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Stay in One Field . . . And own it.

by Dan Poynter

Once you select your subject. Stick to it; stay in one field. Too many authors and author-publisher-speakers write a book on a subject they know well—aimed at their own (reachable) field. With this formula, the book is a success, and they suddenly think selling books is easy, so they write about a totally different subject. It flops because they do not know how to reach the buyers in this particular market. They do not really know who their buyers are, what their buyers need and where their buyers are. They are starting over.

One day, I received a call from a customer. He said “I’m a chiropractor, and I recognize that while chiropractors are good at what they do, they are not good at running their offices. But I have solved that challenge. I have just finished my book titled *How to Run Your Chiropractic Office*.”

“Sounds good,” I said and I thought to myself: “now here is an author who can look into the mirror and see a reflection of his customer. He knows *who* the customer is, *what* the customer needs and (most importantly) *where* the customer is.” Chiropractors are easy to locate because they have to have a license; they are on lists.

Then the doctor went on, “I have a packaging idea I would like to run past you”. I leaned back in my chair and listened. The caller said “once I sell this book to all the chiropractors, I’ll go through the manuscript with *search & replace* and change the word “chiropractor” to “dentist” and sell the same book to all the dentists. Next, I’ll sell to all the medical doctors. Isn’t that a great plan?”

“No,” I said, “It sounds great but it’s a terrible idea. First off, it will not be all that easy to sell your peers. It will take reviews in your magazines, displays at your conventions, lots of mail and telephone calls. Finally word-of-mouth from one doctor to another will sell the book.

“The average sale is made after the prospect has said 'no' six times.”
—Jeffrey P. Davidson, author and speaker, *The Washington Post*, 1985.

“Do you really want to learn all about dentists: read their magazines, join their associations, and attend their conventions? You don’t have time for that.

“What you should do is publish this book. Then publish the advanced book, then the office forms book and then the little books chiropractors give to their patients. You want to become known as *the* publisher for the chiropractic industry.” Soon other chiropractors will approach you to publish their books.

New customers have to be bought; existing customers are free. Anyone who has ever been in sales will tell us, it is far easier to sell an additional product to an existing customer than it is to find a new customer. Stay in one field and keep adding products until you own the territory.

Next: Combine your products in a “Power Pack,” a higher priced package.

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