

Customer needs or wants – which creates more profits?



Do I need a new computer mouse?

Figuring out whether your potential customer needs or wants your product or service may seem irrelevant since the terms are commonly interchanged.

However, entrepreneurs who know the difference between needs and wants more easily optimize profits and turn potential customers into satisfied and loyal customers.

What's a Need ?

A need is that basic element essential for sustaining life, growth and contributing to physiological and psychological development. Many marketing and sales strategies are designed around Maslow's hierarchy of needs for esteem and self-actualization. But, for a potential

customer it's a necessity for finding a solution to a problem quickly.

What's a Want ?

By comparison, a want is not life sustaining or critical to solving a problem. Wants come with added value, quality, comfort, or enhanced features. Products and services often create customer wants with irresistible offers of promised benefits and bonus features.

Do I Really Need a Mouse?

Today, I decided that I need a new mouse. But, in actuality, I really don't. The old one still works, I can do everything that I have always done with this mouse, and maybe if I clean the bottom plate of any residual gunk it would guide the cursor faster and more accurately to its target (problem solved).

But, I also have my reasons for wanting a new mouse after a quick Internet search. After all, it would be nice to have a wireless model, there's a range of prices and styles to choose from, and there are even ergonomic designs to reduce the chances of developing a carpal tunnel condition.

There's Nothing Wrong in Wanting the Want

My primary need kicks in when my mouse makes it too difficult to navigate on screen or completely dies. Then of course, my need for a new mouse is a problem to be resolved as quickly as possible.

As to wanting a new mouse, that's a legitimate concern easily rationalized by benefits. A wireless model would reduce the tangle of cords under my desk. Prices are competitive and I like the new style features. I can even convince myself an ergonomic mouse, which cost considerably more, has value in relieving the overuse of my right hand.

These benefits can trump the need of having a mouse that still works, because they suggest that my mouse experience can be more enjoyable.

There's nothing wrong with wanting the want and purchasing products and services that enhance an experience with satisfying benefits.

The Problem

Many times customers satisfy a want, but wake up and realize their initial problem is still unresolved. If you are a marketer that doesn't meet a need, the customer has no qualms about moving on.

The Solution

Go back to the old maxim of *"find a need and fill it."*

That means:

- Finding out what kinds of problems potential customers in your niche are seeking solutions for.
- Examining which niche products or services are offered and do they solve problems or satisfy wants.
- Checking out customer complaints about why they are still having unresolved problems.
- Positioning yourself as a resource person who understands and solves problems.

Here's an example of addressing a specific need of health care professionals with challenging patients.

"You'll learn how to determine whether your patient or client has ... issues that contribute to ... other symptoms. ... You'll also learn my proven, **step-by-step system for working with ...**, so you can get results with even the toughest cases." Abridged from an offer made by Dr. Ritamarie Loscalzo

This need fulfillment not only seeks to solve a problem, with a step-by-step system for even the toughest of cases, but also it optimizes profits with a track record of satisfied customers.

Here's a clever example of addressing the need and moving on to the want.

"... start with the \$... course and go through it to make sure this will help you to build a list in your niche. Then go back and look at the additional training ... [being offered]." Abridged from an offer made by Connie Ragen Green and Ron Douglas

Once the need has been satisfied, customers will want more from you

Customers have a natural tendency to want more. They're always looking for that "next thing" that makes it easier, simpler, and better. Therefore, having an on-going dialogue with your customers is critical. You can quickly learn what else they are looking for that will make for a better experience or will make their own business more successful.

By listening and paying attention to their wants, you become a trusted resource person and advisor. Not only can you satisfy what your customers want next, but you're also in a position to anticipate new problems and be ready to meet those needs, as well.

By addressing the initial needs first followed by wants, you have an opportunity to create more profits with a satisfied and loyal customer base.

What's been your experience in dealing with your customers?

Are they looking to get a need met first or are they looking to fulfill their wants?

Comments and sharing are appreciated.