



The Psychology of Marketing

By Dr. Linda Hancock

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Hancock has written a regular weekly column entitled “All Psyched Up” for newspapers in two Canadian provinces for more than a dozen years. Over the years, her readers and clients have said that they have benefited from her common-sense solutions, wisdom, and sense of humour. Dr. Linda Hancock, the author of “Life is An Adventure...every step of the way” and “Open for Business Success” is a Registered Psychologist who has a private practice in Medicine Hat. She can be reached at 403-529-6877 or through email office@drlindahancock.com

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My daughter and I are leaving for England in early September. We have therefore been preparing an itinerary and booking accommodations for the trip. Because of the distance, we are using the internet to do much of the research. Some websites are intriguing and capture our attention for a great deal of time. Others offer very little of interest and we cannot find helpful information so leave quickly.

Throughout the process I have learned a great deal about internet marketing and customer service that can be implemented by any business:

1. **Web presence** - Do not assume that people will find you or your business in a telephone book or hear about you through word of mouth. Potential customers might not even live in your community. It is becoming the norm for individuals to use a search engine to find options and then read about goods and services before even making contact with a business. If you don't have a website, they might never know that you exist and if you aren't using the right keywords, they might never find you.
2. **Location** - I have been surprised about how many websites neglect to provide even a hint of where you could find your business. Not a city, region or even a country! It is very disappointing to get all excited about products and services you offer only to find that your location is unreasonable for your travel plans or not practical for shipping goods. We have found that the websites that have maps showing the business location and surrounding area are extremely helpful.
3. **Contact information** - As strange as it might seem, contact information is completely missing from some websites. Others have email addresses that do not work or contain telephone numbers that are not in service. Those that have the most contact information that is easily found appear to be the most reputable and trustworthy. Providing several contact options also allows potential customers to reach you in the way that they are most comfortable as some prefer to use the phone while others prefer email.
4. **Photos and media** - I feel that websites with staff, facility and activity photos were most attractive to us. Short videos that loaded easily also allowed us to easily make choices about activities and venues that we wanted to include in our trip. When these were missing and we had to guess about where we might be going, we usually just moved on to a different website.
5. **Clear and complete descriptions** - When I help my grandchildren with their writing projects, I always recommend that they pretend they are telling a story to a child who doesn't know anything at all about the topic. Preparing a good website can be done using this same concept. Make sure that the person who enters your website can easily find and understand your content. Journalists use who, what, when, where and why to communicate and you can do the same.
6. **Pricing and discounts** - Trying to make purchases in another country can be difficult if you don't know about the currency or additional charges for things such as taxes and shipping. The sites that have currency converters on them

as well as specific percentages and amounts were the easiest to navigate and the most helpful for us.

7. **Customer service** - Many companies did not return emails or telephone voice mail messages that I left for them. One of the best hotels who got a booking from us was the one where someone answered their phone, gave us the names of the individuals responsible for making reservations, provided email addresses for further communication and always returned messages in a timely and respectful manner.

You might already have a website for your business but not understand how much it is helping or harming your sales. Try going on it while pretending you are someone who doesn't know anything about you. Is it user-friendly? Better yet, ask a dozen people to go to your website and then provide honest critique to help you make improvements.

The psychology of marketing involves understanding how people think and then providing content that encourages them to want to deal with you. Does your website do this?

Maybe it's time for a review.