

Hi

OK, I admit, I screamed like a girl!

I've never been keen on roller coasters and always avoid going on the hardcore rides. But as we were recently in Disney with my 4yr old son Zac, I wanted to show him that his alpha male father was afraid of nothing.

The way I figured it, there wouldn't be any nasty rides for a 4 year old. So when I saw the Finding Nemo attraction, I ushered the family to the queue . . .

Bad move!

Standing there we could see the start of the ride and it seemed nice and gentle, but that was a devious trick! You see, what you didn't realise (until it was too late) was that, once out of sight, the ride started to climb . . . and climb . . . and climb into the darkness and then . . .

"AAAAaaaaaaaaarrggggghhhhhh!!!"

The coaster drops, spins and veers this way then that in total darkness (well I think it was darkness because I had my eyes closed throughout the 3-minute hellride!). And during those long 3 minutes I screamed uncontrollably. The last time I was that scared was on the big dipper in Blackpool in 1981! Of course Zac loved every second of it and wasn't bothered in the slightest.

"Daddy, why were you shouting on that ride?"

"Um . . . because I was . . . er . . . so excited to see Nemo?!"

Enough of my wimpy behaviour. Spending 3

days at Disneyland Paris was actually a great opportunity to see how a hugely successful business operates.

You know, I'd never realised before that the rides are actually quite incidental to the business. Of course, people pay to stay in the hotels and purchase a pass to get into the park, but the rides are ultimately nothing more than ways of directing visitors to retail opportunities.

Each major ride would have its own shop that stocked a huge range of products related to the particular character or film. You HAD to walk through the shop to exit. Of course the idea must be that the kids will be so thrilled after the ride that they will want to grab a piece of that experience.

Kerching!

Oh when you came off the ride you could also see a photograph taken of you at the most terrifying point (I didn't disgrace myself by even looking at my Nemo shot!)

Kerching!

And here's another strange thing . . . there were no green spaces where you could go and sit down and the small patches that were there had signs prohibiting picnics.

The reason? Of course, Disney doesn't want you to bring your packed lunches, instead they want you to patronise one of their own food outlets.

Kerching!

You'd think the hotel would be pretty low key, but oh no. Come down to breakfast and you have to walk past the huge foyer where one or another of the Disney characters would be posing for photographs with the kids. Never wanting to miss a potential sale, they had an official photographer who would take shots you could buy later.

Kerching!

For most people I suspect that this customer

manipulation was quite invisible. I guess it is only because I was trained as a copywriter and used similar 'cloaking' tricks to obscure the 'sale'.

Truth is, no one likes being sold to. We all recoil from the hard sell. But if we are in a heightened emotional state then it is far easier to soften us up, reduce our resistance and get us to buy.

What can we learn? Whatever business you are in (or hope to be involved in), sales will be a part of what you do. Think about your target audience. What kind of experience could you offer them through your marketing or contact that gets them into an emotional high?

One trick is projection - try to show your prospect enjoying the future benefits of your product or service. Use the present tense. So don't phrase it as 'you will be richer/thinner/smarter'. Instead it is 'you are richer/thinner/smarter'. It's a subtle difference, but there is a sense of immediacy that will prime your prospect.

Back to Disney . . .

Now despite the fact that much Disney is a successful operation with more than 12 million people visiting the park each year and spending in excess of £700 million in the last 12 months, but I think they are missing a trick.

Yes, there's no way you could miss the retail outlets but they really hadn't catered for the parents. Sure, there was plenty of merchandise for the kids. And yes, I guess some of the less fashion-conscious adults might find some of the Disney clothing appealing, but there was no real effort to target the adult pound.

Now after spending serious money for the train, accommodation, food and having to put up with all the terrifying rides, this parent for one felt like treating himself. But unless I wanted a Mickey Mouse key ring or hilarious Pirates of the Caribbean fake wig and hat or porcelain figurines of Goofy, I was stuck!

What I would have given for a few designer shops or a place to pick up the latest digital gadget (cameras, handheld games)!

Now I can understand that the focus is on the Disney franchise and the core demographic is children, but surely they could be missing out on significant additional revenue stream?

OK, enough of Disney.

In my next email I'll tell you all about CharlieWright totally weird and wonderful Biz Opp Wedding. . . plus full update on the latest opportunities I'm investigating . . .

Best regards

Nick

PS: Apologies for being absent from your inbox for a couple of weeks, but it's that time of year where I seem to be working simultaneously on about a dozen projects! Normal and regular transmissions have now resumed!

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