How to Sell Anything: Crash Course Entrepreneurship #12

Crash Course: Business - Entrepreneurship
https://youtube.com/watch?v=n7-wsGLc1js
https://nerdfighteria.info/v/n7-wsGLc1js

Once upon a time, there was a woman with a strong entrepreneurial spirit who was ready to transform her side hustle into a magnificent full-time business.

She identified a problem and crafted a solution, and now she needs to make her voice heard by the people. But how?

This story might sound familiar. Any entrepreneur's path is full of critical sales, elevator pitches, and persuasion. We want people to buy our product or service, but we also want them to believe in our ideas and seek our expertise.

It can be hard to strike the right tone or know what's going to appeal to someone, but there are tricks. We can craft a narrative and use well-placed emotional appeals to tell customers a story. Maybe it doesn't start with "once upon a time…" but you get the idea.

Even if you don't consider yourself a persuasive person, you don't need a +5 charisma modifier to succeed at this crucial stage of entrepreneurship. Today, I'll be your fairy godmother of sales and together, we're going to learn how to sell ANYTHING! I'm Anna Akana, and this is Crash Course Business: Entrepreneurship. [Theme Music Plays] For some of us, sales might be the scariest part of starting a business, while others might be like… HECK YEAH WORLD COME BASK IN MY AWESOMENESS!

For me, putting my art online was intimidating but exciting! I loved wearing catstronaut merchandise, what better way to use my entrepreneurial skills than to turn my passion into a profitable business? If we did our job in the validation stage of entrepreneurship -- talking with prospective customers and making adjustments based on their feedback -- we should have developed some relationships that can turn (or have already turned!) into a customer purchase.

And despite all the stereotypes, you don't have to turn into the worst version of a used car salesman to sell something. Turn off the smarm. The key to selling is developing relationships and telling a meaningful story to prospective customers.

Now there's a lot of research on how to sell things, and everyone has their own 7-to-50 step process. But all those strategies boil down to two key points: persuasive people ask questions and make emotional appeals. Asking open-ended questions to learn more about a customer's life can help us make a sale.

Don't just ask one question then jump into a pitch. It's clear to the customer you're not listening and that you're only focused on selling them something, and that's no way to build a relationship. You believe your business can help these people.

So just like giving advice to a friend or anyone you care about, have a meaningful conversation where you're asking a lot of questions to understand their needs. Or, convey that authenticity and empathy online if you're selling there. Remember some entrepreneurs recommend asking "why?" five times, to get to the heart of an issue and learn where a customer is coming from.

What do they really need? How can you connect with them? What does their time frame look like?

What obstacles are they facing? Really hear what the person is saying. If they mention the need or problem that inspired you to become an entrepreneur, it's totally fine to say "I had a hard time with that too." And then, once you have a connection, offer suggestions or bring up your business. "Gut instinct" also plays a huge role in making purchases.

Even the most logical person can't totally separate themselves from their emotions, which is why emotional appeals can be persuasive too. Marketing experts like Geoffrey James at Inc magazine say customer decisions come down to a mixture of six emotions: greed, fear, envy, pride, shame, and altruism. Depending on the situation, we can target different ones.

With greed, entrepreneurs want the customer to think "buying now means I'll be rewarded." You can use words like "exclusive," "profitable," or "distinguished," and emphasize all the great benefits you can provide. Even toss in a few testimonials from satisfied customers. Think about fast food commercials.

Sure, you know those crisp french fries go straight to your arteries, but those ads make them look like salty heaven that will instantly reward your taste-buds. Fear can also spur immediate action. Don't leap out at people wearing a ski mask, but you want customers to think "I have to buy now or I'll lose out!" You can use words like "consequence," "cost," or "harm," or an argument focused on "missing out," to make a fear-based appeal.

Pharmaceutical companies notoriously play on fear. They list off a whole textbook of symptoms you may be feeling and how they might lead to your untimely demise unless you buy this one miracle product. Envy can lead customers to think "my life looks nothing like this, but if I buy this product, maybe it could!" When using this strategy, name drop -- who are your current customers and what awesome things did you do for them?

Instagram, with its well-framed and well-lit photos, is a hotbed of envy. We all see filtered views of people's lives that make us yearn for something we don't have -- the perfect dinner, drink, or yoga pose on a cliff overlooking the ocean. Or we can appeal to someone's sense of pride and get them thinking "I'm so smart for making this purchase" by using words like "reputation," "influence," or "powerful" to make the value all about their image or status.

Show off awards you and your customers have won! Fair Trade labels do this implicitly. Theo Chocolate is a Fair Trade company that jumped through significant hoops to build a mission-driven business and get that certification, partly so customers can feel like they're spending money wisely.

On the flip side, shame can get people thinking "I better listen or bad things will happen." Drop hints about how dark the future could be with words like "mistake," "disappointment", or even "failure." Seventh Generation doesn't hide the fact that they're an eco-friendly business. The environment is a key part of their sales strategies and they can make people regret wasteful past purchases. But our darker emotions aren't the only decision-makers.

Altruism can get customers thinking "my purchase will help people." When talking with customers, emphasize the benefits to them, to employees, to partners, or to the world. Talk in terms of collaboration, and use vocab like "give," "help," or "improve" to drive your narrative home. Any time you've bought something where the "proceeds go to charity," that's an altruistic plea.

Sarah McLachlan's partnership with the SPCA is a prime example of this, making soulful appeals to raise money for animals. In the aaarrrms of the angelllls... To see how a new entrepreneur might combine asking questions and making emotional appeals to be persuasive, let's go to the Thought Bubble.

Andrea is a whiz at Excel with some statistics training, and she wants to start working with small firms and nonprofits to do some basic data analysis and make visualizations for them. She knows

her skills are top-notch, and she even has a few examples of her work from personal projects. But to survive in the freelance world, she needs to find new projects and customers.

So Andrea starts with her network. She meets with a few people and businesses who know someone who knows the manager of her neighborhood grilled cheese-erie. And she starts by asking those people questions to figure out what a restaurant might want to know, like if there's a difference in the number of appetizers they sell on Fridays versus Wednesdays.

From there, Andrea can make informed suggestions when she's talking with the manager. She could say, "That's an interesting problem. Might I suggest creating a sales dashboard that shows sales by category, and also what your current top-selling dish is?" If they're still on the fence about working with her, maybe she'll add an emotional appeal.

Fear would be a realistic starting point. She might say, "Data analysis is complicated, but without it, your business could suffer in the future. If you want to compete with big chain restaurants, you'll need an edge.

I can help you create that." Pride might work too. Do they want to make the best decisions possible and look like a business master? She might say, "Your brand, You Cheddar Believe It, is something that people want to wear on a T-shirt.

If you wanted to create merchandise, I could help you analyze what sells best." They still might say no, but Andrea will have a much better idea of what to say (or not!) with her next potential customer. Thanks, Thought Bubble! Even when using emotional appeals, the goal shouldn't be to trick a potential customer into buying something.

By researching their pains and gains and asking questions, we can know that a product or service will authentically help them in some way. We're all on the same team. If you're still at a loss for how to get started, or even if you're well-prepared, the internet is the place to be!

Developing a strong customer-base online can make it easier to successfully start up a physical store or network with bigger retailers down the road. Using tools like SquareSpace, Weebly, Wordpress, or Wix, even the least tech-savvy person can have a professional-looking site up and running in no time. But it shouldn't just look good.

Websites are also important channels to communicate with customers. So a value proposition -- or at least a simplified version of it -- should be on display. Square, the point of sale system used by lots of small businesses, says they "help you save time and grow faster" on nearly every page.

Then, you want to show off the site on social media platforms -- as long as that's where your target market is. If you're trying to sell to the 60+ retirement crew, maybe Snapchat isn't where you want to spend energy. Now, the tasteful color scheme of your website, your eye-catching tweets, or your value proposition might be enough for some people to make a purchase.

But entrepreneurs also want to generate leads -- or lead gen in business slang -- and give people lots of opportunities to "opt in" besides making a purchase. Email addresses are like gold in the marketing world because we're given more chances to connect with the person. We can use automated systems to follow-up with an emotional appeal or attractive coupon offer, and turn that lead into a real customer.

Systems like HubSpot or MailChimp help with everything from formatting to mass-sending email campaigns to thousands of people. And many of these systems even have free versions for startups. Of course, not every visitor to your website will become a lead, and not all leads will actually become customers.

Here's an analogy: Traditionally, the marketing world has relied on a visual called the sales funnel. Once people are aware of a product, a fraction of those leads will be interested in learning more, and a fraction of that fraction will decide to make a purchase. That fraction of a fraction is where we can put in the work with these sales strategies.

But there's also a new visual popping up: the flywheel. Instead of constantly starting over and pouring new potential customers through the funnel, the sales flywheel captures the fact that happy customers talk, and word-of-mouth can lead to even more customers. Whichever metaphor speaks to you, remember it's all about developing a relationship with a person that eventually turns them into a loyal customer.

The bottom line is, anyone can sell. Listen, ask follow-up questions, and use all your available information to tell a story, develop a relationship, and make it easy to make a purchase. Next time, we'll talk about revenue streams, AKA all the ways your business is actually bringing in the money.

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