



# latest word

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## If you build it, they will come???

**"Everyone is not your customer."  
Seth Godin**

It may have been the case in that movie *"Field of Dreams"* that *if you build it, they will come* but in the *"Field of Business Reality"*, this is certainly not the case. If you build it, they might come but it's unlikely, and the bigger question is, who are *'they'* anyway?

The fundamental questions for any business, or indeed before you even begin any business are:

1. Who are they?
2. What do you do for them?
3. How do you do it better than anybody else?

That fundamental question, who are they? Who did you go into business to serve?

I'll give you a clue, they answer is never "everybody"!!

## Who Are They Anyway?

Time and time again, people starting businesses focused on the premises, the

products or the processes but fail to get real clarity around that fundamental question, *who are they?*

That's part one of the problem.

Part two is failing to build any effective visibility with their potential customer. A shiny new business, keen as mustard but with no effective strategies to reach out and build visibility with prospective customers and consequently they don't have enough customers. What happens next? They run out of money and out of road.... bye, bye shiny new business. They may have been the best baker or candlestick maker but, who knew? Not enough evidently.

Is that a moral victory when your business fails but were great at what you did? Is it bad luck? Was it the government or the economy or Brexit :- ) that caused your untimely demise? Was it stupidity? Probably not, unless you keep making the same mistakes, then it is stupidity, or insanity.

Maybe it was ignorance, you just didn't know what you didn't know.

Or maybe it was fear, which is chart topper when it comes to business failure factors. You had an idea of who they were, but were afraid to talk to them because they may reject you after all.

Sometimes ignorance is used to cope with the fear, where one pretends not to see the problem and

prefers not to know. If I don't try to sell it, well they can't not buy it!!

Look, we're complex creatures 😊.

Now there's a relationship between part one of the problem *i.e. who are they?* and part two of the problem *i.e. do they know I exist?, I'm invisible.*

If you're not clear about "who are they?", who are your target customers?, then it's easy to be invisible, because you don't really know who to build visibility with in the first place because everybody and anybody is your potential customer but guess what they're not!!

When you think it's anybody and everybody, it's often nobody.

Now maybe you're standing on street corners with a loud speaker telling anybody and everybody you exist, and you're the best candlestick maker in the land. Firstly, I applaud you because at least you're taking some action but have you heard people talk about *working hard* or *working smart*? It's not either one or the other, you've got to do both, and telling everybody and anybody isn't smart, it's only second to "telling nobody". Believe it or not, there's large amounts of businesses with no real defined or executed strategies to get the message out to their perspective customers.

The next best thing to knowing "who they are", (i.e. your potential customers), is to have an idea who they might be? Why? Because you can at least act on targeting who might be your potential customers. You'll soon find out whether they are or not, and act accordingly.

To boil it all down, this is what I'm saying:

1. Everybody isn't your customer, you've got to find out "who they are", the customers you are



most likely to serve and add value for.

2. Secondly, you've got to have a strategy and be taking action on getting the word out about what you do, to the people most likely to buy it. A fundamental aspect of marketing is about *getting the right message, to the right people, at the right time.*

Look, you don't even have to be right, who do you at least *think* are the people most likely to buy your product or service. Target them and you'll at least know one group of people

who aren't your prospective customers. Test, measure, refine.

If you can't answer these questions then my guess is that your business will at best not advance too much more than survival or existence or at worst, fail.

Fundamentally you're in business to serve somebody, get really clear about who that is and for goodness sake, go tell them.



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Feedback on our newsletters is always welcome and gratefully received. [joe@fwf.ie](mailto:joe@fwf.ie).

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