The Role of Customer Empathy in the Future of Marketing

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**We all know that effective marketing puts the customer first.**

But, let's be honest:

* How do you really know what matters to your target market?
* How do you know which marketing activities to implement, test, and refine in the first place?
* How can you create amazing customer experiences that will deliver revenue and a higher ROI?

With empathy.

By harnessing this underrated human superpower, marketers can cut through the noise and prioritize activities that will deliver real value both to the customer and to the business. Empathy can also help you mobilize an army of brand advocates whose advocacy will expand your marketing reach exponentially.

Which is why the future of marketing is bright. Let's look at the path leading to that future and the steps marketers can take to get there.

*(****Editor's note:****This is the first in a two-part series of articles on customer empathy. Up next, in two weeks: "How to Use Empathy in Your B2B Brand Storytelling.")*

**The Main Problem With Marketing Today**

The problem with marketing today is that a lot of us are still focusing on what marketing no longer is. Marketing has evolved. It is no longer defined by ads and promotions to sell product.

Execute a few marketing tactics, and magically achieve revenue growth, right?

No longer.

Too many marketers have accepted the idea that we pour a lot of time, money, and effort into an ever-expanding pool of available marketing activities—social ads, emails, billboards no one is going to look at—only to move the needle a little bit.

And only for a limited period of time. Then you have to keep making more efforts—more ads, more promotions—to keep hitting your marketing KPIs.

So, [what is effective marketing today?](https://marketinginsidergroup.com/strategy/what-is-marketing/) It's the process of getting to know your customers so you can build an ongoing relationship between your company and the buyer.

And that takes empathy.

Empathy helps you connect on a deeply human level with prospects and customers alike. An [upcoming MarketingProfs event on Empathy in Marketing](https://www.marketingprofs.com/event/43107/doubleheader-event-customer-empathy?source=mpt&utm_medium=article&utm_campaign=sponsored&utm_term=strategy&utm_content=spwb) features two presentations: "The ROI of Empathy: How Marketers Use Customer Empathy as a Business Differentiator" and "Empathy and the Future of Marketing: B2B Success Stories." [Register today (it's free)](https://www.marketingprofs.com/event/43107/doubleheader-event-customer-empathy?source=mpt&utm_medium=article&utm_campaign=sponsored&utm_term=strategy&utm_content=spwb).

If you haven't built relationships with your customers, you're not marketing effectively. If you don't understand their needs, wants, and goals, if you haven't been making efforts to build trust, you're not going to reach your business goals.

You can engage in dozens of marketing activities—blow through your marketing budget—and never resonate with your target market.

**How to Build the Type of Customer Relationships That Help You Achieve Results for Your Business**

***Put yourself in your customers' shoes***

Talk to your customers. Listen to the conversations they're having online. Gain feedback about what matters to them right now to ensure you're always offering relevant solutions. Then, use that knowledge to [create phenomenal content](https://marketinginsidergroup.com/content-marketing/what-is-content-marketing/) that helps them solve a problem, educates and informs, or in some other way improves their lives.

***Be authentic***

[Fully 86% of consumers](https://stackla.com/resources/reports/the-consumer-content-report-influence-in-the-digital-age/) say that brand authenticity matters when they're deciding which brands to support. You can be authentic through consistent empathetic messaging across your marketing. Also, express a focused set of brand values—not generic values, but values aligned with your brand story. And those values come through in all your content and all your actions.

***Build trust through***[***thought leadership***](https://marketinginsidergroup.com/content-marketing/what-is-thought-leadership-and-when-you-should-use-it/)

Provide well-researched, *truly helpful* content to your customers consistently. Doing so will signal that your brand has the answers they need. [Two-thirds of people](https://www.edelman.com/sites/g/files/aatuss191/files/2019-07/2019_edelman_trust_barometer_special_report_in_brands_we_trust.pdf) say they will stop using a product if they don't trust the company behind it.

***Keep connecting***

A great content marketing strategy will help you to keep connecting with customers. Useful blog posts. Engaging social media content. How-to videos. Informative e-books. Game-changing events, online or in-person. All threaded together with a cohesive, consistent strategy.

And always approachable and relevant because you're using empathy every step of the way.

**What Is Empathetic Marketing and What Does It Do?**

With [empathetic marketing](https://marketinginsidergroup.com/strategy/empathetic-marketing-connect-customers/), you're allowing yourself, your customers, and your employees to be human. And that leads to immense benefits to all concerned.

But you do have to go against the grain to do this. In business, we tend to think we need to continually talk about our product to sell it. You know it's effective. It's easy-to-use. It's a great value. Or whatever else sets it apart from other products. So you keep talking about it. Posting about it. Making promotional videos about how great it is.

But that's not going to strike a chord with buyers. The truth is, you're not going to sell more stuff by talking more about the stuff you sell.

If you want to increase revenue, you'll get better results if you move your focal point from product to person.

Empathy is the guiding force here. It's where you are problem-solving in a powerful way because you care about people. Customers, employees, everyone.

Empathetic marketing is all about helping, not selling. It's about marketing to real people. Having conversations with your customers. And looking at what you can do with your business, your products, and your content marketing, to make their lives better. It also means looking at how you can help solve society's problems in a way that aligns with your brand values.

When we take this empathetic approach, you know what happens?

* We're more passionate about what we do as marketers or business leaders. So, our messaging becomes more impactful.
* Employees are more engaged. So they start becoming brand advocates and even thought leaders.
* Customers are more inspired and excited about what your business is doing. This is where you start to see your customer base start doing some of your marketing for you: Sharing your content. Spreading the word. Raving about your product and your brand.

It's a lot of positivity. But what's incredible is that it starts perpetuating more positivity. More engagement and reach. Greater brand authority and trust. Higher revenue and a much higher ROI.

And you can [start this road to the future of marketing now](https://www.marketingprofs.com/event/43107/doubleheader-event-customer-empathy?source=mpt&utm_medium=article&utm_campaign=sponsored&utm_term=strategy&utm_content=spwb).