

# “Marketing To Your Online Customers – Las Vegas Style”

By Ted Cantu - SEO/Online Marketing Champ

I like to go to Vegas for the weekend and blow off steam. I run an online marketing group out of Chicago and Detroit so catching a quick flight out there is no big deal. **Every time I go out there I am always amazed at the details of the overall customer experience. There are systems put in place, however slight, that are designed to get the customer dollar at just about every turn.**

It is no big secret that the entire city is made out of money. It is the sole reason for its own existence. You feel like a pinball when you get caught up in the Las Vegas experience. I always come back a little smarter and apply new techniques to my online and offline business ventures. I am going to illustrate a few examples of how this can work for your business.

## **The Overpasses**

When you walk down the strip you are going to notice a few things that are different. You can cross the street going from one Casino to the other. You will notice that the streets are wide and the cars do not slow down. When this is congested during the week you can get yourself killed if you are not careful. Of course you can take the easy way out and take the escalator which will carry you right over the busy intersections. A quick jaunt across the bridge and you are in the casino safe and sound and ready to blow even more of your hard earned loot.

**Now if you look to your right you will notice that the escalators are turned off. This means that if you leave the casino you will most likely have to walk down the equivalent of three stories of stairs back down to the street.** This is interesting to me too for another reason. The escalators that are turned on are all facing one direction. They all move the people towards the bigger and richer casinos like the Wynn, Monte Carlo, Caesars Palace, and the Venetian. You will see more of this around the MGM, The New York New York near the new Las Vegas. In just about every cross walk I encountered I noticed that the escalators pointing towards the older Vegas, (Circus Circus etc) were turned off. This way they keep the money moving.

**There is a lot of construction going on near the Circus Circus and there are a lot of small shops. The energy really picks up near the Fashion Mall and the Wynn. Even Trumps Casino is up for sale and it is visible from the strip.**

**I think of ways I can make the public go through my online maze and get to the meat of the sale. This is something that a lot of businesses fail to pick up on. You need to direct the flow of the current and it is damned difficult to do that with nothing but a picture and price.**

### **In Your Face Sales Copy**

Walking into the Circus Circus at 4 in the morning is a real eye opener. These are seasoned pros and they have been around since the 1960's. I was checking into my suite from a late flight from Phoenix and I noticed that deals sort of fell out of the sky. Everyone was selling you something. Price was never mentioned except in a few cases. **You would see signs like, "Get 2 For The Price of 1" and, "Blow Out Deals – Get In Free" and these were instant eye grabbers. Never once did I ever question how much something was or what the ticket price was on an item.**

You are dealing with an environment that deals with instant satisfaction. And with this mindset you hardly care about how much anything really costs. I had to cut through the casino to get the hotel lobby. Keep in mind that I was extremely exhausted and yet this place was kicked on full blast with entertainment, music and people. When I looked up I could see a live trapeze show and everyone around me looked wide awake. It was a truly unnerving experience. I was hungry too and wanted to eat something. These signs all around me got to me. Never once did I worry about price. These simple sales pitches called out to me and I responded.

Need and desire go hand in hand.

### **Hit Them With Excess – But Have Limits**

Always give your customers MORE than what they actually need. Vegas really over delivers in just about everything they do. You get that treatment with the food they offer, the shows they put on and in their gratitude but there are limits.

They run a very tight ship. If you don't tell the front desk that you are staying an extra night you get locked out of your room. I made the mistake of ordering multiple nights from different travel sources including Orbit, Travelocity and on the main Circus Circus web site. The front desk couldn't reach an agreement for some reason they wanted to shift me around from room to room every night of my stay. I had to come down to the desk and tell them who I was and ask for another night and get a new key. This sounds ridiculous I know and believe it when I say I agree.

**I went to use the hot tub and found myself locked out of my room. I had to go to the front desk in my swimsuit and stand there like an idiot in my towel to get a new key. They apologized and I got back in my room somewhat flustered with the whole ordeal.**

I recommend that you also run a tight ship when it comes to your policies. Never let the customer steam roll your company with their own agenda. When I created my company I used to get a lot of emails from clients that were off subject. In the beginning I let it go but this later became a serious problem. I had clients who would forget what they sent me and dropped the ball on the project completely. I would get nasty emails in the tone of – "What Have You Done With My Project?" They were getting upset with me while they

were so lost in sending me garbage emails, when in fact, I was waiting for them to get back to me with pictures or sales copy.

What did they send me?

I would get a lot of gibberish – everything from Gospel messages, Amber alerts, chain letters, get rich quick chain letters, poems, prayers, feel good messages and jokes. The whole time I would be waiting for them to wake up and get serious so I could attend to my other clients.

It's important to cater to the customer but you have to have limits on what you are willing to put up with. Vegas doesn't fool around when it comes to customer incompetence. As you can see I didn't follow their rules to a "T" and didn't check in the morning and get a new key. So they locked me out of my room. Some of you may not think that is very nice but that is how it works in Vegas. They do not fool around.

### **Get A System**

**The beauty of Vegas is studying all of the systems that are put in place. One good example is that you will never see any clocks in the casinos.** Time is not an issue. They want you to get lost in the experience of the bar scenes, the casino and whatever else is happening. You never see windows in the casinos because they want you to lose track of time.

**Everything has a system. There is beauty in chaos. You will notice that it is literally impossible to walk straight through a casino. You will have to twist and turn and walk between aisles and crooked aisles that are deliberately set up all over to distract your attention.** It is somewhat of a rarity that I will see a patron walk straight through a casino to reach the street. Usually they will stop and drop a few more dollars into a slot machine on the way out the door. The only people who walk straight through this maze are casino workers and cops and well.... Me of course, (I'm not much of a gambler).

**When Van Halen stopped playing for the night at the MGM it was a total mob scene. We were all let loose into the strip to go totally nuts. The traffic was tight so I decided to walk back to my suite. All the way home there were bars set up on the strip to get you good and drunk. I have no idea where these bars came from but they were all in row.** They looked like the kind of wagons you see at the State Fair. Normally these guys sell you food but not these guys. If you wanted food you had to go into the restaurants and sit down. These guys were on the street selling buckets of beer for \$4 bucks. I'm not talking about quaint mini mugs I am talking about the kind of buckets you sell chicken in.

At every step there were ways for the street vendors to get your money. I saw a lot of bootleg t-shirts, and gimmicky tourist stuff along the way back to my room. I was glad to see my suite again and get that door shut. At least nobody would try to sell me something in my room right? OR would they?

## **Inner Branding**

When I turned on the TV set I was hypnotized. There was an internal television station in my hotel room at the Circus Circus. It was clowns doing the sports, news and weather. The jokes were bad but the quality was good and I was seriously enthralled with this. The hotel was broadcasting to the guest like so many hotels do but this was different because these were clowns. I decided to leave it on and study it.

They had a, “Starskey and Hutch” type of clown cop promo to showcase all of their restaurants in the casino. The jokes were terrible but oddly enough I found this somewhat pleasing. They were trying to find this clown who was hiding out in a steak house and bring him to justice. In this episode they looked high and low for this offending clown. By doing so they gave reviews of all the restaurants they searched for him in. **I found this pretty amusing. I also liked how they repeated this every 15 minutes. I ended up ordering room service from one of these restaurants too after seeing it so many times. The food was actually better than what you get in a lot of local places. With all that competition you have to be good.**

Those clowns could have sold me anything. Seriously. I was that hooked on the idea.

**I don't know who stole the bible out of my room but I didn't have one. This made me feel a bit uneasy because I was camped out in Sin City for four days and five nights. Either someone lost their mind and stole it with hopes to reform. Or the Gideons didn't bother coming out to Las Vegas and leaving one behind. In either case I realized that this trip catered to the ego and what I thought was real. An interesting adventure all around.**

I took these lessons home with me and thought about how this could relate to my customer experience. I was very intrigued with how I could apply these lessons over my own online business by giving people what they wanted in controlled systems.

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