

7 marketing and sales differentiators that work

Clifton Warren explores simple ways to set your business apart from your peers', especially in these competitive times

In the Australian financial services market, there are over 12,000 mortgage brokers, 2,600 insurance brokers, and 18,000 financial planners. In such a competitive market, how can you differentiate and stand out in the crowd? By becoming distinct or specialised.

With rare exceptions, most products and services will at best be competitive. To create real differentiation for yourself and your company, focus on providing fresh ideas, innovative insights, and benefits that address your customers' concerns.

Here are seven differentiators that do work and are easy to implement.



1. RESILIENCY

There will always be occasions when things don't work out as planned, no matter how well prepared you are.

Being able to quickly recover, admit mistakes and learn from these setbacks will be appreciated and applauded by customers, as it provides a measure of assurance that you are in it for the long haul.



2. SPEED

Many companies are winning new business simply because they are fast, reply to emails quickly, return phone calls in a timely manner, and follow up with requested information promptly. Often their products and services are no better than the competition; they simply are able to get to the customer first.



3. PERSONALISATION

Customers are delighted when they actually get to speak to a real person or receive a personalised email reply instead of a computer-generated response or out-of-office reply. If you must use an automated response, take the time to personalise it instead of using the standard stock replies as everyone else. With a little bit of effort, you can create a personalised approach in your own style.



4. VALUE

Do you provide the same services and ideas as your competitors? Some companies are great at adapting ideas once the market demand is there, while others are continually innovating with new ideas and become market leaders. When your

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customers recognise you as an innovator, you will be positioned as a leader and your competitors will be forced to follow. This applies to products, services and ideas.



5. OPTIMISM

Research studies have shown that optimistic professionals outsell the non-optimistic; the reason is that when people are in a certain mood, be it happy or depressed, that mood is often communicated to others. What is the mood at your company? What is your staff communicating to your customers? Being optimistic is a contrarian approach to out-thinking your competition. Regardless of what is happening in the world, there is always a different way of looking at things.



6. A REAL GUARANTEE

A Melbourne search firm provides a six-month, 100% guarantee on all searches, and I know of another firm that provides a 100% 12-month money-back guarantee. The key to developing real guarantees is to keep it simple and easy to understand without the small print.



7. COMPETENCE

Customers love competence versus jack-of-all-trades. Become a student of your industry and marketplace; learn more than just the buzzwords. Most people do not call a handyman to fix an electrical problem – they call a specialist electrician. Your customers are more apt to look for help from an expert with relevant experience.

Forget all of the marketing hype and latest fads, and instead become 100%-focused on the problem and challenges of your market, and provide fresh ideas and insights that address their pressing issues. You will quickly stand out in the market, and will become known as the go-to person.



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