

Do Two Negatives Make a Positive?

No, not never! Okay, so this is poor English. Stick with me, though.

Are you hearing too many *can'ts* and *don'ts* these days?

Is life and especially business getting too negative? I've noticed recently that no matter where I travel in the world I consistently encounter someone whose immediately response to my questions is "I can't... or I don't..."

Let me give you an example. I asked the rental car agent if I could have a fuel efficient car. His response was, "the cars are all pre-assigned, I can't change them." Or how about asking for a different side dish at a restaurant and the response is, "we don't allow substitutions on the specials." Have you ever tried to return a product and heard this, "I can't give you a refund, I don't have the authority." I think you get the idea.

Now, take a look at your latest business and marketing materials. Have you written too much about the can'ts and the don'ts? Have you said things like "You can't beat our quality. Don't wait another day to try this product." What message are we sending? Try to reframe everything into the positive. Let's start telling people what we can do and what we will do. Remember the sales clerk who said I can't give you a refund. What if she had said, "I would be happy to offer you a store credit for your return." I feel better just hearing that statement.

Here's another example from a marketing email I received for a new internet based tool to increase sales. *"What that means is that I can't share any of the details of the actual strategy. If I do, then thousands of marketers will be using it by the end of the week."* I know their intent was to create intrigue, yet there may be a better way. Could they have said it this way? *"Once you sign up for the course, I will share with you all the details of the strategy. You will be one of the select few able to use our strategy to exceed your sales projections by 500%."*

Make a point today to go back over some of your business correspondence and take a look at whether or not you have sent information to your staff that was filled with negatives. Have you told your staff that we **can't** use the old procedure anymore. We **must** start using the new forms effective August 1, 2009. Are you feeling loved? Consider this—that same memo or email could have been written this way: Starting August 1, 2009 we have a new form that will make your reporting much easier.

Hey, now I feel like they care about me and are trying to make my job easier. Do the same with information you send to your customers. Take away their problems and make their life easier. Writing everything in more positive way can take away the no, not nevers!

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