WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT YOUR CUSTOMERS?

When starting a business one of the first things to consider is who is my customer? Who is going to buy my product so that I can make a successful business from my product, and by product I mean an item or a service that I provide.

Knowing and understanding **customer needs** is at the centre of every successful business, whether it sells directly to individuals or other businesses. The more you know about your customers, the more effective your sales and marketing efforts will be.

However good your product or service is, the simple truth is that no-one will buy it if they don't want it or believe they don't need it. And you won't persuade anyone that they want or need to buy what you're offering unless you **clearly understand** what it is your customers really want.

Once you have this knowledge, you can use it to persuade potential and existing customers that buying from you is in their best interests. **Knowing and understanding targeted customers is the overarching rule of exceptional companies.**

TEN THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT YOUR CUSTOMERS

1. **Who they are**  
   If you sell directly to individuals, find out your customers' gender, age, marital status and occupation. If you sell to other businesses, find out what size and kind of business they are. For example, are they a small private company or a big multinational? You’ll need to know about the decision-maker if it’s a company. What similar services/products do they use? What papers/magazines might they read? Social networking? Internet? TV? Radio? Dislikes? Children? Where they are?
2. **What they do**  
   If you sell directly to individuals, it's worth knowing their occupations and interests. If you sell to other businesses, it helps to have an understanding of what their business is trying to achieve.
3. **Why they buy**  
   If you know why customers buy a product or service, it's easier to match their needs to the benefits your business can offer.
4. **When they buy**  
   If you approach a customer just at the time they want to buy, you will massively increase your chances of success.
5. **How they buy**  
   For example, some people prefer to buy from a website, while others prefer a face-to-face meeting.
6. **How much money they have**  
   Income of individual or budget if business. You'll be more successful if you can match what you're offering to what you know your customer can afford.
7. **What they expect of you**  
   For example, if your customers expect reliable delivery and you don't disappoint them, you stand to gain repeat business.
8. **What they think about you**  
   If your customers enjoy dealing with you, they're likely to buy more. And you can only tackle problems that customers have if you know what they are.
9. **What they think about your competitors**  
   If you know how your customers view your competition, you stand a much better chance of staying ahead of your rivals. They may give you information on what rivals are doing and how they feel about that.
10. **What makes them feel good about buying**  
    If you know what makes them tick, you can serve them in the way they prefer. People will forget what you said. People will forget what you did. But people will never forget how you made them feel.

Successful entrepreneurs know with exactness the wants, wishes and buying behaviours of specific individuals. They have analysed the size of the market or the number of potential customers that fit the target profile. But further still, they know their customers’ names, ages, genders, incomes, home and Internet addresses, professions, education, associations, and marital status, number of children, hobbies, their tastes and interests. They grasp what their customers watch, read and hear. They understand their likes and dislikes. Knowing a customer to this depth is one of the key characteristics of highly successful business leaders.

Once you have this information it is essential to keep it up-to-date which will allow you to market efficiently, WOW your customers and achieve your business goals.