in order to help you serve them better. Use the quick and easy survey forms at the end of the Manual to get you started.

Incentives

Offer your customers an inexpensive promotional gift for answering the survey.

This serves two purposes. A gift they value will encourage them to participate. It will also show that you believe in what you sell AND it may prompt them to use promotional products for their own surveys.

► *What Can You Do Now?* ◄

- Think about the **current challenges** your customers face and find **innovative solutions** you can offer them.
- Send **fast and easy surveys** out to your current accounts – today!
- Find **a high-perceived value, low cost gift** you can offer to clients who answer your survey.
- **My most successful survey incentive:** a pre-paid telephone calling card with the tagline - *Give me one minute of your time and I'll give you 30 minutes free!*