

STOP SELLING COMMODITIES

A commodity is a product that is differentiated only by its price. If the only thing that differentiates your product from the competition is your price, you have more than a pricing problem. You have a failure-to-stand-out problem.

Buyers that commoditize what you sell (and their willing accomplices, salespeople who sell their products as commodities) have a low opinion of their needs and what it will take to satisfy those needs. The commodity-minded buyer is saying, “My needs are not very special; therefore, I will search for whatever product minimally satisfies them.” There are plenty of salespeople out there who will agree with this buyer and sell them a not-so-special product at a reduced price for their not-so-special needs. Is that how you want to go to market?

Here’s an alternative. “Mr. Buyer, I know there are some people out there who will treat your needs as commodity-needs and sell you a commodity-type solution. We view your business differently. We see your needs as special and are proud to bring you a specialized solution for these needs. We never view customers as commodities and always view our products and services as special.”

You cannot stand out unless you view your customer’s needs as special, unique, and important to that individual. For buyers to view your solution as something more than a commodity, they must first realize that their needs are special. That is your first step in a value-added sale—understanding the special nature of your customer’s needs. Then, you can demonstrate how special your product is. By doing this, you refuse to play the commodity game.

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