

Are You Speaking Your Customer's Language

One of the funny things about humans is we all expect other people to communicate in the same way that we do. However, what researchers studying a science called Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) have found is that people see and make sense of the world differently. We each have our preferred ways of representing the world in a similar way that we prefer to use either our right or left hand. The four ways of representing the world are:

1. Visual - all the things we can see with our eyes or mentally in our minds eye
2. Auditory - the sounds that we hear or the conversations we have in our head
3. Kinesthetic - the things we can touch and experience such as emotions
4. Olfactory and Gustatory - Smell and taste. Smell and taste are the least used systems by people and are less under our conscious control, so when we are trying to understand someone we focus mainly on visual, auditory and kinesthetic (VAK). Each person has a dominant or preferred method of communicating - some people are visual, some are auditory and some are kinesthetic. But what does that mean? If you want to build rapport with your customers in order to get them to make a decision to buy your product or service, one of the ways you can do this is through speaking their language. If you speak someone's language you boost their trust in you as you are "just like them". There are many different ways you can determine a person's preferred language. You can listen to their voice tone (high tone is generally a visual, a medium an auditory and a lower tone a kinesthetic). You can check out their eye movements (visuals eyes tend to go in a certain direction when they are remembering an image which is different to an auditory person). You can watch how they use their hands as each preference tends to use their hands while they are talking in a certain way (this is hilarious at election time when you watch candidates who have been drilled in this process trying to move their hands in ways outside their preferred patterns). You can watch where a person breathes from in their chest - high, mid chest or belly breathing. The easiest and simplest way you can understand a person's preference is you can listen to the verbs, adverbs and adjectives people use when they speak. Each preference uses certain words in preference to other words. A visual person will say "Let's look at this issue". An auditory person will say "How does this solution sound to you" and a kinesthetic person will say "How do you feel about this issue?" Here are some other words typical of each type: Visual words and phrases * Appears * Focus * Hazy idea * Illustrate * Imagine * Mind's eye * Perspective * Picture * See eye to eye * Vision Auditory words and phrases * Clear as a bell * Call on * Discuss * Earful * Hidden messages * Loud and clear * Rings true * Sound * Tuned in * Unheard of Kinesthetic words and phrases * Active * All washed up * Feel * Firm foundation * Get a handle on * Grasp * Lay your cards on the table * Not following you * Slipped your mind * Solid Now you have a basic idea of the different languages, go back and look at your marketing and communications materials. If you are like most people you have written your marketing using your preferred communication style. That means you are appealing to people of one type only and missing the other two type's preferences. To say it another way - you are not speaking the language of 2/3 of your customers. To be most effective in your communication you need to speak the language of all of your customers. You need to be clear in your communication each one of your customers otherwise they will feel rejected or not connected to you. (If you look closely at this paragraph you will be able to identify all 3 types of preferences touched in the messages). It is as simple (or as hard) as ensuring each of your communications covers all of the preferences of your clients. When you speak your customer's language you will achieve more powerful sales results as well as building stronger relationships with your customers. This is a win-win for both your business and your clients.

About the Author

Ingrid Cliff is a Freelance Copywriter with her Brisbane Copywriting Business (Heart Harmony). Ingrid writes a free weekly small business newsletter packed full of articles and tips and Small Business Ideas blog for small businesses. www.heartharmony.com.au

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