

# How to Make Selling Unnecessary

*Rethinking What We Know  
About Sales and Marketing*

By Blaine Rada  
Arch MI



**M**arketing isn't about getting the sale. Don't get me wrong, effective marketing can lead to sales, but I believe most marketing is ineffective because it focuses on the wrong things.

Marketing should first get someone's attention and then help to establish whether or not the product or service being marketed is the best fit for the buyer.

Let's talk about some attention-getting ideas to establish your credit union as a solid fit for your customer, and differentiate it from all of the other choices your members have.

Because if your marketing looks and sounds like every other lender's, how can you stand out from the competition?

## **CLEAR VS. CLEVER**

Most marketing messages attempt to be clever, as if getting attention is the only thing that matters. Have you ever watched a commercial and had no idea

what it was about? Or worse yet, couldn't recall the company or product being advertised? This happens to me all the time.

Getting attention isn't enough. To be memorable, the message needs to be authentic and relevant. Authentic marketing is transparent, even vulnerable at times. It approaches the consumer from their perspective, not yours.

One of the challenges we

all have in the mortgage industry is we tend to look at everything through the eyes of a mortgage professional, which isn't who we're selling to. The problems we solve—and even the language we use—need to be from the member's perspective.

This may seem obvious, but it isn't as easy as it sounds. The reaction you want to get from people is, "Tell me more," not "So what?"

Marketing authentically from the member's perspective will help ensure



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your message is relevant to them. Just consider for a moment what gets your attention when you're visiting a website or scrolling through a social media feed. Which posts, videos and content will you actually take the time to review as opposed to just scrolling by? With the exception of entertainment (think puppy videos), what gets your attention is what is relevant and valuable, as if it's speaking directly to you.

## PAIN OR PLEASURE?

Most marketing focuses on either enhancing pleasure or reducing pain. What I often see in mortgage marketing is mostly focused on pleasure. Quicken Loans' "Push Button, Get Mortgage" campaign is an example of this.

But isn't there some pain involved in getting a mortgage? Isn't there a good chance many borrowers will experience some pain in how long the process takes or the amount of documentation that is required?

My suggestion is that you ponder your answer to the following question: How is your CU the fast-acting pain reliever for mortgage headaches?

I'm not suggesting you focus on the pain of getting a mortgage. But if you can identify how you make the process less painful and communicate that to your members, they'll not only find it compelling, they'll feel like you understand them and have their best interests at heart. Again, the reaction you want from them is "Tell me more."

## THE THREE M's

The best marketing is a combination of three M's: Market, Method and Message.

The market is your desired audience. Who are you trying to speak to? We often think of demographics to answer this question. Demographics are easily identified or measured, including age, gender, marital status, first-time buyers, etc.

That's a good starting point, but I'd like to suggest you go even deeper and look at something called psychographics. A person's psychographic profile is internal—relating to their feelings, desires, concerns and attitudes.

You see psychographics at work in ads by real estate developers emphasizing sustainable features such as energy-efficient appliances in response to surveys showing that many potential buyers are focused on reducing their environmental impact.

In another example, ads for Porsche sports cars in-

corporate psychographic attributes of the company's best customers—many of whom are successful "hard-chargers" who like attention and will splurge on certain purchases to reward themselves.

When you can speak to the psychographics and not just the demographics, people will feel like you really understand them.

After defining the market you want to reach, you should consider the method you'll use to reach your prospects. The best way to do this is to "be where they are."

If you want to reach younger borrowers, where do they go for information about mortgages? YouTube is the second-largest search engine behind Google. If you don't have any videos on YouTube, you're missing out on a key opportunity to connect with young people searching there for information about mortgage loans.

Once you know the market you want to attract and the method you'll use to get their attention, you need to focus on your message. I've already said a lot about this, but your message needs to align with the market and method to be effective. The worst examples I see are often on social media platforms, where the intent appears to simply be to reach as many people as possible.

## CONNECT VS. CONTACT

Social media can be an amazing platform to create connection, but many CUs don't do it well. It really comes down to intent. Do you use social media because it's efficient or do you want it to be truly effective?



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fives, I stopped long enough to listen to their concerns and then gave them a hug before speaking to someone else? I wouldn't be able to get to as many people this way, but I would have made a connection with the people I listened to and hugged.

A high-five is making contact. A hug is making a connection. Social media can be a high-five or a hug depending on how you choose to use it.

## UN-MARKETING

Perhaps what I'm suggesting is that we get better at un-marketing, doing things differently than everyone else. I don't have anything against the traditional approaches to sales and marketing, but why would you want to do what everyone else does when you're trying to differentiate yourself and stand out?

Instead:

- Focus on being clear, instead of being clever.
- Tell people how you can reduce the pain of getting a mortgage.
- Align your market, method and media to achieve a connection with your customers rather than just establishing contact.

By doing these three things, "selling" in the traditional sense really can become unnecessary.

Two paths lie before you. One is more efficient; the other is more effective. Which one will you choose? ▲

*Blaine Rada is the Senior National Trainer and Instructional Designer for Arch Mortgage Insurance. A thought leader with more than 30 years of mortgage industry experience, Rada's focus is on helping organizations rise above the competition. He holds a Certificate in Distance Education from Indiana University. Rada also holds the highest designation from the National Speakers Association, that of Certified Speaking Professional.*



Blaine Rada