

Let People Buy Time Periods

By Jay Abraham

Why hold your customers to one-at-a-time purchases, if they would be better served, relieved and benefited by being able to buy a time-structured package? Like the lawn-care business that sells you a season of full lawn maintenance, instead of just a one-shot summer mowing job. Season-long service is what many homeowners really want, after all: the "end result" of enjoying a sensational lawn without having to worry about seeding and weeding and mowing and clipping, is not achieved with a single visit.

Almost any service and most products can be offered for a time period. You can sell tickets by the day or performance, or by the season. Optometrists can provide exams alone or exams with an annual supply of contact lenses and solutions or eyeglasses.

If you sell any product of services that can be offered on what I refer to as a T.F.N.-basis (Til Further Notice), you can use your add-on or up-selling technique to run one-time purchases into ongoing, perpetual weekly, daily, monthly or quarterly "locked-in" sales.

I got a tree trimmer to turn most of his one-shot customers into regular quarterly service clients by using that add-on method. I did the same with a pest-control company and a health club. A cosmetics company built a \$100-million business by persuading 60% of all the women buying its products to up-sell or add-on and convert that one-shot over to a regular, ongoing automatic monthly shipment.

How many ways can you turn your one-shot sales into ongoing purchases using volume options including this ongoing service technique? Talk about multiplying results? If you normally get one purchase from a customer and he or she rarely comes back - and through this volume option you get 30-80% (that's that target range of people you could expect to convert over to TFN) - you can literally triple to quintuple our business overnight. Quite literally, instantly. By the way, the TFN add-on technique can work for many, if not all business or professions - if applied inventively.

Take out that pencil and paper again with the names of your three best-selling products or services. Write down next to each product or service the amount that your good customer buys from you, on average, each transaction. Just ask yourself, "What quantity or frequency choice would give these wonderful people the greatest end result and the greatest incentive to buy more?"

Consider offering three times the average volume being purchased now for 2-1/2 times the price. That's right. If you are selling a pound of something, put three pounds together. If you are selling flashlights, package three together. Remember, your customers' desired end result is not being left in the dark without a light. Three flashlights might achieve that desire better than one? If you are selling an annual exam or service, package it with three quarterly checkups. If you sell a service in monthly or yearly increments, offer three-month and three-year options. I know you get the point. And by the way, three times the volume for 2-1/2 times the price isn't the only combination to try. For example, I bought my last book of 12 oil changes for the price of seven. This simple action took from a single purchase situation to an annual supply situation. Wherever possible, let customers buy time periods worth of product versus a specific quantity. That brings me to point #2.

Package your product or service for a period of time; try a year's worth first. Any service can be turned into a yearly contract, from HVAC maintenance to initial legal consultations. Almost any consumable can be provided in a year's supply delivered every week, month, or two months. You can buy your vitamins, coffee or wine that way. Many gifts can be turned into a "gift-of-the-month" club experience.

And finally, offer your product or service Til Further Notice with periodic billings. It's not just insurance, fuel oil and newspapers that can be sold that way. Remember, people don't want valuable services or products to stop.

Now, write down the names of your ten best customers and next time they call or come in, offer them your favorite volume option. In fact, try out your offer on a second group of customers who aren't on your "best" list - and compare the results, list against list.