



Don't Try to Sell More. Simply Entice Customers to Buy More.

By [John Reiss](#)

The best sellers are not sellers at all. They're more like buyers or customer advocates. By identifying and relating to their customers, sales and marketing professionals build better communications plans with better ROI.

The primary difference between buying and selling is in the exchange. In one hand you have a product or service and in the other hand you have currency. Somewhere in the exchange, perception is defined and value is established (the most important ingredients in commerce).

So who's responsible for establishing value?

The seller.

Defining perception and establishing value begins by understanding buyer motives. Once motives are understood, positioning and marketing strategies can be devised that appeal to the specific motives or thirsts of the buyer.

Bars and pubs use salted peanuts and pretzels. Auto manufacturers use prestige and sex appeal. Software companies use ease of use, efficiency, and productivity. No matter what your business, creating thirst depends solely on your customers' needs and wants.

Talk to your customers. Find out what they like and don't like about your products or services. Find out what they'd love to have. Learn from them.

Look at things from a different angle. Shake things up a bit. Instead of thinking you can't make a horse drink, say "I can lead them to drink, but I can't make them water."

Apply what you've learned to your next marketing plan: rewrite your sales collateral, launch a customer-centric newsletter, re-architecture your website, or reposition an old ad campaign. The enhancements you make should speak to and quench your customers' thirsts.

Remember, it's not about selling more. It's about customers buying more. With a balanced blend of persistence, strategy, and luck, your new customer-focused marketing materials will surely improve ROI and impress the CEO.