



WHAT MY CAT TAUGHT ME ABOUT NICHE MARKETING

Some people are "dog people," others are "cat people." I'm a cat person. Regardless of which pet you prefer, we can all agree that pets enrich our lives in many ways. They provide unconditional affection, they don't care what we look like, and sometimes even they teach us a life lesson.

But I never expected my cat to teach me a marketing lesson! A niche marketing lesson, to be more precise.

At this point, the dog lovers reading this are saying that this cat person is crazy. But I'm not. Here's how it happened.

Like millions of other pet lovers, I bought plenty of pet toys. We all want to be able to interact with our pets, yet still have them not be bored when we're away.

My cat went through the usual toy assortment: feathers, balls with bells in them, foam balls, catnip, string, and an assortment of stuffed rodents. Because we all want the best for our furry friends, I bought the biggest stuffed rat I could find. It received an occasional sniff but was mostly ignored.

The medium-sized stuffed mice received more attention, but only if I moved the mouse or threw it for the cat. He wouldn't play with it on his own.

Then my cat was given a pair of tiny stuffed mice. I thought they were too small and would be ignored just as the giant rat was.

Boy was I wrong!

Like a lion on a gazelle, my cat pounced on the tiny mouse and gave it a beating it would never forget. He played mouse hockey through the house, scoring goals under the refrigerator and under the stove. He played baseball, tossing the mouse high into the air and catching it again, or hitting a home run on the way down. He played jungle lion, proudly carrying his prey back to his waiting pride (me!).

So what does all this warm fuzzy cat stuff have to do with online sales?

It's a metaphor for niche marketing. The cat is the consumer. The cat toys are your products. The ultimate goal is to match the former with the latter.

Your first product, the giant rat, was of vague interest to the consumer (the cat). The consumer sniffed at your ad or sales page, but did not like what he smelled, and moved on. No sales.

Your second product, the medium-sized mice, were more interesting to the potential buyer. He would take action, but only after intensive prompting on your part. You would probably have to spend a lot on pay per click ads or gave away lots of bonuses to get his business. A few sales might be made, but it would be expensive to get those sales.

But your third product, the mini-mouse, was pure magic! Your cat consumer took one look, something in his brain clicked, and a sale was made. It was as if your product was a key that unlocked the part of the customer's brain that triggered the buying impulse. Jackpot!

That's what my cat taught me about niche marketing. You must find a product that somebody desperately wants (preferably a large group of somebodies). That product must be exactly what they were looking for, even if they didn't know they wanted it! It must be so tantalizing that your customer is more concerned about playing with his new toy than he or she is about paying for it.

You see, I made a classic info-product mistake with my cat. I gave him what I thought he would like. I wasted money promoting large stuffed rodents and heaps of other toys to him. What I didn't do is ask him what he needed and give him that!

Don't make the same mistake! Figure out what your customers want FIRST, and give them that. Then watch them pounce on it so fast that the payment process is almost an afterthought for them.

I have since learned that the mini-mice are about the same size as real mice. No wonder the cat was sold on them immediately! He had never seen a real mouse, but there was a mini-mouse sized niche in his brain that was instantly gratified by the smallest mouse toy.

Don't give your customers what you think they need. Ask them what they want, and give them that. Then you will have truly created a better mousetrap, and they will beat a path to your door (and your bank account)!

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