



## Understanding Customer Pain

By Angelo Biasi, General Manager of  
SMART Marketing Solutions, LLC  
([abiasi@smartmarketingllc.com](mailto:abiasi@smartmarketingllc.com), 239.963.9396)

### Customer Pain & Pleasure

Whether you know it or not, you're in the business to address your customer's pain or pleasure. In other words, you provide a solution, product or service, that in some shape or form, addresses customer pain or satisfies customer pleasure, in exchange for their money. When talking about customer pain specifically, most associate it with a customer's needs or problems. Since pain usually involves greater urgency and specific timing, it is therefore an easier sell, and more common for businesses to focus on and benefit from 'healing' that pain, 'solving' that problem or 'satisfying' that need. If a customer has to address pain, they will spend money to buy a product or service that does exactly that. I'm sure we all have a personal example of such pain such as a burst pipe, hot sale, or competitive threat.

Customer pain is a company resource. It plays a critical part in the sales and marketing process of any business. Identifying, treating and benefitting from customer pain takes understanding, accuracy and vision.

### Diagnosing your Customer's Pain

If you're wondering specifically what your customer's pain is and how you may or may not be addressing it, you should start by asking yourself this simple question – *Why should/does anyone care about your business?* If you can explain this in a few words, you pretty much know your customer's pain and are in a good place for healing/solving it. Jon Burgstone and Bill Murphy, Jr. in the book *Breakthrough Entrepreneurship*, state that "Innovators and founders who need paragraphs to describe their market or persuade potential customers demonstrate that they haven't refined their businesses sufficiently." "This works in reverse as well. Think of the some of the most successful companies in the world and also of some of the companies we've used as examples already. For the truly great ones, you can probably describe very quickly what they do and thus what customer pain they exist to solve. Apple exists because people want elegant technology. Google exists because advertisers want to reach customers effectively. Starbucks exists because people are addicted to caffeine." They go on to say that "Is it fatal if you can't articulate a compelling customer pain?"

It also takes time and good ears (listening skills) to figure out customer pain. So often, a sales person will make his/her way into a prospect's office with a presentation on the services or product that he/she represents never to really know the specific pain of that customer. Learning of and listening to your customer's real pain will usually create a pathway to the sale, greater sense of urgency and/or specific reason to buy the product/service.

Sometimes finding new customer pain comes out of other innovations and/or creations. For example, Apple created iTunes and the iPod to address legal access to and distribution of digital music created by Napster. In that example, they created an ecosystem around a specific customer need, or pain, that included hardware (products)

*connecting you to a world of good business*



and services. Had Napster figured that out to some extent, they may have created a more scalable and sustainable business.

There may be innovative and creative destruction happening within your own space creating new customer pain, right now. Remember to ask questions, be attentive and learn from your customers. Try not to create “me-too” products and services, but instead look inside for residual pains and how you can play a part in addressing it.

### **Scaling Your Prescription for Solving Customer Pain into Customer Gain**

Understanding customer pain can contribute to exponential business success. Certainly once you’ve solved or healed one customer’s pain, there’s value in scaling that. In other words, other similar customers are likely to have similar pain points, timing and the same sense of urgency. Having use cases, examples and messaging around this make for a more streamlined and efficient sale. Success in solving customer pain, breeds more success.

Be excellent!

### ***About the Author***

Angelo Biasi is General Manager of SMART Marketing Solutions, LLC, a leading full-service integrated marketing company in Florida and New York since 2001. He has helped create and execute marketing plans and integrated marketing solutions for companies such as Playtex, Bic, Rogaine, Tauck, and over 35 colleges and universities, to name a few. Angelo has an MBA in Marketing from the University of Connecticut and teaches Marketing at New York University where he has for over six years. He has been quoted and/or featured in USA Today, Mobile Marketer magazine, Mobile Commerce Daily, Luxury Marketing magazine, BNET TV and Business Currents magazine, to name a few. For more information or to learn more, email him at [abiasi@smartmarketingllc.com](mailto:abiasi@smartmarketingllc.com), visit [www.smartmarketingllc.com](http://www.smartmarketingllc.com), call him at 239.963.9396 and follow him on Twitter @angbiasi.