

"It's So Hard to Say "Good-buy""

If you are not specific in telling customers how to decide between you and your competition, they will choose based on the one thing they do understand: price. Unless you are Wal-Mart, your aim for "everyday low, low prices" could be putting the profitability and the health of your business in grave danger. By definition, most small or midsize businesses do not generate enough volume to compete on price and price alone.

The opportunity lies in your ability to define your advantages and teach your prospective customers how to buy whatever it is you are selling.

Wal-Mart has perfected the art of "everyday low, low prices". They virtually own this position in the minds of consumers. Any new retailer coming into the market today would have to spend a tremendous amount on marketing to try to unseat Wal-Mart as the low price leader. The good news is that Wal-Mart leaves plenty of room in the market for other retailers to position themselves as the leader in customer service, convenience, quality or a host of other attributes that are also important to shoppers.

Your role is to teach your customers how to buy your product or service. You have the opportunity to take your business strengths and turn them into "must haves" for shoppers.

Car marketers are geniuses at teaching us how to buy. Car marketers teach you about rack and pinion steering, twenty-four inch wheels, ABS brakes and all kinds of other bells and whistles. Granted, many of us aren't really sure why we need rack and pinion steering or ABS brakes but the car marketers have done such an incredibly effective job at teaching us what we need that we no longer even consider those cars that don't offer these basics. They have shifted our focus away from price and have turned our gaze towards an ever-growing list of "must have" features.

Take a step back and closely examine your business. How do you define what you are selling? How do you compare with your competition? Take the time to teach people why they should buy and more importantly why they should buy from you. Don't be fooled into thinking that offering the lowest price is the key to getting more customers. Your job is to let your customers know why you are the obvious choice, regardless of your price. And remember, not everyone is looking for a good buy.