Helping the Consumer Help You

I was reading a great new book by the Heath brothers entitled, “Decisive”. The book was written from the point of view of the consumer making better purchasing decisions (as well as other life decisions). From these lessons and ideas, I was inspired to think about how we, as marketers, could direct consumers to make the decision we want, to get the “consumer to help us”.

WIDEN YOUR OPTIONS

The Heath brothers talk about how we often frame decisions very narrowly and from that comes often poorer decisions. The marketing take on this is to provide choices but point to the choice you want chosen. For example, consider a restaurant with a wine list. In order to get a certain wine purchased, we may want to feature that wine or offer it as a suggested pairing. So while we widen the options, we also know that a narrow frame forces decisions, so we narrow the frame once we show the entire list.

TEST ASSUMPTIONS

Consumers come to the marketplace with preconceived notions and ready to have their notions confirmed (that’s psychology). The book discusses how consumers can get out of the “confirmation bias” trap by gaining other points of view and challenging their own views. Being open to disagreement and welcoming it is part of the discussion. The marketing take on this is to work the confirmation bias … provide more and more confirmation wherever you can. This is especially important in this day and age of the internet and social media. I was in the optometrist office the other day and I was talking with them about their poor comments on YELP and how this is holding back people from coming in. Getting back to the wine list, the addition of ratings from respected wine reviewers would add the confirmation that people need to feel confident with a decision … and we want our customers to feel confident in order to make a decision.

ATTAIN DISTANCE

It is suggested that better decisions get made if we take a moment, give ourselves some distance and time, and take the emotion out of the equation. So, my marketing take on this is to get more emotion into the decision and move the decision making along. On YELP, stories of how people were helped by the eye doctor can up the emotions. Or recommendations of happy wine drinkers with their stories of how they enjoyed a certain wine with a certain food …. Re-create the emotion of the great meal for others to follow.

I recommend the book Decisive to all of you along with the other two titles from the Heath brothers … those books are “Switch” and “Made to Stick”.