

Create the Experience

Another good way to get people involved is to get your product into their hands. If they can begin to use it, chances are they will continue. That is why car dealers encourage test drives. You will even see car dealerships give their loyal customers a car to drive for a few days. How can you go back to your old car after driving around in a new car? By that point, neighbors and co-workers have already seen you in the car and have commented about your new vehicle. You're thoroughly involved and the new car is yours. You want people to experience your product for free. Free trials are really what made the Internet company AOL (America Online) successful. Who doesn't have 5 free CDs from AOL?

Infomercials are great examples of this. For example, many TV advertisers offer a free one-month trial before you have to pay for their product. After the month is up, most consumers will keep the product, even if they didn't use it. The trial period has created a sense of ownership in the product and consumers don't like to relinquish ownership. This is also why so many companies use introductory offers. Credit card issuers are known for tempting customers with introductory deals that give very low interest rates. To get your product in your prospects' hands, get them to open the box and play with the object, give them the feeling of ownership, make them feel as if they already bought it, and suggest how the product can be used in their home. There are many other examples of the Law of Involvement. Think about the listening stations in the music stores, the comfortable chairs where you can kick back and read in the bookstores, booths set up at the malls where you can try and test products and equipment, CD clubs where you get so many free CDs, frequent user programs, coupons, contests, and the variety of services offering free estimates.

Another great example is the company 3M. At their outset, Post-it notes were not very successful. 3M was going to discontinue the whole line until the brand manager sent a case of Post-its to 499 of the Fortune 500 Companies. Because of their trial run, the Fortune 500 companies loved the efficiency of Post-it notes and the rest is history.

Another common way for businesses to cash in on the Law of Involvement is to use the "magic" of written declarations. This occurs through the use of an innocent-looking promotional device. Have you ever seen companies who have essay contests? You know, where the consumer has to write a 100-word essay beginning with the statement, "I love this product because..."? Well, is there any better way to get a commitment out of someone than to have them put it in writing? What about those Crayola drawing contests, where kids had to submit their artwork created with Crayola's crayons. It's the same principle.

Usually we are more inclined to favor our own ideas over the ideas of others, right? Knowing that people do not typically resist their own ideas can be key when trying to influence others. Always seek to get the other person to think your ideas are his or her own. An example of this strategy in action is when companies have the customer fill out a sales agreement. Cancellations are amazingly low when the customer has filled out

their agreements on their own. It's a double whammy: not only are your prospects agreeing to what you want, but they are also putting it in writing!

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