

# SO WHAT!

ELIMINATE MESSAGING WITHOUT IMPACT



# The most dreaded response to get from a customer

## How did that happen?

You just went into an important sales call, and did a masterful job of presenting all the positive attributes of your company and products. However, at the end of the meeting, instead of sharing your vision on the amazing benefits of your products, your customer says “*So What!*”.

What do you do? But the more important question to ask is: “How did that happen?”

## Externalizing an internal perception

Aside from a basic error in the approach to the sales call, which we’ll discuss later, the problem comes from a term I developed called *externalizing an internal perception*. This problem affects both Sales and Marketing, and in many instances affects the latter to a greater degree.

It’s really very simple, we all believe our products are good, and that our company is the best. If we didn’t, we wouldn’t be able, in good conscience, to sell or market our products. And that is the basis for the problem.

We know our company is the best. We know our products are the best. And we *assume* everyone else does too!

I’ve seen numerous new product launches fail because the sales and marketing teams assumed the market would have the same perception they did. They believed that customers would immediately see the benefits and jump on the bandwagon to order the products.

This not only happens in advertising and product literature, but in sales training as well.

## Internal boredom!

Have you ever attended a sales training for new products and watched the top sales people? Are they sitting there with eager anticipation to learn more or are they bored

and talking amongst themselves? Like me you've probably seen the latter, and if you were a fly on the wall you'd hear what they are saying: "*So What!*". Product Managers tend to present a plethora of product features while failing to include the true benefits that matter to the customer. And the best sales reps know those benefits are the only piece of critical information they need to drive sales.

One of the reasons Marketing focuses on features is because many Marketing teams haven't been trained in selling. Another is due to the fact that Marketing is not in the field enough with Sales to know the benefits customers really want. However, a major reason is an internal silo of belief that their company and its products are the best, and then trying to *externalize that internal perception*.

In order to help drive the business, as well as get greater buy-in from Sales, Marketing needs to focus on the benefits to customers and the external reception to their message in the marketplace. Otherwise they will not only hear the dreaded "*So What!*" from the market, but from their own team as well.

### **The presenter**

All the sales vets reading this are probably saying Hooyah - we need Marketing to get it right! However, Sales needs to take an introspective look at their work as well. I can't count the number of times I've been on a sales call and witnessed tenured salespeople spend the entire meeting *presenting* everything about their product without asking a *question*.

In those instances if the customer didn't say "*So What!*", they were probably thinking it.

Let me share an example. My friend was looking to replace her leased car and went to the same car dealer she has done business with in the past. While there, she inquired about the new models and the sales rep proceeded to tell her everything about the car.

The presentation was actually so technical, I can't even remember what he told us. All I know is that we both looked at each other when he wasn't looking and said "*So What!*". At that point the sales trainer part of my brain kicked in. I told her that if he didn't start asking any questions shortly we were leaving, which we did within a few minutes.

## Question, question, question

You may know the theory that people are best convinced by their own ideas. And *asking questions* is the best way to develop those *ideas*.

Failing to ask questions to develop customer needs and then relate them to benefits that the product provides is a sure way to lose a potential opportunity. You will also bore your customer to the point that they may limit the amount of their valuable time that they spend with you in the future.

## What to do?

It's really very simple. Every time you make a claim, a statement... about your product, service or company, ask yourself "*So What!*". Then answer some key questions:

- Is the feature important?
- Does the benefit you claim relate to a business issue faced by the customer today?
- Does it solve a problem they have today? Have they told you they need it?
- Have you quantified the benefit and does that benefit make a significant impact on the customer's business?

For example, just think about the last computer ad you read. It had umpteen megabites of RAM, a multi-terabyte hard drive, and a processor that ran at warp speed. Did you see a benefit in all that or did you think "*So What!*"? Where in those claims did it relate to you doing your work faster, or making your life easier?

By having Sales and Marketing work together to pass the "*So What!*" test, you can not only gain alignment, but also assure that your messaging has the greatest impact on your business.

For more information on maximizing your company's selling efforts, please visit the References Page on our website at [www.tritonconsult.com](http://www.tritonconsult.com) or contact Triton Consulting directly at 978-232-1113.