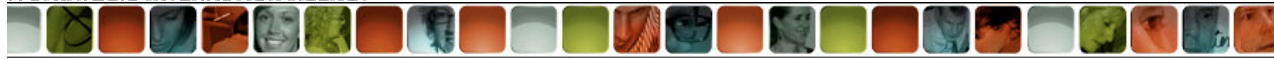


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Should the Horse Be for Sale? The Nays Have It.

Posted by Tom Marks | [Advertising](#), [Business Strategy](#), [Content Marketing](#),
[Interactive](#), [Marketing](#), [Social Media](#) | Wednesday 5 May 2010 1:58 pm

My father was a preeminent food and drug marketer with Foote, Cone & Belding, and then later on in a solo consulting practice. He was actually the man behind Orville Redenbacher's Gourmet Popping Corn, but that's another story for a different time. My father believed that the best ad written was from a farmer selling his horse. The headline read *Horse For Sale* and under the headline there was a picture of the horse, and under the picture of the horse was the word *Horse*. In other words, just get it all out there, go sell something, and don't horse around. Times have really changed.

Two colleagues of mine in Madison, Doug Tangwall and Wendy Soucie, are taking a deep look into effective selling, and getting results, which is probably the basis for their company's name – End Result Marketing. Their approach to generating sales leads is called *Nurture Marketing*, and although this strategy has been around since the mid-nineties, it's a 180 from my father's approach or those sales methods like the Ben Franklin and Bear Trap sales closes.

Doug defines *Nurture Marketing* as educational promotion designed to improve customer outcomes and cultivate affinity for a business. That makes sense, and it's in complete lock step with the belief that we spend so much time trying to be understood and not enough time understanding. In other words, stop the hard sell and substitute that approach with a little hard listening. As Doug says, "Think of nurture marketing as the exact opposite of traditional marketing. Instead of 'buy my stuff', it's 'what information can I provide to help my customers succeed'?"

By all accounts the approach works. By combining research into a client's business, including research into their target audiences, promotion, thought leadership and social conversation, Doug and Wendy have obtained 14-17 times the sales leads than traditional tactics. Yes, it takes time to



nurture these relationships, but being a trusted advisor is going to pay off more than merely being a product hawker. “The buying process has changed and our sales process needs to change accordingly. Most of us educate ourselves about products now before we ever call anyone. Sharing knowledge is increasingly important to differentiate your business. The concept of nurture goes hand in hand with social media outreach,” adds Wendy.

But don’t just think about that in terms of generating sales leads — continue the *Nurture Marketing* process all the way down the line. I have a friend who, in the interest of expediency, left home on a road trip and realized 40 minutes later – at the convenience store counter – that he was wallet-less. A representative from his financial institution actually made the trek north to deliver him some cash. Can anyone say, “customer for life?” That’s nurturing the relationship.

So, here’s a little *Nurture Marketing* tip. Use social media to conduct some primary research about your prospect, then take some time and extrapolate some useful data from secondary sources.

Synthesize the information and develop a few critical insights that you can share with your future customer, but don’t share all of them – you might need to meet again. They’ll see you as a thought leader, as a company who is genuinely interested in them, and as a person who is in it for the long haul. No doubt the sales and marketing process has changed, now we need to make certain we change along with it.

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