

To Become a Market Leader, Start Selling to Non-Buyers


— *Allan Gorman*

We live in a time where the way people shop for goods, gather information, and make choices about taking action has drastically changed from just a few years ago.

The Internet has expanded our range of choices from just a few to dozens— or sometimes hundreds — of alternatives that may look, sound, and feel pretty much the same. And, if they can't perceive any difference between you and them, more often than not, you don't get the sale, right?

Smart brand owners have come to the realization that it's no longer acceptable to just be "one of them." You must be special and unique—an attractive and trusted brand—in order to just survive.





Still, many marketers -- most marketers -- are struggling with competitors who are just as smart as them, fickle customers, and a marketplace that's set on eroding their margins and profitability.

They're scared... they're frustrated... and they're stuck in the land of "me-too."

What keeps brands stuck in "me too" country?

When companies are struggling, their problem almost always lies not in the products they make nor in the services they provide, but rather, in the fact that...

They're just not talking to the right people... at the right time... or in the right way.

Think for a minute about the way people take action. Not just about what they buy, but about any action.

First they get an idea... and then they go out and look for ways to turn that idea into a reality.

If you -- like so many other marketers -- craft your messages to address customers only when they're already in the "looking for ways" phase -- when they've already begun shopping -- it's almost too late. And it's a lot of work. Because then, you're almost always working against other competitors who are doing and saying the exactly same thing you are. Selling this way puts you in a defensive position. You're creating arguments to overcome prospects' objections, to tell them why you're better than the other guy. That's just not the way of leadership. And it's ugly.

See, once your potential customers are in the stage of shopping, you've already become a commodity to them -- whether you like it or not. They're shopping. They've got a list of criteria and they're checking off the list, with the solution that has the most check marks getting the sale. If somebody gets more check marks than you do, you lose. You try sales training, team building, new quality controls, new marketing campaigns -- and still you struggle.

Because you're saying the wrong things to the wrong people at the wrong time.

To become a market leader, start planting ideas in the minds of the disinterested

What if you could engage customers in a sales dialogue before they've started shopping?

What if you could convince them that you're what they should be shopping for?

What if you could make them feel that having what you're offering would change their life?

What if you could engage them in the IDEA stage?

What if you GIVE THEM THE IDEA of what to shop for?!

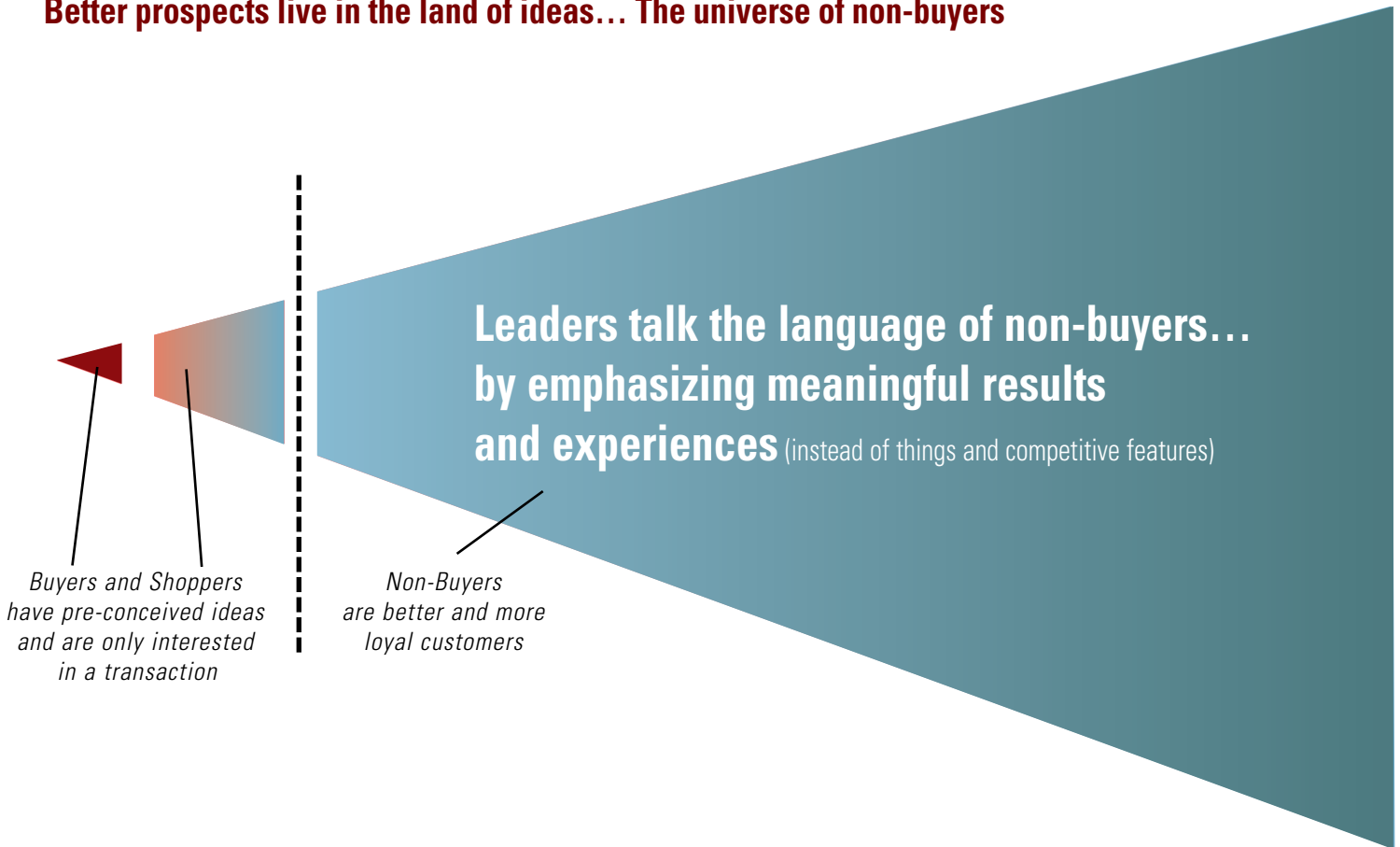
Look what just happened.

You just set new standards. You created new criteria. You created the problem -- and suggested the ideal solution. And, if the results of doing what you suggest sound really good—if they feel that their life would be vastly improved if only they had you—you've probably also eliminated the shopping phase, and all your competition too.

This is the domain of the market leaders.

Instead of doing what everyone else does, market leaders have learned to plant good ideas with non-customers -- when they're not even looking -- by waking them up to exciting possibilities. They've learned how to turn them into loyal buyers by offering innovation and a new way.

Better prospects live in the land of ideas... The universe of non-buyers



There are a vast number of potential buyers for your products who don't even know they need them yet. In fact, there are many more of these disinterested (for the moment) folks than there are people who actually may be actively looking for what you have to offer.

I call this the *universe of non-buyers*.

If you can find a way to connect with this universe—a way to convert more non-buyers into customers—just imagine what can happen. You can own a new category—and because you're first, you can then become the market leader. To do that, you need to change your pitch from what you do or how you do it to the only thing they care about: what they get.



Start selling a promise instead of a thing

You cannot reach the universe of non-buyers through the normal type of marketing and sales techniques, which stress how your product works or what it does or how it differs from the competition. If they're not shopping, they just don't care about those things. You need to connect with them through their emotions, by promoting an idea that offers the vision of a better result, a better tomorrow. Define what he/she can expect if they're savvy enough to take you up on your offer. And then, of course, do all you said you were going to do and THEN add a little extra to boot.

The beauty of this type of selling approach is that it helps form tighter relationships and more sales from your existing shoppers and buyers too. If you can convince the non-buyer to buy... and then make him thrilled that he/she did... Wow! You've just won a brand new friend.

And now you're on your way to redefining how you feel about yourself and the way others will define you from now on.

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