

Three sales-boosting techniques derived from adding new value to old products

December 27 2021



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In the age where everyone can sell goods and services by simply opening an online store, we see the number of similar products and services from both existing and new sellers that have grown exponentially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

New merchants looking to earn extra income may feel unsure about what they want to sell because so many similar items are already available in the market. How can they compete? Existing sellers want to keep selling their goods in this fiercely competitive market. How can they make their [products](#) and services more appealing to customers? Asst. Professor Dr. Kritinee Pongtanalert, Lecturer, Department of Marketing, Faculty of Commerce and Accountancy, Chulalongkorn University (Chula Business School) recommends three simple tips for success that brands in Japan have already implemented to help differentiate their products, increase the appeal to consumers, and boost sales.

1. Pick a star product and run with it

Having a variety of products and services used to be a selling point, but in the age of information overload, promoting all your products and services may overwhelm the consumers. Asst. Prof. Dr. Kritinee suggests merchants pick only a few star products to create clear differentiation.

"Take the example of a restaurant that has an extensive menu with all delicious dishes, but you cannot present all of them. Customers nowadays do not search for the restaurant's name but the menu they want to eat. If you have a great many dishes, but your specialty is hard-boiled eggs in Chinese-five-spice sweet gravy (Kai Palo), try to focus your

presentation on just this one dish, but add variants; 6 choices of how the eggs are prepared—soft-boiled, raw, Chinese-style, Taiwanese-style, Thai-style for example. Doing so will make your menu trendier and more impressive to customers."

Asst. Prof. Dr. Kritinee cited an example of a pottery maker in Japan who chooses to present only their thin ceramic "drinking cup" (without a handle) made in minimalist style and rebrand their products to be memorable to customers. "Though the brand has lots of products, they cannot present them all. So, they pick a product and add a new value proposition to showcase its strength which is the spouted rim that fits people's lips."

What about your products and services? What are your star products that will resonate with customers and differentiate you from the competitors?

2. Same product, new use

In this day and age, trends come and go quickly. Your products may suddenly fall to the wayside. Products that used to be essential may become outdated in the blink of an eye. To keep your products at the consumers' top of mind, you need a change in perspective and present new uses for the same products.

"They mix and match the ties with various styles of clothing to create more interests, present more unique ways of tying the ties, give the ties gimmicky names, like the "34 Degrees Series" for a cool and comfortable mood, etc. Also, they create stories for the products, making them more appealing."

Try to find a new use for your products. What angles can you play?

3. Same product, new experience

Undeniably, an important factor for hospitality businesses such as hotels, airlines, and restaurants is "the creation of a great, interesting, and unique experience" for customers.

Asst. Prof. Dr. Kritini brought up an interesting case study of the "Kanoya Tofu" shop in Fukushima Prefecture, Japan. The taste of their tofu is probably similar to any other shops, but what differentiates them is the fact that customers can come in and make their own tofu.

"Customers would enjoy the experience of stirring the soy milk and then cutting the tofu they made. Normally, this shop sells their tofu for 600 yen for each cube, but with this new experience, they can charge 3,000 yen while making their customers happy at the same time," Asst. Prof. Dr. Kritini said.

"This is a unique way of offering a new service that requires almost nothing," she added. "Whoever has an office that can be open to letting interested children gain some forms of professional hands-on experience, could see a chance to create an extra income from the so-called run-of-the-mill stuff that they are already doing."

There are many techniques to breathe new life into existing products and increase sales. You don't need to find new products or create new services. Just look for ways or angles to add new values to the things that already exist. It is important to be clear who your customers are and find ways to sell your products or services in new ways that capture the customers' hearts," Asst. Prof. Dr. Kritinee concluded.

Provided by Chulalongkorn University

Citation: Three sales-boosting techniques derived from adding new value to old products (2021, December 27) retrieved 26 April 2024 from <https://techxplore.com/news/2021-12-sales-boosting-techniques-derived-adding-products.html>

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