

Will You Stoop So Low For Money?



By Welly Mulia

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Some people (and marketers) will just do anything for money, even if that means using dishonest and unethical means.

They don't really mind and they don't really care about it as long as they make money. Their first priority is always about making more money and they will stoop so low just to be able to do that.

Do you think it's right to do that? Do you think it's ethical? What's your definition of ethical?

Though I'm not into ethics and wouldn't qualify to talk about it, in my opinion being ethical in running a business is about being honest to your customers and prospects.

Of course it's not easy to simply judge whether a certain act is right or wrong, since people can have different opinions about it. A lot of times, we simply can't attach absolute values to these acts like we can to math.

For example, we know that:

$$1 + 1 = 2$$

$$2 + 2 = 4$$

There is only ONE answer.

But what about: "Do you **THINK** what he did was in the best interests of the company"?

When you have questions like that, there are bound to be different answers supplied by different people. And the answers these people give is dependent upon their own characteristics and backgrounds that have shaped their lives and lead them to become what they are today.

The answers are SUBJECTIVE, and there are no clear right or wrong answers.

So what am I getting at in this post? Internet marketing ethics?

I just met a friend of mine from another country.

We were talking about marketing in general and how there are many different ways to sell products and services. Then he told me about one of the underhand practices that some of the

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retail shops in his country are using to get people to buy stuff from them instead of from their competitors.

He was talking about the camera market.

So this is what would happen...

Peter is a tourist from another country and he enters into a local camera shop and asks for the price of a Canon camera with model number XYZ-123.

The shop owner replies: "The price for that camera is \$300".

Peter thinks to himself: "Wow that's cheap! The last 5 shops I went quote me a price between \$350 to \$370. This shop is only charging \$300. This is definitely a good deal!"

Without any hesitation, Peter says: Okay I'll take it.

Store owner: Sure, please have a seat first while I get the camera from the storeroom.

A few moments later...

Store owner: Sir, unfortunately the camera you're looking for is out of stock. Actually, to tell you the truth, that camera is an old model and it's not really good. A lot of customers who bought it complained they should have gone for a higher model, the XYZ-217. It boasts a higher megapixel, can zoom in more, gives you clearer shots, and has a longer battery life.

Peter:

Really? How much is that?

Store owner: \$500, but I can give you a 5% discount if you really want it. After discount, it would be \$475.

Peter again thinks to himself: "Hmm... the original model that I was looking for is sold cheaper in this store than other stores. This means this store is selling cameras at a cheaper price than others. They are selling the higher model for \$500 plus 10% discount. This must mean that other stores are charging around \$600 or even more. This must be a good deal!"

Finally Peter bought the higher model camera for \$475, thinking that he got a good deal...

Until he walked past another store with a banner that says:

"Canon XYZ-217 for only \$400"

It was then that Peter realized he'd been "tricked" and "cheated".

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Why was Peter tricked and cheated?

In the scenario above, the shop actually has in stock the camera Peter was looking to buy. The problem is that they (the store) are selling it for \$370. But if they were to simply state the price bluntly, Peter will just say “Okay thanks” and move on to another shop because he was looking for a price lower than \$350.

To make Peter stay and buy from them, they purposely quote a very low price to get Peter’s attention. And it worked. Once they said that it costs \$300, Peter immediately agreed and wanted to buy from them.

But they would lose money if they were to really sell the camera for \$300. Hence they went to the storeroom to PRETEND to get the camera, and finally returned empty-handed, saying that there are no stock left (which is not true).

Then they “switched” Peter’s desire for that camera model to another different model by saying some negative things about it and praising the other model with some cool features.

Moral of the story: Just because someone or some shop is selling ONE product for a cheap price does NOT mean that someone or shop is selling EVERYTHING for a cheap price.

Peter was tricked into buying the higher model camera for a higher price because he failed to realize this principle.

It’s also important to know that there will be consequences if you resort to such tactics.

Firstly, Peter will of course never buy from this store again, EVER.

Secondly, he is going to badmouth the store everywhere he goes. If this was the 1990s, he will only badmouth the store to every person he KNOWS. Now, you can be sure that he is going to badmouth to everyone out there via social media, even if he doesn’t know them. After all, it only takes a little tweet and sharing your message via Facebook to get your message heard.

Remember earlier when I said that Peter was a tourist?

Stores like I’ve just mentioned above mostly target tourists because most local people already knew of their underhand practices. Tourists from other countries, on the other hand, even with the power of social media, still fall prey to these unscrupulous sellers.

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