



Chapter 4: Reaching Your Customers

So far you've identified who your customers are, what they look like, and the products and services that they buy, but how do we take prospects who look like those customers and convert them into actual paying customers? This chapter addresses the question of converting prospects into customers.

A **prospect** is someone who has a need for your product and has the resources to buy it. This, in and of itself, tends to help you work through a prospective customer list. If the person on your list doesn't actually have a need for your product, or if they don't have the resources to buy it, then they aren't a qualified prospect. A **qualified prospect** is a prospect who has the resources available to actually purchase your product.

I know many people who love photography. In fact, I suspect many people go window shopping for cameras. Most people either cannot afford or don't need the cameras sold at the high end, but they do enjoy looking. While they are "prospects" they're not qualified prospects, at least not for now.

Of course, that doesn't mean these prospects may not be converted to qualified prospects at another point in time or for another product category. If they show a strong interest in the product or service and you think they may become qualified customers at some future date or for another product, certainly listen and be aware of their wants, needs and fears.

With that said, once you have a qualified prospect, someone who has shown an interest in your product and has the resources available to them, and perhaps has demonstrated a desire to use those resources to purchase that product from you, the next step is to convert them into customers. A **customer** is someone who is willing to part with their money in exchange for a product or service. Ideally, these customers will stay with you and continue to purchase additional products or services from you as time goes on.

In this chapter, we are going to address this pivotal point of how we transition potential customers from prospect to a satisfied customer.

Why is Creating a Brand Important?

There's tremendous pressure on businesses to make every customer not just happy, but thrilled with their product. If they're not satisfied it's easy to find a competitor. Today we have numerous choices in virtually every product category. The more choices customers have, the more selective they become. When they become more selective, they not only choose to do business with those companies, products, services, or brands that simply meet their needs and desires, but also seek to be involved in something bigger than themselves. Your brand is no longer just your logo or image; it's the larger story that you communicate around your product or service.

How often have you come across someone who uses a MacBook and also has an iPhone, an iPad, an apple watch and maybe even an AppleTV? What about someone who identifies as a "Pepsi-person" or "Coke-person"? Whether it is Apple, Pepsi, Nikon, Chevy, Nike, or Hershey the brand integrates into the user's routine and identity. The customers become part of the brand and the brand becomes part of them.



The Curse of Knowledge

Transforming prospects into customers is no longer about presenting facts of why your product is the best. Because business owners are specialists in their field, they have what Chip and Dan Heath, authors of *Made to Stick*, call the “Curse of Knowledge.” Because of their knowledge, experts often have difficulty communicating with non-experts because they forget what it’s like to NOT know something. Experts often immediately jump to the facts and statistics about why their product is the best. The problem is that facts don’t stick in the minds of your prospects. Spouting facts about a product or service just adds to the advertising noise in our culture.

When a company focuses on facts about why their product is the best, they fail to focus on the aspects of their offer that will allow **customers** to survive and thrive. These businesses are causing their prospects to “burn too many calories” trying to figure out what the brand actually has to offer. It turns out, there is something much more powerful than a list of facts that will catch and keep the attention of a prospect. Getting someone’s attention is the first step to transitioning them into a paying customer.

Sticky Ideas

The Heath brothers found 6 common principles behind ideas that truly stick and they’ve arranged them as an acronym: **SUCCES**

Simplicity - Make your messages as compact as possible

Unexpectedness - Get attention through the use of surprising information or scenario

Concreteness - avoid abstract ideas; instead state things in common terms

Credibility - use examples of success and testimonials to demonstrate your authority

Emotions - encourage people to “feel something” regarding your product

Story - draw people in through telling compelling stories

These principles can act as a checklist for your marketing materials. Chip and Dan use Subway’s “Jared Campaign” as an example of these principles being used well. The message was simple: “I lost 400 pounds by eating Subway twice a day.” It was unexpected; fast food, healthy? It was concrete. Subway didn’t advertise the number of calories or grams of fat per sub. They had tried that previously in the failed campaign of “7 subs under 7 grams of fat.” The message was credible: It worked for Jared, it could work for you. The campaign played into people’s emotions by dramatically displaying one man overcoming a hardship. The essence of this campaign told a story. Within months of airing the “Jared” commercials, sales dramatically increased. Jared’s story stuck in the minds of their prospective customers in such a way that converted them from prospect to customer.

The last principle, “Story,” is more fully developed in the book *Building a Storybrand*, by Donald Miller. In it he gives a simple strategy for telling compelling stories using many of these same principles. Story becomes the framework in which you can put Chip and Dan’s other “Sticky” principles to work.

Creating a Storybrand

If you were to evaluate every blockbuster movie made in the past 20 years, how many different storylines do you think you would find? Donald Miller demonstrates that the majority of the top grossing movies follow one predictable formula or pattern. People pay money year after year to be



told the same story over and over again. Why? Because we are naturally drawn into this narrative. Miller knows that businesses who tap into the power of “story”, following this formula, are able to capture the imaginations of their prospective customers long enough to start building a relationship with them. To connect with customers, you don’t just need a brand, you need a **Storybrand**.

Miller breaks down a story into seven parts. It starts with (1) a **character**, or a **hero**, (2) who has a **problem**. This character (3) meets a **guide** who (4) gives a **plan** and (5) calls him/her to **action**. This (6) **avoids failure** and (7) leads to **success**. The point of this story line is the transformation of the character.

Take *Star Wars*, for example. Enter Luke Skywalker, the hero of the story. He faces a problem: his aunt and uncle are killed by the Empire. He gets caught up in the rebellion against this evil, but finds that he can’t do it alone. He meets a guide, Yoda, who gives him a plan: use the force. Yoda calls him to action: “do or do not, there is no try.” This leads to the success of defeating the Empire and avoiding the failure of the rebellion being destroyed. The result of the story is the transformation of Luke, from a young moisture farmer on Tatooine to a Jedi knight.

The trick is being able to apply this formula to your business’s marketing. What story are you telling your customers? The first common mistake that companies make is setting themselves up as the hero. This puts the emphasis of the story on the business or the product. Prospects aren’t as interested in listening to stories about your business; they are interested in hearing stories about themselves. The prospect is already the main character and hero of their story. Your company takes the role of the guide; think of yourself as Yoda. Identify the problem that you solve, give your prospects a plan which utilizes your product and calls them to action.

Clarify your message

The power of the Storybrand formula is that it puts everything in order so that your prospects’ brains don’t have to work hard to understand what’s going on. The first step in this process is to clarify your message. We’ve worked out the value that your product offers and how it addresses your customer’s wants, needs and fears. Now we need to communicate that value to each customer segment in terms they can understand. We need to boil down the essence of your brand’s message down to one story per customer segment. The more that you’re able to pare down and simplify the message (“Sticky” principle #1) the better. Even if you offer a variety of products or services, condense your message into one concrete thing that you do or problem that you solve. If you confuse, you’ll lose.

Three Levels of Conflict

There are three levels of conflict that your product can solve. The first are external problems. These are real, everyday problems they need to solve. These conflicts could be something as simple as, “I’m hungry and need to find something to eat,” or they might have a leaky pipe or termites in their house. These are all external in the sense that they involve the physical world and are solved with a physical solution i.e. food, a plumber, or Terminix.

The next level of conflict is internal. This involves a hero’s desire to resolve a negative internal emotion. This could be frustration related to an external problem. Or someone might feel embarrassed by their unsightly lawn or they feel intimidated by new technology. When you appeal to an internal problem, you begin to reach a deeper level of motivation within your customer base. To



find internal conflicts your product addresses, ask yourself, “What frustration does my product resolve?”

The third level of conflict involves philosophical problems that the characters face. These widen the lens to take in the bigger picture and appeal to a person’s desire to be involved in a story greater than themselves. This level of conflict addresses things such as good versus evil or basic human rights. This often relates to a judgement on the way the world “ought to be” or “ought *not* to be.” For example, Tesla sells electric cars because customers ought to be able to get where they want to go without polluting. How might your product solve a larger, more philosophical problem? Take a moment to think through how your product or service might solve each of these levels of conflict.

How does your product or service address the following levels of conflict?

<p><i>Internal:</i></p> <p><i>External:</i></p> <p><i>Philosophical:</i></p>

Become the Guide: Give a plan and call to action

Identifying how your product solves the problem of the hero is the basic building block of your Storybrand. The next step is to set yourself as the guide. Think of Yoda. He’s likable, credible and demonstrates his authority on the subject. The easiest way to give yourself credibility is through testimonials from past customers. Collect stories of customer transformation and ask permission to share these stories with others. It can be helpful to provide question prompts to focus your customer’s testimony. Instead of asking customers to write a review, give them specific questions, such as “How did you feel prior to using our product?” and “What difference has our product made in your life?”

Part of establishing yourself as a guide is providing a plan for your prospective customers. This plan should have three easy steps that walk your prospect to directly becoming your customer. As an example, a custom furniture builder has created the following three steps: 1. Schedule an appointment. 2. Design your furniture 3. Enjoy our guarantee of lasting quality for life. Their steps lead their prospective through the purchasing process. Their plan also includes another important concept of the guarantee or warranty. Guarantees alleviate fears prospects might have prior to making a commitment to be a customer.



Finally, you must call your prospects to action. There are two types of calls to action; direct and transitional. A **Direct call to action** is the “Buy Now” button on your website which will be discussed more later. A **Transitional call to action** provides an alternate, lower commitment action step for your prospect to take. This could be inviting them to find out more information or to schedule an appointment.

Take a minute to write down your three step plan to move prospects to customers.

How do you call your prospects to action?

What is a transitional call-to-action that you could provide for prospects who are almost ready to be your customers?

Visit www.mystorybrand.com for an online tool to help create your own Storybrand. On this website you can find helpful prompts for filling out all seven steps of your Storybrand.

Utilizing your Storybrand

Once you have created your Storybrand, it’s time to put it to action in all of your marketing materials. The primary medium for telling this story is your website, but many different platforms can be used i.e. traditional tri-fold flyers, social media sites, and email campaigns.

Most websites include far too much information for the average visitor to process. This is where the “Curse of Knowledge” begins to reveal itself. Instead of long paragraphs about why you are the best person to provide service because of your extensive experience and expertise, your website should focus on the following five priorities.

The first priority is putting an offer “above the fold.” The term “above the fold” refers back to newspapers and all of the content that could be seen literally above the fold in the newspaper. Apply that to websites and the term refers to all text and images seen prior to scrolling. At the very top of your website’s homepage, your prospective customer should be able to see what you offer in terms of a short, enticing, phrase that states exactly what you or your product does: “We clean anything!” This could also be a promise to solve a prospect’s problem, “Embarrassed by your



toenails? We can help!” This tag line should tie directly to the external, internal, or philosophical problem your product solves that you identified above.

The next important element of your website is a clear and obvious call to action. Our eyes naturally scan a webpage in a “Z” shape across the screen. A “Buy Now!” button should be placed in the top right corner and then again lower down the page on the left or middle. This button should also be a color that stands out from the rest of the page.

To accompany this short phrase and a button which calls your prospect to take action, you should include images of a happy, satisfied customer. Your product might not even be in the picture. Find a good photographer and ask them to take pictures that tells your story through images. Focus on the result of what you want your customers to look like or feel after using your product or service and show that in a quality image.

The fourth element is a very simple break down of your revenue streams into one or two options. Don’t confuse your customers with a large number of choices on the first page. You might have a variety of products or services, but you must communicate what you offer in very simple terms. Create an umbrella structure, in which all of your services fall under one message. For example, your fabrication business might be able to cut metal, wood, paper and fabric as well as paint any type of surface. You could view these as separate services, but instead try to find the common thread that runs through all of your products. This company might utilize the umbrella of, “We can customize anything.”

The final element is that you should use as few words as possible. The most effective websites use 400 words or less on their home page. You can create a “Read More” page for the small number of customers who actually read every word and want all of the details. The wording that you use on your website and in all of your marketing is very important. Research demonstrates that certain principles are more effective at influencing your audience. Before we explore other marketing tools, such as email and social media, let’s take a look at what types of communication is most effective.

Principles of Persuasion

In his book, *Influence*, Robert Cialdini identifies six principles of persuasion which you can put to work in your favor to transform your prospect into a paying customer. The more principles you can apply to your marketing, the more persuasive your communication will be.

The first principle is reciprocity. People are more likely to give back after having received something. What’s more, he has discovered that when people receive something that’s unexpected and personalized, they are even more incentivized to take action. For example, waiters who leave a mint with the bill receive 50% higher tips. But a waiter who leaves a mint, and as he walks way, turns around and says, “You know what? For you nice people, have an extra mint because it’s been a pleasure serving you,” provides an unexpected and personalized gift.

How has your business been generous? How could you generously give away with no strings attached in order to draw in prospective customers?



Another principle of persuasion is scarcity. People want something when that resource is dwindling or going away. This is the driving force behind “limited time” offers and “one day only” sales. The resource of the sale is ending at a definite point in time, therefore your customer is more likely to act now in order to take advantage of the resource. Consider scarcity as a potential marketing tactic if it fits your business model.

Several of Cialdini’s principles are put to work in Storybrand. Cialdini’s third principle is “authority” and is in alignment with Miller’s concept of a guide. People are more likely to be persuaded if you appear to be credible. His fourth principle is “consistency,” meaning that people are more likely to make a larger commitment after first making a small commitment. Miller utilizes this idea in the transitional call to action. The fifth principle is “liking” and Cialdini ISN’T talking about clicking a thumbs up button on Facebook. This principle states that people are persuaded by people who appear to be similar to, or like themselves. Finally, he identified “consensus” as his final principle, which states that people are convinced by being told what others have done before them. This is another effect of testimonies. The success of other customers demonstrates a consensus for new customers to replicate.

Email Campaigns

Email is one of the least expensive and most effective ways to spread the word about your business. In order to utilize email, you need a way to collect email addresses. This can be done through the “Transitional Call to Action” on your website. Invite visitors to your website to find out more information and request their email address. Directly ask them to sign up for your newsletter or schedule an appointment, or take some other action in which you need their email address to follow up.

Prospective customers, however, aren’t always willing to part with their personal information without receiving something in return. This is an opportunity to utilize Cialdini’s principle of reciprocity. The best way to collect email addresses is through giving away content of considerable value. This can be a downloadable guide, an online course or webinar or software demo, a free trial, free samples or a free live event. Your customer must first provide their email address in order to receive the “gift.”

Once you’ve secured their email address, you can enter the prospect into an automated email drip campaign. This type of email campaign sends potential customers (the people who responded to your transitional call to action) emails at regular intervals. The point of these emails is to keep your company’s name in the forefront of your prospect’s mind while continuing to provide valuable content. Even if they don’t open the email, they will hopefully at least see your company name as the sender before deleting the message.

Resist the urge to have every email be about a “Blowout Sale!” or “New Product Released!” Instead, think of them as “Nurturing Emails” that give you an opportunity to utilize your story brand in a different format from your website. One email can share a story about a common problem that you solve. Another email might explain your three step plan of how you solve this problem. The third email can paint a picture of life after the problem has been solved. Providing genuinely useful content raises the likelihood that your customer will open the email. Every third or fourth email



should offer your product or service to the customers in a very direct way, calling the potential customer to take a direct action that leads to a sale.

Email drip campaigns also give you the opportunity to practice the principles of “authority” and “liking.” Every so often, include an email that shares a testimonial from one of your previous customers. This reinforces your position as the guide and builds credibility. This story is an opportunity to demonstrate that your customers are people similar to your prospect.

There are several different companies that assist with creating this type of email campaign. Mailchimp is simple and very reliable. Infusionsoft is much more robust allowing you to focus campaigns to different customer segments. Either can provide a constant reminder to your prospective customers that you exist through regularly sending an email.

Referral Generation System

The best way to attract new prospective customers is through referrals from current customers. After providing the highest quality service or product, you would hope that your customer would want to share their experience with all of their friends. Some customers will do this, but this may not occur to many of your customers. Do not leave this up to chance! A referral generation system is simply intentionally asking your current customers to refer their friends and family.

The system is simple; reward your current customers for referring a new customer or sale. The first step is to identify your current, ideal customers. These are the ones that keep coming back. Specifically reach out to them, thanking them for their business and giving them a percentage off their next purchase for referring their friends. The best referral systems are automated through Mailchimp, Infusionsoft, or Hubspot. Make sure you have a way to track the referrals back to your current customers to give them credit for their work!

What about Social Media?

Social Media gives you the ability to target your customer segment within very specific geographic locations at very specific times. It also gives you the opportunity to listen to your prospects and see what is important in their lives. In order for your marketing to be heard above the noise, you need to tell a story that your audience already believes. Listen first and observe your target audience. Look for the underlying internal and philosophical conflicts that your prospects are sharing. What types of stories are they telling about themselves? What pain points are they expressing that you can resolve? What wants, needs and fears are they demonstrating through their posts? Remember, they are the hero of their own story. With this information, how can you position yourself as the guide and provide a solution to the story they are already telling?

The goal is to build a relationship with your potential customers. Relationship is the special sauce that will turn a first time buyer into a repeat customer. Take the first step to build that relationship through listening. From that point on, be authentic and tell your story well!



Chapter 4: Reaching Your Customers - Worksheet

Marketing is no longer about the stuff that you make but about the stories you tell. People do not buy goods and services. They buy relations, stories and magic.

After working through the SWOT analysis matrix that is attached, start thinking about these questions below. You've identified WHAT your strength/weaknesses are, but now what do you do with that information?

Effective Storytelling

What Story are you telling people about your business?

What Story is your competition telling?

Where is your customer's attention? Where do you need to go for them to hear your story?

There are 6 main principles of persuasion we will discuss here; reciprocity, scarcity, authority, consistency, liking, and consensus.

Principles of Persuasion

How do you encourage reciprocity? _____

What can you make scarce? Is there value in creating scarcity? _____

What can you do to convince your customer you are the expert?

How can you encourage your customers to make a series of small commitments and build the relationship? _____



People prefer to say yes to those that they like, and we like people who cooperate with us towards mutual goals. How can you encourage your target customer to 'like' you?

How are you promoting the actions and behaviors of others to grow your business?

Action Items

Here are some assets you have that can be utilized to reach your customers more effectively. Which ones seem easiest for you to implement? Why?

Customer List – Data

Social Media Audience

Website Traffic

What are 3 things you can implement today to improve your marketing?