



By Richard D. Czerniawski

## CREATING CUSTOMERS – THE RULE OF SEVEN



I'm curious about how many calls it takes on average for a salesperson to make a sale to a prospective customer for a given brand or her/his company. The same goes for the number of impressions an ad must make to create a customer. What does it take?

I came across the following: The Rule of Seven. The Rule of Seven is a marketing principle that states your prospect needs to come across your offer at least 7 times before they notice it and begin to take action.

This rule originated in the film industry, where they determined a prospective moviegoer required at least seven messages before they purchased a ticket. However, I do not know how this "Rule of Seven" became a principle. A principle is something that is proven. The Rule of Seven is unfounded. It's poppycock! The fact of the matter is that it could take one call or impression or twenty-four. The correct answer is: it depends.

The number of calls or impressions to create a customer depends upon a few factors. The first is whether we have and are calling on the correct target customer. For example, if we're marketing and selling million-dollar luxury yachts and our messaging is directed at someone earning \$25,000 a year and living in middle America—far and away from anywhere s/he can put a boat into water—our sales call or ad impression will never make a dent, no less a sale. We'd be foolish to direct our

messaging there.

Another factor is your brand's appeal. If it is undifferentiated, then it is likely to take far more than seven impressions. It might also require (deep) discounting to make the sale. Moreover, there's little likelihood you've created a customer. The target customer will probably not stick with your brand. It's more likely that s/he will move on to a competitor when it offers discount pricing or an attractive incentive.

Indeed, where and when your message appears is an essential factor. We want to reach our prospective customers where they are, when they're receptive, and where we can communicate our brand's story effectively. This may call for a host of touchpoints. However, we need to ensure critical mass at the most productive touchpoint or the optimal mix of touchpoints.

The delivery of the message is a factor too! Our messaging must be compelling. It needs to be fueled by a BIG, juicy Campaign Idea. If our messaging does not contain a BIG Campaign Idea, it will not be compelling. If it is not compelling, then it's doubtful that we'll successfully motivate behaviors and register a sale—period!

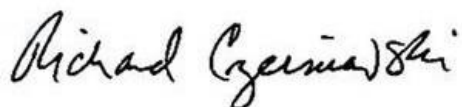
It doesn't matter if the answer is 7 or 17. And, if we're talking averages, which we are, then "7" could mean anywhere from "1" impression to "whatever" based upon the prospective customer our message reaches.

I'm not interested in the exact number because whatever it may be, my goal, and yours, should be to reduce it. When we target appropriately, promise a relevant and meaningfully differentiated benefit—a Point of Preference one—and deliver it with a BIG, juicy Campaign Idea, we reduce the number of sales calls and impressions needed to create a customer.

When we reduce the number of calls and impressions to create a customer, we enhance productivity. Our "growth acceleration rate" increases, sales grow faster than the category, market share improves, profit rises, and our brand may even be rewarded with more company resources.

***Reduce the number of sales calls and impressions to create a customer.*** If you'd like to learn more, read chapters 5 – *Lack of Relevant, Meaningful Differentiation*, 6 – *Mis-Targeting Target Customers*, and 11 - *Lack of Ideas, The Mark of a Dull Brand*, from my most recent book, **AVOIDING CRITICAL MARKETING ERRORS: How to Go from Dumb to Smart Marketing**. Check it out here: <http://bdn-intl.com/avoiding-critical-marketing-errors>

Peace and best wishes,





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