

# Association Sales & Marketing Tips

## IDEAS FOR ASSOCIATION EXECUTIVES

### Value-Based Selling

#### *Does One Mercedes Equal Two Toyotas?*

What is the difference between cost and value? Cost is the price you charge your customers and value is what your customers receive in exchange for their money. Let me give you an example. Suppose you are in the market to buy a new car. You look at a Toyota and a Mercedes and note that for the price of one Mercedes you could buy two Toyotas. You also know that both cars have the same basic functionality: they use the same type of fuel, can comfortably seat the same number of passengers, meet all of the federal safety and environmental regulations, offer similar warranties, can travel faster than most of the posted speed limits you will encounter, and have many of the same features and functions. So why do some consumers buy the Toyota and others purchase the Mercedes? The answer is simple: the purchasing decision is made not based on the cost of the product, but on the value that product is perceived to deliver. Some consumers are willing to pay more in exchange for receiving more value (Mercedes); others want to pay less for what they perceive as receiving the same value (Toyota Camry); and yet others will pay less but are willing to receive less value in exchange (Toyota Corolla).

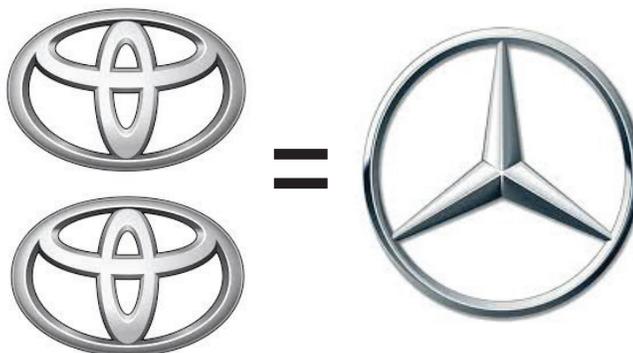
The sale of advertising, exhibits and sponsorships can be modeled after the way the auto industry positions their products—not by cost but by

value to the consumer. Let's look at some of the value points association products offer:

**Audience quality:** Who are the members of your association? They are the professionals who are actively involved in the profession or industry your association serves. If they didn't have a direct interest and need for the offerings of your organization, they wouldn't have joined and retained their memberships. Your association should have a concise understanding of the job titles of its members, the involvement those members have in the purchasing processes

for their employers, the size of their procurement budgets, and the overall size of the market served by your members. Also, underscore the importance of your membership when compared to the circulation or attendance numbers of products offered by your competition. Only an association can state that its membership is built exclusively from the most responsive and involved people from the industry or profession it serves. That is the essential part of the value you deliver.

**Product Mix:** One sure way to deliver value to your customers is by not selling them what you want to sell them but, rather, by selling them what they need. A good menu of offerings that includes print, digital, and face-to-face products assures that you



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## Value-Based Selling *Continued from previous page*

offer a product or combination of products that can be packaged in a way that meets each of your customer's unique marketing and budgetary goals. One size no longer fits all, and delivering value can only be achieved through listening and understanding your customer's needs and offering solutions that exceed those needs.

**Content:** The stories in your association's magazine, the articles on its website, and the presentations given at your convention are the content that attracts audiences to these products and keeps them coming back. The content must be relevant to the specific interests and information needs of your members. Stories that show best practices,

innovations, case studies, and other subjects show your members how they can more efficiently and effectively excel in their careers and run their businesses and organizations successfully. The value of your content comes from delivering something that every member relates to and benefits from.

Remember, you are not selling advertising or exhibit space; you are selling access. Your organization's products are providing a meeting place for your members and your industry suppliers to meet each other. It is the value of the relationships that come from this that represents the greatest value for your association, its members, and the industry or profession it serves.

### 10 Tips For Advertising Sales Success



1. Know the product or service the prospect sells before calling. Understand how that product or service is purchased and used by your reader and how much it costs.
2. Price your advertising appropriately so that it is worth the time of an ad agency to process an order for your publication.
3. Know as much as you can about the demographics and buying power of your readership. Support this knowledge with strong documentation.
4. Be familiar with your competition but do not compare yourself to them in your presentations. Also, know your prospects buying history with your competitors.
5. Become an expert on using social media to develop and maintain relationships with advertisers, exhibitors, and prospects.
6. Develop a strong editorial calendar and sell against it.
7. Use creative print and electronic promotional pieces to qualify prospects, to keep your publication's name visible and to highlight special issues.
8. Your publication should not be all things to all readers. Emphasize its place in the vertical market which you serve.
9. Expand your prospect list, manage it properly, and keep it up-to-date.
10. Use advertising sales professionals and reward them for their success. Give them the tools they need to be successful.

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