

Learning From Experience: Aiming at the Right Target

Introduction

The story that you are about to read is from actual events that occurred in the field. Its purpose is to provide you with a real-world example from a seasoned professional in the business world.

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Auto repair is big business. With warranty-related work, it is straight to the dealer. As for other types of repairs: How does one choose? Many females are uncomfortable getting their cars repaired for various reasons, including being made to feel inferior, having to sit in unclean waiting rooms, and the perceived rip-off factor. This may all sound cliché, but these feelings are real. Magazines and media geared toward women provide coverage on the topic. Perception has become reality.

How can an auto repair business cater to female customers?

Some of the large dealerships recognized the gender's apprehension and hired female intake consultants in the repair department. This move was supported by ads featuring the female employees. To not alienate male clients, the ad campaign never spoke to the gender strategy, but simply featured women as integral to the repair process. Self-reported customer service surveys pointed to this move as positive for the department across both genders.

If the strategy worked for large dealerships, the opportunity to brand a female-run repair business could bring success to the owners. A local company did just that and developed a female-centric repair facility that was run by women. Almost all of the clerks, salespeople, and repair professionals were female. So as not to alienate male consumers, the logo and look was mainly gender-neutral with a little splash of pink. As shown in the dealer survey, male customers were not adversely affected by female intake employees, and thus the move to target women without discounting men worked.

The car repair business is typically not segmented by gender, and the sex of the customer usually does not come into play in marketing communications. Reaching out to a group that feels disenfranchised and meeting its unmet needs is an excellent growth strategy.

It is important to take the following away from this scenario:

- Recognizing and attracting an underserved target market is a powerful

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- strategy for a business that is grounded in marketing research.
- Positioning a business to appeal to a target market without alienating other groups is a balancing act that is supported by internal and external marketing communications.