

MORE ON ADVERTISING

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RESTAGING YOUR LOCAL BUSINESSES

In a recent webinar, Peter Lamb of Lamb Consulting shared his selling approach in this time of “business reset”.

Here are the bullet points, for those of you who weren’t able to join the presentation:

TLC stands for “Think Like The Customer”. Start with their needs, and work backward. If we start with “Here’s a revenue idea for the newspaper”, we aren’t going to be as effective. Our customers want us to listen to them vent. We need to let them talk it out, and we need to listen closely. So we can give them options that will make things better. That’s what they really want.

Customers do not want to be sold. They want a partner (us) to give them options. Customers are saying, “I want to hear from my reps. They are my trusted representatives.”

Start a conversation. Let them tell us what they’re doing. A good question to ask is: “What, if anything, has been working for you the last few months? What do you believe your biggest marketing challenges are, as you reopen?”

Be prepared to answer this question: “What’s working in other places?” But Lamb suggests we don’t try to answer this right away. His suggestion is to tell them we’ll get back to them after researching best practices from other places.

Lamb recommends a re-think of “rebrand and relaunch”. He says we’ll do better if we think “restage”, as in “We can help you restage your business.”

Charitable chat: Another important question that can lead to a marketing campaign is, “During this time, what has your business done to make things better?” If they’ve been involved in helping others through charity or something else, that’s a great newspaper ad campaign.

Don’t end the first conversation trying to make a hard close. Instead, say something like: “I’ll get with my team of “brand experts” — key word! — and we’ll come up with some ideas for you.”

We need to help our customers form their message as they open up. The local newspaper can do them a great service, messaging what audiences want to know: Store hours, services — and, most importantly, what they are doing to make things better.

Not just a re-opening. Treat this like a Grand Opening! Tell your advertisers: “We can help you make your message better.” Be confident, like an expert.

As salespeople, our old model was pursuing business categories like real estate, automotive and recruiting. Now, we need to look at the niche markets. Look at niche businesses that are busier now than they were pre-virus. Look for businesses that are not doing business with us right now.

Businesses helping businesses: Encourage sponsorships from some cash-rich businesses, such as a utility sponsoring a list of restaurants that are doing carryout.

Record unemployment? An opportunity! Think what you can do as a media organization. Peter Lamb reminds us: “We are great at matching people to jobs.”

Think like an advertising agency. The companies on the way to success think like an agency: They use data and bundle solutions. The newspaper advantage: We’re far cheaper than traditional advertising agencies.

If your advertiser wants to reduce prices to generate cash flow, be sure it’s clear that the reductions are for a limited time only.