

You don't need a transformation project to get more customer focused. You just need to change one word in your vocabulary to open up powerful new possibilities for success...



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Forget About Customer Needs

Customer needs analysis has always been a cornerstone of effective selling and marketing. I'm writing today to suggest you start talking about wants, not needs, because it will take you to powerful new places.

Ask What Customers Want, Not What They Need

I was part of an expert panel recently speaking to a group of marketers at a financial institution. Despite the fact that they are among the most successful and customer-centric companies in their sector, it's still hard for them to truly look at the world through the eyes of their customers. It got me thinking about how we all talk about customer needs.

Nobody Wants Features

Here's the problem with talking about needs: it gets you talking about products and features. You start saying things about certain customer segments needing this, or needing that. And maybe they do. But it's pretty unlikely that your customers see it that way. What they want is a certain type of life. They want financial security. They want to feel powerful, competent, appreciated, in control, successful, desirable.

Feelings Drive Behavior

The reason lifestyle brands like Apple and Armani are so successful is the way we feel when we use the product. Elegant, successful, cool, superior. Considerable scientific research has shown that emotion is a key driver of most consumer decision-making. Because we want things we don't necessarily need, right? We need transportation. But we want a cool car, a sophisticated car, a car that supports our identity.

It's Not Only Consumer Decision-Making

You might think business decisions are all rational, but they're not. Executives also want to feel confident, comfortable and secure. Those are feelings not easily come by. And who can give them that confidence? Remember the saying, "Nobody ever got fired for hiring IBM"? Bingo.

Change Your Vocabulary

If you change this one word in your conversations, you'll start thinking quite spontaneously about emotion. You'll start seeing the natural segments in the market. You'll see where your communications should be headed. And you'll start investing in the strategy that will give you real differentiation.

Because nobody needs you. But they might want what you can give them.

If you want to improve the performance of your customer-facing organization, please contact us: 416-481-7409 or 888-244-0285 [e-mail](#)

Or ask us to [contact you](#). We help organizations deliver customer experiences that improve results, with marketing research, organization design, and change management.