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Five things that instantly sway customer buying decisions

in [Growing](#) by Nigel Bowen

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When it comes to buying decisions, there's been no shortage of research done into the motivations that can drive them. But the results vary depending on who is surveyed, how they are surveyed and what product or service they are purchasing.

Consumers are inclined to assert they make buying decisions after a sober and rational analysis of factors such as the product or service's quality, reliability and price, while sellers, or at least those they pay to do

research for them, are inclined towards the more cynical view that consumers purchase things out of a desire to fit in, stand out or appear sexier. Drawing from both schools of thought, here are five things that seem to instantly sway customer-buying decisions.

1. Competitive pricing

There have been countless tomes written about how businesses should price their products and services. To boil it down to one sentence: price is rarely the sole reason consumers buy anything, but it's undoubtedly a factor. If you can convince a prospective customer they have to act quickly to get a bargain, you're well on your way to securing a quick sale.

2. Good customer service

In an age where customers are increasingly buying online, good customer service has become the point of difference for brick-and-mortar operations. Consumers who interact with well-trained, knowledgeable and friendly staff are more likely to actually make a purchase rather than just window shop and go home to buy what they want from online stores.

3. Online buzz

It's well recognised that there is no form of advertising as effective as the word of mouth variety. What's changed in recent years is that instead of asking a handful of friends about what accountant they should use or air conditioner they should buy, people consult the internet's hive mind at some point before parting with their cash. If your product or service has a positive online reputation, you're three-quarters of the way to securing a fast sale.

4. Reputation

Why do consumers walk into an Apple store and impulse buy a \$2,000 laptop computer when they could get one that does more or less the same things for half the price in the department store down the road? Doubtless there are a number of factors involved, but essentially the answer is reputation. Given Apple's reputation for making innovative, reliable and well-designed devices, consumers feel relaxed about buying their products, even without much forethought involved. If you can establish a good reputation, your potential customers will be similarly relaxed about making quick purchases from you.

5. Surroundings

There's a wealth of research into the affect that the context in which a product or service is presented has on consumers. For example, people typically feel more comfortable (and hence more amenable to purchasing) standing on a carpeted floor than a tiled or wooden one. The interior design of a business will differ depending on what it's selling, but it is worth putting some effort into understanding the type of surroundings that will, at a largely unconscious level, persuade people to make a quick purchase.

Humans are complicated creatures who make buying decisions for a large and often contradictory range of emotional and rational reasons. That said, with some analysis of both your own and competing businesses, you should be able to identify ways in which to encourage more of your customers to make a quick purchasing decision.

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Nigel is a freelance journalist and web content provider. Over the past 15 years he has worked for many of Australia's major print media companies and written for a wide range of newspapers, magazines, trade publications and websites. Nigel most enjoys writing about entrepreneurship, popular culture, politics, social trends and small business.

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