

# Communication & Language

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The best salespeople are able to take the complex and make it simple to understand. Like a teacher they can explain clearly and through questioning make sure their points are being understood.

### Simple enough

Businesses on the other hand particularly in the software and tech space don't achieve this simplicity in conveying or should I say communicating what they do, what they sell and why that's good for you.

In part this is due to the thousands and thousands of different solutions on offer and in part philosophy, that is to say how they perceive their offering and consequently how they position it.

Many businesses advertise empathy and customer centricity, which feels more like marketing than reality. The truth is many are product centric and as per our last podcast pushing your product to make it fit is not a strategy. Least a means of growth.

And this spreads throughout an organisation from the language they use internally to how they communicate with customers.

In today's show we are going to focus on those topics demonstrating both the good and the bad in how businesses communicate with their target audience.

Poor communication impacts sales, probably an obvious statement to make and it all starts with the website. This is typically the first port of call for prospects. Whether they've been referred to a business or searched online, that First impression just as with human interactions, is what will entice a visitor to engage or leave.

Back in the day when the internet was only a child, most sites were informational, essentially, a web page was an advertisement for a business. It contained all the information of the product or service being sold and offered a means for people to make contact with that business. Very simple, but also very effective.

Things certainly have evolved since those early days but the principle of AIDA doesn't seem to be as robustly applied as it used to be. For those unfamiliar, AIDA is an acronym relative to advertising and I'd also say to sales, as it aims to achieve the same outcome. It is very customer/buyer centric in how it is designed. Here is what it stands for:

**A for Attention** - Number one is to get a buyer's attention

**I for Interest** - Now that you have their attention you want to stimulate some interest

**D for Desire** - With attention and interest in the bag you want them to want what you are selling

**A for Action** - When desire to buy is reached you want your prospect to make a positive buying decision

In a nutshell that is what an advertisement tries to achieve and as far as a website goes the same principle should be applied. Now I know there is a lot more entailed for a website to be fruitful, but without the drivers for that acronym to work, the online journey will be cut short.

The key elements a business needs to communicate on its landing page are:

**Who they are**

**What they do**

**How they are resolving a problem**

**Who they have helped**

**What's good about that and why it matters**

As per our previous podcast If it don't Fit it don't Sell, it is paramount that in addressing all these questions the target audience/industry has been well defined. And by answering these questions your value proposition will be clear to help those potential customers take action and become a tangible lead.

The examples I'm about to discuss are from the software and tech industry. Pitching intangible products is no mean feat, in contrast with the straightforwardness of the tangible, for instance, a shoe brand like Clark's. While Clark's website clearly conveys its product – shoes – many software vendor sites often lack clarity, occasionally resembling more of a philosophical discourse than a clear presentation of what they offer.

The first example is a survey software company which talks about everything but surveys. Its core offering is in essence a survey tool, something many businesses need.

When you arrive on their landing page it talks about communication, engagement, productivity, call centres, decision making, products and much more.

As for target audience it covers a vast array of industries and businesses. Now that could be the case for example with Microsoft a giant who sells 1000's of different solutions if not more across multiple industries and to many different target audiences, here are some interesting stats for ms3:

- Nearly 70% of organisations globally use Azure for their cloud services
- 1.6 Billion active devices running windows
- 100 Million X-Box players
- 270 Million Teams users
- 258 Million Microsoft office users

Of course you're going to say to me if it's email or an OS or an amazing games console it covers a much much wider audience and you would be right.

The point, as I learned from my own business many years ago, is that your focus should be on specific market segments, or if your offering does indeed cater for wide audiences perhaps state who they are more clearly, for example "as used in these industries or by these businesses"... the more obvious you make it for people to understand the more leads you will generate.

Going back to this survey company, In addition to the wide audience they also offer over 15 SKUs adding to the overall ambiguity. How would one know what they are looking for or what is right for them with such a selection?

It can be off putting and may deter potential leads from engaging.

This particular business fails to communicate what it does clearly. The language they use in how they communicate what they do is very philosophical. It would be interesting if it was possible to find out; What that site's bounce rate is... I'm fairly confident they could easily boost their leads by 40% to 50% if they were more direct with their overall communication.

If you're not clear in your statement from the get go or near the top of your landing page, a buyer will scroll 2, 3 possibly even 4 times before bouncing and going elsewhere to find what they're looking for. I think sometimes businesses forget this.

A sales leader I met with a couple of weeks ago has the same issue with their company's website. In fact it is so badly structured they do not share the url in any of their outbound activities. When asked by a prospect for the url the salespeople explain that the site is being restructured... Awkward to say the least and a great waste of an important and valuable business asset. These days if your business has no website it isn't really a business especially in the B2B world.

Now two businesses who nail this particular point are Zendesk and Docusign.

Zendesk started as a customer service helpdesk solution and over the last 17 years through product growth and acquisitions has evolved into a full customer experience solution, now used by over 100,000 businesses.

Their landing page gets to the point instantly:

Unlock the power of customer experiences  
Build lasting relationships with our complete customer service solution.

There you have it. I immediately know that this solution can help me cater for my customers by offering them positive customer experiences.

An older statement used when I worked there was:

If you have customers you need Zendesk

Looking at our AIDA acronym that instantly gets my attention and peaks my interest.

Zendesk communicates its offering in a clear language that makes sense. They reinforce that with testimonials on the landing page to help visitors better understand how the Zendesk solution can help them.

There is very little scrolling required to further understand what Zendesk does enabling a buyer to quickly take action whether that be starting a trial or making contact.

The next one, another unicorn, Docusign and e signature platform which has revolutionised the way we do business today. They state what they do clearly from the outset:

Everything you need to agree  
Easily send, sign and manage all your contracts in one place.

Similarly to Zendesk's landing page it is efficient and effective. Testimonials are right there for a visitor to scan over and relate other use cases to their own.

I would describe Docusign's offering as doing exactly what it says it does and that makes it so much easier for someone to engage with their business.

No fancy terminology or vagueness or ambiguity in either of these examples. If I'm looking for e signature Docusign is definitely going to be one of my choices and likewise if I'm looking for a customer service solution, Zendesk will be in my short list.

The more complex a solution is, the simpler the language should be to describe what it does. I think the problem with complex offerings is just that, they perform multiple complex functions. This in itself makes the translation of what it does challenging, but keeping language simple and understandable will greatly help in growing pipeline.

The same goes with our example earlier on, say what you do don't wrap it up in your language, your perception. How you see it is not how your customer, initially, will see it.

This is a big topic on which plenty more could be said, but to wrap up, my advice for those selling is to firstly adapt the language you use to the customer and secondly, especially where you have multiple SKUs, to clearly state what each SKU does, who its for and why that's good.

This may sound obvious, but when you have multiple offerings, it takes effort for a potential customer to assess whether or not that solution could possibly work for them.

It's really about idiot proofing from the website to your sales conversation. People want to understand a product and why it is good for them. If they don't they become frustrated or worse yet feel foolish. Put them at ease, speak their language and keep it simple. Big words and terms do not make you sound smart.

