

Why People Buy

Perhaps you already know why people buy, but do you know all 51 reasons?

The more of those reasons you know, the better you'll be able to market. By Jay Conrad Levinson Geoff Ayling, in his superb book, "Rapid Response Advertising," provides wannabe guerrillas with a full fifty reasons why people buy. There are really far more than fifty, but I have a feeling that these fifty will get your creative juices flowing. People make purchases for these, among many reasons:

1. To make more money – even though it can't buy happiness
2. To become more comfortable, even a bit more
3. To attract praise – because almost everybody loves it
4. To increase enjoyment – of life, of business, of virtually anything
5. To possess things of beauty – because they nourish the soul
6. To avoid criticism – which nobody wants
7. To make their work easier – a constant need to many people
8. To speed up their work – because people know that time is precious
9. To keep up with the Joneses – there are Joneses in everybody's lives
10. To feel opulent – a rare, but valid reason to make a purchase
11. To look younger – due to the reverence placed upon youthfulness
12. To become more efficient – because efficiency saves time
13. To buy friendship – I didn't know it's for sale, but it often is
14. To avoid effort – because nobody loves to work too hard
15. To escape or avoid pain – which is an easy path to making a sale
16. To protect their possessions – because they worked hard to get them
17. To be in style – because few people enjoy being out of style
18. To avoid trouble – because trouble is never a joy
19. To access opportunities – because they open the doors to good things
20. To express love – one of the noblest reasons to make any purchase
21. To be entertained – because entertainment is usually fun
22. To be organized – because order makes lives simpler
23. To feel safe – because security is a basic human need
24. To conserve energy – their own or their planet's sources of energy
25. To be accepted – because that means security as well as love
26. To save time -- because they know time is more valuable than money
27. To become more fit and healthy -- seems to me that's an easy sale
28. To attract the opposite sex – never undermine the power of love
29. To protect their family – tapping into another basic human need
30. To emulate others – because the world is teeming with role models
31. To protect their reputation – because they worked hard to build it
32. To feel superior – which is why status symbols are sought after
33. To be trendy – because they know their friends will notice
34. To be excited – because people need excitement in a humdrum life
35. To communicate better -- because they want to be understood
36. To preserve the environment – giving rise to cause-related marketing
37. To satisfy an impulse – a basic reason behind a multitude of purchases
38. To save money – the most important reason to 14% of the population
39. To be cleaner – because unclean often goes with unhealthy and unloved
40. To be popular – because inclusion beats exclusion every time
41. To gratify curiosity -- it killed the cat but motivates the sale
42. To satisfy their appetite – because hunger is not a good thing
43. To be individual – because all of us are, and some of us need assurance

44. To escape stress – need I explain?
45. To gain convenience – because simplicity makes life easier
46. To be informed – because it's no joy to be perceived as ignorant
47. To give to others – another way you can nourish your soul
48. To feel younger – because that equates with vitality and energy
49. To pursue a hobby – because all work and no play etc. etc. etc.
50. To leave a legacy – because that's a way to live forever

I must add one more area about which you should be creative, one more reason that motivates people to make a purchase, and that area deals with pain. Thomas Jefferson said, "The art of life is the art of avoiding pain; and he is the best pilot, who steers clearest of the rocks and shoals with which it is beset." More recently, Sam Deep and Lyle Sussman, who wrote "Close The Deal," teach the importance of pain and the ways to learn where it resides. If you know exactly, you've got a heckuva great starting point for your creativity.

There. Now that you've got 51 ways to win the hearts and business of your prospects, I think you'll have an easier job of winning sales and profits.

(Jay Conrad Levinson is the author of the "Guerrilla Marketing" series of books, the best-selling marketing series in history. This column has been excerpted from Jay's forthcoming book, "Guerrilla Creativity: Make Your Message Irresistible with the Power of Memes," published by Houghton Mifflin and available in early October.)

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