



Ens On Sales By Wayne Ens

The Power Of Language

Make Your Words Mean Something To Advertisers

Nelson Mandela said, “If you talk to a man in a language he understands, it goes to his head. If you talk to him in his language, it goes to his heart.”

Professional advertising practitioners understand that we generally buy from the heart, then justify our purchase decisions from the head. They know how to harness the power of relevant language to influence the heart.

When are the advertising sales executives in our business going to get that message? Many account executives incessantly use broadcast language and sales-speak, rather than speaking the advertiser’s language.

Here’s a news flash: When it comes to sales, your clients don’t care if the person writing the check is a listener, a reader, a viewer, or a web surfer. Your advertisers may refer to their customers as consumers, patients, homeowners, prospects, motorists, or bikers, but they seldom call their prospects listeners, audience, readers, or viewers. Most media sales training courses address the need to get out of the media business and into the client’s business, but we still fall woefully short of speaking our clients’ language.

POP THE RIGHT QUESTION

I recently accompanied a media sales executive on a sales call to the principal of an automotive dealership. We went for lunch with the dealer and his son, who was being groomed as part of a succession plan. We discussed the dealership, but avoided talking about my client’s radio stations.

A one point, I asked the dealer, “How is your CSI?”

In his industry, CSI stands for Customer Satisfaction Index. Each month the manufacturer surveys new car buyers to evaluate their buying experience at the dealership, and sends a summary report and CSI to the dealer.

When I popped the CSI question, the dealer looked at his soon-to-be-successor and said, “This guy knows his stuff. We can do business with him.” They asked us to prepare a 52-week presentation, and the rest is history.



But here’s the kicker: When the dealer said, “This guy knows his stuff,” what he was really saying was, “This guy knows my stuff.” CSIs are about his business, not ours.

DO THE MATH

Your news director knows your audience cannot grasp the American national debt, a whopping \$9 trillion. But it sure hits home when a newscaster says, “The national debt is

approaching \$30,000 for every man, woman, and child living in the USA.”

On a recent sales call with an account executive to a wood flooring company, I saw that the client was not relating to the account executive’s claim to reach “70,000 listeners.” Our presentation was for \$45,000 over 52 weeks, and the client’s average sale was \$10,000. The bottom line? We needed to promise only 150 sales for him over a one-year campaign — a figure he could understand and find believable.

So I intervened with, “Yes, we have more than 70,000 listeners, but we know that only 30,000 of them are homeowners.” Cutting the number to less than half and talking only about homeowners took us up several rungs on the client’s trust ladder.

We explained, “Our goal is to have 1.5 percent of those homeowners shop at your location. Does that sound realistic?” An entrepreneur who is passionate about his product finds 1.5 percent of the market a very realistic target. We then suggested that he should close one-third of that 1.5 percent. In other words, we targeted only one-half of one percent of our homeowners to buy from him over the next 12 months. I could tell from his body language that his closing ratio was higher than one-third. We had given him a number that was both believable and fathomable.

When we asked the client if a \$300 cost of sale (a \$45,000 ad campaign divided by 150 sales) against an average \$10,000 sale was realistic, the answer was a nod and a big grin. Who wouldn’t invest \$300 to make a \$10,000 sale?

Relevant language is the most powerful tool in the communications trade. When we talked about sales instead of audience, we had the buyer’s undivided attention.

When you speak your clients’ language, you will be miles ahead of your competition. 📺



QUICKREAD™

- Speak in the advertiser’s language, not broadcast jargon or sales-speak.
- Talk about sales numbers, not audience numbers.
- Paint word pictures using language related to your clients’ business.

Wayne Ens of ENS Media Inc. (www.wensmedia.com) is a broadcast sales consultant who also produces SoundAdvice and SoundManagement. He can be reached at wayne@wensmedia.com or 705-484-9993.