

Why People Don't Buy

“The only way to get someone to do what you want them to do is to get them to want to do it.”

John Yeck

Knowing what makes prospects turn the other way is just as important as knowing what makes them buy. Often it's the little things that cost you sales – pages that take too long to load... links that don't work the first time... even simple spelling mistakes can cost you sales.

Once you've completed your sales letter, it's well worth reviewing in search of anything that could be turning prospects away from your proposition. Spot the potential pitfalls before launching your sales letter. Have others review your work as well. You'll be glad you took the time to do this the minute you spot the first potential obstruction.

People Don't Buy Exaggerated Claims

Most people view advertising with a high level of skepticism. They take whatever claims they read and hear with a grain of salt. They suspect marketers will do just about anything to make the sale. Many do. But you'd be well advised to stay on the straight and narrow. Any claim that cannot be backed up 100% should be eliminated from your copy.

If you stretch the truth even a little, you know it. If you know you're exaggerating, many prospects will pick up on that subtle signal through your communication. If they suspect a fabricated tale, they'll never trust you with their money. But there is a simple solution: don't lie.

Use all the enticement and powers of persuasion you can generate. But never cross the line. If you do and you're found out, the marketplace will never trust you again. Remember, your mission should be success over the long term. You're not merely interested in making a sale today... you want to foster a lifelong relationship with each and every customer.

It's important that your message appears credible. Avoid the use of multiple exclamation marks (!!!) and adjectives -- often these are signs of an over-hyped message. It's the kind of 'in-your-face' hard selling that doesn't go over well on the web.

People Don't Buy From Amateur Marketers

You could have the hottest, most desirable product -- perfectly suited to your target consumer. But when prospects arrive at your website, they see flashing images, colors that blend, rather than contrast... numerous pop-up windows and banners... and a general lack of organization. All are signs of an amateur marketer at work.

If you look the part, that's how you'll be judged. What's worse is that the opinion people get from their first exposure to your site gets transferred directly to your product. A shoddy presentation suggests that the product may also suffer from the same kind of flaws. It may be unfair... but this is the kind of association that can easily develop.

Spelling mistakes, typos, unreadable type, and confusing links must be corrected beforehand. Make it easy for prospects to get your essential message, clearly – cleanly. That means an organized path that ultimately leads to a natural conclusion. It also means legible type of at least 10 points – and a color that strongly contrasts with the background. To do otherwise will brand you an amateur, discredit your marketing message, and turn off many would-be buyers.

People Don't Buy From Over-Designed Sites

“Great designers seldom make great advertising men, because they get overcome by the beauty of the picture – and forget that merchandise must be sold.”

James Randolph Adams

It's easy to get wrapped up in the technology -- to want to use these newly discovered tools and acquired skills on your website. But don't let technology get in the way of your sales message.

Slick, overproduced websites might appeal to the designer's sense of pride, but they do little to sell prospects on your goods. You're better off to keep it simple, direct, and clear. Save the bells and whistles for the used car dealer down the street. Adding additional elements to make your site look more attractive only adds to page load times. The longer it takes to load, the lower the number of visitors who'll stick around waiting.

It's information that online users want – not fancy graphics and design. Use your layout and design to facilitate an efficient delivery of the information your prospects want to know about.

People Don't Buy From Clever, Catchy, Or Humorous Ad Copy

Prospects don't visit your site to get a chuckle. They aren't there to be entertained. They're not amused by catchy headlines, teaser copy, or unusual graphics. Save these for the corporations who pour millions into "creative" television spots that satisfy egos and win awards... but fail to attract large numbers of buyers. The reality is that as direct-response tools, often these ads fail miserably.

Any of these approaches actually diminishes the effect of your sales letter. It takes the focus off the message and drops it squarely on the technique or method of delivery.

It's a safer bet and always a more effective approach to stick to those benefits most appealing to your target market. You have but one opportunity to impact your prospect's life and generate a response. Why waste the opportunity trying to be cute or funny? That doesn't make any sense. You want response and the most likely way to ensure a good response is to follow simple direct response techniques.

People Don't Buy When They're Uncertain

Uncertainty creates uneasiness. If you're product is new in the marketplace, you've got to work harder to prove it's worthiness to prospects. Solicit user feedback and use that feedback in the form of testimonials in your sales letter. Let prospects know that others have thoroughly tested your product and the results fully support your advertising claims.

If prospects are hesitant to buy because they're not yet comfortable with you or your business, give them more information. Add a brief bio and a few photographs. Show your 'bricks and mortar' business where all orders are received and shipped. Mention the affiliation or association you share with your market. Help your prospect get comfortable with you. Put him at ease. Answer the most common questions on a separate Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) page. The more they know, like and respect about you, the more they'll trust you.

Ease any concern over credit card use online by providing safe and secure ordering options. A secure order form is an obvious answer... but not the only one. Telephone and fax ordering is preferred by some people. Give them the option so they can choose the ordering method they prefer.

One option I've used problem free for years is secure email ordering. It's very simple. Just advise buyers to submit their credit card details in two separate emails. In the first email, they send the first two sets of numbers. For a Visa order, it would look like this: xxxx xxxx. The second email

follows with the last two sets of numbers and the expiry date – xxxx xxxx 03/08. Of course you'll need their name and complete mailing address too.

This system has worked like a charm and doesn't require anything beyond a simple email address. With this system, a hacker would have to intercept to separate messages and be able to put them together to steal the information – a highly unlikely scenario.

People Don't Buy If The Product Isn't A Good Fit

Targeting your market is a fundamental step to success. The only people who'll ever buy from your sales letter are those to whom the benefits appeal. If they're not a good prospect to begin with, no amount of persuasive copy will ever convince them to fork over their dough. That's why all your lead generation efforts should be directed at 'grade-A' prospects only – those most interested, capable, and likely to buy. Other 'traffic' won't lead to sales very often.

You want only qualified prospects to arrive at your site based on their predetermined interest. Then it's up to your sales letter to close the deal. Remember, good quality prospects arrive with high expectations, interest, and excitement. But that doesn't mean they're about to spend any money. You need to fuel their interest and propel their desire to the level where they simply must have what you're offering. Move them with your words every step of the way.

Make sure any purchase is the right one from the customer's perspective. You want delighted customers... not disappointed ones. That's why it's so important to avoid trickery and deceit at all costs. It's not just about making the sale today... but about making the sale stick (no refund) and acquiring a long-term customer.

People Don't Buy If They Feel They're Being Pushed

You've got to realize that your prospect is in control of the buying process. Selling online means pulling readers inside in an inviting way.... not pushing your product upon them in an attempt to generate revenue.

Pushing products creates a feeling among prospects that you're trying to gain an upper hand, trying to take control of the situation. Trying to control prospects is pointless. It only instills a sense of fear... and a fearful prospect will never buy.

Guide them. Provide a roadmap that directs them to their desired destination. Give them the opportunity and lead the way. Let them know they're in total control and the fear melts away.

People Don't Buy What They Need -- They Buy What They Want

Needs are uninspiring and unemotional. 'Wants' on the other hand, are the driving force behind all but the most rudimentary of purchases. Get your prospect to want it and you've moved much closer to a sale.

"No matter how much they NEED what you're selling, if they don't WANT it, they won't BUY it!"

John Counsel

Needs are purely logical... while wants are emotional. Remember, it's emotions that are the driving force. Whenever the two -- logic and emotion -- come into conflict, *emotion invariably wins*.

You could sell on emotion alone. But anything beyond the petty cash or pocket change expenditure would be difficult to sell using just logic. The most effective approach is to employ a combination of both emotion and logic.

People Don't Buy When There's No Clear Cut Advantage

Offering the same thing that's readily available from numerous other sources is not the most effective route to online success. You've got to offer something more. If not, why should anyone take a chance on buying from you – an unknown entity?

If prospects already have an established supplier, there's no need to find another - - unless of course, they're unhappy for some reason. If they can meet their shopping requirements from another source, perhaps one that's close by or better known, there's little incentive to venture out online in search of another source.

You need to offer more – something special... something unique... a clear-cut benefit or extra advantage. If it's not very appealing to at least check out your offer, no one will.

People Don't Buy From You Again If They Weren't Satisfied The First Time Around

Can you remember being disappointed with a particular buying experience? What kind of feelings did the experience leave behind?

Chances are, you'll never go back to buying again from the same source and you've probably shared your experience with others. One bad experience can

cost untold thousands of dollars in lost revenue over the years. Yet, this is a common problem online – even amongst corporations and big-names who should clearly know better.

Personally, in the past year, I've had at least 3 such experiences online. One business never shipped all the products I was promised in the offer. When this was brought to their attention... they offered an excuse and another promise to deliver. Still nothing.

On another occasion, I was overcharged. The merchant in this case was using a third-party billing arrangement and suggested I contact this organization instead. I never was compensated and vowed to never buy from this individual again.

The third disappointment occurred with a downloadable software program. When I couldn't get it to work properly on my system, I contacted the seller. At this point I was given the contact information for the technical person behind the product, whom I was assured would help.

As it turned out, I could never reach this individual. Fortunately, I was able to solve the problem myself after spending an extra hour or so trying various options. What's interesting to me is that the seller never bothered to follow up to ensure that I was satisfied. A little ironic I thought, since this particular firm stresses its "superior" customer service in their ads. It may be a minor point... but it certainly changed my view of the company.

Think about all the possible reasons why prospects might not buy from you. Develop a plan to counter act all such reasons and excuses. Convince them that your way is a better way for them to go.

It's important that you take the time to address all customer service issues and handle them in a sound, professional manner. Give prospects one small reason to not buy and they'll seize it. Inaction is always easier than action – regardless of the payoff. People establish their own comfort zones and bad habits that are often extremely difficult to break. The challenge is to make your offer so alluring that it helps move even the most sluggish of prospects into a buying frenzy. Fix your faults first.