

PROFITABLE PRINT RELATIONSHIPS

The Successful Print Sales Circle

Video 24: Creating difference

Hello, and welcome to the next video on creating and launching a new product or service.

Now, up until now, we've done a really good job. You've identified your audience. You've got a great product that will solve one of their business challenges, and you've put it together in a really good way that will engage with them. So surely by now, they should be jumping to buy from you. Unfortunately, it doesn't quite work like that.

Imagine that you've given a really good, powerful sales message to someone. They like what you offer. They think that it's the right solution for them. Do they go ahead and buy? Unfortunately, not. Typically, the average buyer will go round and look at other potential suppliers to see if they could also offer what you offer, but at a cheaper price. That's why difference is so important.

These days, shopping on price is built into our DNA. Anyone in procurements, typically it has to go out to three prices from different suppliers. Then we have price comparison sites when we're looking at our insurance or so many other aspects of our lives and sites like Amazon, that actually split out the different prices from different suppliers and list them and rank them in price order. So we have to try and get away from that.

Now it's important to remember that many people don't just buy on price. I paid more the other day for a pair of hiking shoes, simply because I wanted them in a different colour. I have tradespeople that I use because I think they'll do a better job. I trust the way they do things as opposed to someone that I don't know who might be a little bit cheaper. We have lots of times that we take up a special offer and we buy something because of something else that's included with it, or because the product that we're buying is slightly different and has a feature that the other ones don't have.

So there's lots of reasons why we can charge a higher price and be the chosen supplier of a product or service, but to do that, you have to be able to demonstrate that to your prospect and you have to be able to convince them of the value of that. This is what's known as your difference. This is what we're going to concentrate on today.

People who sell, who have a good difference can not only build a better relationship with that buyer, but they have more control over that price battle because in their minds, the buyer wants to buy that solution, that one with this particular difference. So they're prepared to go for it, and therefore you achieve a higher profit margin. People who ignore the difference, they're going to be destined to

be the suppliers who are fighting on price and going to the bottom on that price battle, and it's not a good place.

So today I'm going to take you through how to create a powerful difference. It really will work with your prospects. But before we do that, there's a few things about difference that I'd like you to understand.

First of all, sometimes difference is actually about branding. It's about creating that desire where actually things are pretty similar, but if you phrase it or brand it in the right way, you create a different perception in your prospect's mind.

Secondly, you can have a different difference for every different product or service that you offer. It's not something that has to be the same across your whole company and across all your products and services. So take time to develop a unique difference for each product or service and each sales message that you create.

Thirdly, difference it doesn't have to be set in stone. You can always change your difference. If you find out it doesn't work, or if a competitor changes so that your difference doesn't seem so unique, you can go back and change it again. That's absolutely fine.

Next, remember the difference may be about your product or service, but it may also be about your company. So the two that have to be directly linked.

Lastly, difference is an essential part of your sales message. If you don't have a difference, you are really going to struggle if someone else is competing with you on price.

There are also some differences to avoid. I hear these differences so often and as a buyer, they mean nothing to me.

The first one is the difference is me, and you're making it all about the person. Now, if you are a person that makes a difference that will come across, you don't need to say that, but you need to have something that's more logical as a difference for the buyer to want to act on.

Next, is we offer great quality, and the third one is we offer great service. I'll deal with both of these together because by now I think you know how I feel about selling on quality and service. Buyers expect these, and people find it hard to imagine what you mean by great quality or service. So sometimes even though you offer that, people will feel that down.

Those are three ones to avoid. Instead, I'm going to guide you through a system for creating some really powerful differences in a different way. There's three types of difference that I feel work really well and we're going to try making each one.

The first of these is the product difference. The second of these is the market difference, and the third of these is the process difference. So as we work through the system, you're going to get a chance to try each of these and to see whether they work for your product or service.

In step one, we're going to create a product or a service difference. Actually, this is one of the hardest differences to try and create, because it's focused on what you are providing for the customer. And particularly with the product, it's very difficult to make something that is really

unique or so different that it stands out from the crowd. Most people, when it comes to print can create pretty much the same sort of thing particularly when they have partners who have machinery that they might not have. So it's very hard to say, my difference is this product; you can't buy it elsewhere. And that's what we're asking you to do with this type of difference.

Equally, a difference in the product has to mean something to the customer. It has to be valuable and we'll come on to that later. However, the fact that you folded it in a particular way, or you've done some different type of gluing on it, unless it makes a real practical difference to the customer, rather than you, then it's not worth using as a difference because it's not going to mean anything. This type of difference works best in very specific situations.

Firstly, you may have a product that is [inaudible 00:06:36]. In other words, it's something that other suppliers simply can't offer. So that really is a difference at that point.

Next, you might have some machinery that provides a slightly different product that other people don't typically have. So for instance, Scodix, a raised varnish, is a really good example of this because there's still very few of them around. Now, this is a first mover advantage and you may have to change your difference as more of them come on stream, but right now it's a good difference to have.

Next, you may offer something that nobody else has thought of doing next. So a few years ago, I worked with a printing company that specialized in printing publications and they offered turning page software as part of their solution, and nobody else was doing it at the time. So they had a real first mover advantage, but it only lasted for a few months because there were other suppliers who saw this as good and they started copying it. So if you can create the right difference, it's really powerful, but you just may not be able to create a difference like this for your product or service in this instance. But that's okay because we have some other differences to try it as well.

Step two is to create a market difference. This is where you say that you specialize in a particular type of market vertical. This can be a really powerful difference. It's one of my favourites actually. You could be saying, for instance, that you specialize in a certain area or a certain type of company and that you have experience that other competitors cannot offer. So maybe you're working in the insurance industry and you understand some of the compliance issues that they are faced with and you can help with those in a way that other printing companies can't. That's a great example of using your market knowledge to show that you will be a more valuable supplier, even at a higher price, than some of the competitors.

There's another company I know that specialize in the restaurant trade in Dublin. Any restaurant in Dublin, they were always recommended to go to this supplier because he knew the market. He knew what was working. He knew the trends. It was worth paying a little bit more to work with him.

Step three is to create a process difference. What do you do that's different from other suppliers? This is where branding can really come. Many years ago, there was an American beer called Schlitz Beer, and they did a whole range of adverts on the fact that they were a cold filtered beer. And everyone went to a bar and said, "Oh, we want Schlitz because it's cold filtered." And, actually, this was the process that all lagers were going through at the time. It's just that Schlitz made a big deal

about it and made it sound different from the other lagers. This is where we can really use branding to try and help us.

One example I use in the printing industry is if you're offering web to print, there's lots of companies out there that offer web to print so they can all sound pretty much the same and it can end up in a price war. But imagine if you were offering web to print and you had a process that ensured that every single web to print implementation that you did went live without any errors. It's not as simple to offer web to printers some companies make out. It can go very wrong. That could be very costly for a customer because they could have pieces that have been printed with the wrong information. They could be incurring extra costs or delays to market. So it's really important they get it right. If you offer a process that no other company has that guarantees right time implementation, that's something that's really valuable.

Now for each of these three types of difference I've given you a series of steps to go through on your worksheet, to help you work through exactly how you can create a difference like this. I'm going to recommend that you try and create one of each type of difference before you go further in this assignment, and you'll see why when we move to step five.

But before we go there, let's deal with step four, which is to carry out an SVP check. SVP stands for specific, valuable and proprietary. Your difference must be able to pass each of these checks. What do I mean?

So specific: It means it has to be something that someone can picture. It has to be really, really precise. Valuable: It has to mean something to the buyer. If you're offering something that sounds nice, but it means nothing to the buyer, it won't work to them. It won't be a compelling difference. And proprietary: It must be really hard to copy as well.

Let's look at my difference. My difference is that I'm the buyer and I've been approached by 1400 different printing companies, so I know what works and I know what doesn't. Is that specific? Yes, because everyone can picture in their head the fact that I'm a buyer and that I'm different from a salesperson. Is it valuable? Absolutely. I'm offering the buyer's knowledge that is so hard to get hold of these days. Can it be copied? Is it proprietary? Well in theory, yes. But when I've said that I've been approached by over 1400 different printing companies, that suddenly makes me stand out and shows the breadth of my experience. That's how my difference passes the SVP check.

There's a table on your worksheet so that you can tick off the SVP check for each of your three differences that you create.

Now for step four, I'd like you to work through this yourself. But when we move to step five, we're going to get second opinions from other people on how good your difference is. Actually, using the SVP check can be a very good way to help them work out whether it's good or not. So you can ask them do they understand it? Is it valuable to them? And have they heard of other people offering this?

So in step five, I'd like you to approach your colleagues, your friends, potential customers, and if you're a gold member, approach me as well and I'll happily give you my opinion on your difference, but you need to hear it from lots of people. My opinion isn't necessarily the right one. The one that's

really powerful is your customers. So make sure you get those second opinions. That allows you to move to step six, which is to choose your difference.

So you have hopefully three differences that you created. Which one works best for your product or service? Now it may be that your second opinions have created that decision for you. It may be that there's only one that really works with them. But they may say that all three differences are fantastic, in which case you have the opportunity to choose the one that you think will work the best. However, it may be that your second opinions came back with negative feedback on all three differences you made. So do be prepared at this stage to go back to step one and go through the exercise again.

Creating difference isn't easy. It may take you a few goes, especially if you're not used to it. So if that happens, it's not unusual. Don't be worried about it. Just go through the exercise again, and you will find the right difference to offer with your product and service.

Step seven is of course, to share your success.

So this month I want you to focus on creating your difference. I want you to create a product or service difference if you can. I'd like you to create a market difference, and I'd like you to create a process difference. I'd like you to carry out the SVP check on all three differences and then go out and get second opinions from other people and finally choose your difference. And there's one last thing you can do as well. Send your difference to me. I'd love to hear what the difference is for your product or service.

Next week we've got our group call and I'm really looking forward to seeing you on it, to hearing how you're progressing, helping you with any challenges and answering all your questions, and naturally there'll be a bonus training as well. Then in the following month, we are going to create content for our email newsletter, and we're going to use all the good work you've done on this assignment to put together both an elevator pitch and a sales letter for your product and service. I look forward to seeing you on the call next week and hearing how you're getting on.