



Using Humor to Connect with Others

Having a great sense of humor—and using it effectively—can help communicate your message to capture the mindshare. That’s because humor is one of the best ways to connect with others, which can lead to getting your message heard and understood. Many have taken advantage of this truism using YouTube as a marketing medium to tickle the public funny bone.

As described in Chapter 6, singer/songwriter and budding entrepreneur Kerri Smith put her humor skills to work to help her capture the mindshare for a product she manufactured and marketed. When discovering that her product—the BellyRest maternity support pillow—would be subject to high fees based on “pillow tag laws” if she sold it online, she decided to create a hilarious rap video based on the situation to bring attention to the government red tape.

By using crowdsourcing platforms to post her video, Kerri was able to raise more than enough money to offset the cost of the unexpected fees. In doing so, her humorous message helped win new fans for her product as she launched her business.

Here are some tips on how you too can use humor to make meaningful connections with current and prospective customers:

Start with a friendly crowd.

When Kerri first tried to share her humorous rap video, the crowdsourcing website Kickstarter rejected it based on its political viewpoint. But she found a more receptive audience on Indiegogo.com, a similar crowdfunding platform, and was able to accomplish her goals. The lesson is, look for a friendly test audience to support your idea from the start. Since it can be difficult for others to visualize a comedic idea that’s only in your mind, it can help to create a script to pitch to potential supporters. Target prospects who are known for appreciating creative ideas and more humorous approaches.

Use humor to solve problems.

If you watch enough YouTube videos, you’ll eventually see perspectives that are more mean-spirited than funny. It’s important to use humor appropriately if you want to capture the mindshare; failing to do so can bring the opposite result, causing you to lose customers. So think about positioning your humor to poke fun at an industry problem that your product can solve, rather than lampooning a particular person or group. If you think about what your customers complain about the most, you’ll find plenty of fodder for comedy.

Use comedic devices that customers understand.

When you start with your customers’ “pain points” as the source of your humor, you can create rapport by demonstrating that you understand their concerns. To find the “funny” in a challenging situation while building on this connection, try exploring what would happen if customer problems were magnified to disastrous proportions, and develop your storyline around that.

When you make someone laugh, you create an intimate connection with that person in a business environment. As the competition for eyeballs continues to increase, you can use humor to make your branding more sticky and amplify your messages.