

## **Online Product Launches: Target Your Four Audience Types**

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### **Introduction**

Online product launches have lots of moving parts. Many different departments have a hand in getting to the finish line with a winning product. If you are managing this type of launch, there are a variety of ways to plan strategy and set goals. One way is to target your four main audience types. Using this method, you won't risk missing the big target—making it easy for your customers to buy your products.

Making your plan “customer-centric” allows you to focus on what matters and makes it easier to revise as you progress. You can determine which groups need more attention and which groups are performing well.

### **Audience Type One —“Self-directed”**

This is the easiest type to satisfy. This person is an “early adopter” or someone with a defined need. For example, they have determined they need a “defragmentation” software utility. They have read some online articles, made a decision and want to go directly to the website to buy. To satisfy this type's needs you must have a clearly defined buying process with quick check out.

#### Areas to target:

**Online Store**—Make sure you have a clear, well-run shopping cart in place. Make it easy for him to buy his product and leave satisfied.

**Customer Service**—Have an e-mail confirmation process in place that makes it clear that a product was purchased and a credit card (or other mechanism) was charged.

**Offer testing**—Begin with a special offer that can be tracked online. Make sure to tweak it during the launch period as you see results come in.

### **Audience Type Two— “Tester”**

Satisfying this type is very straightforward. This is a person who wants to get his hands on the “trial version” for a test drive. If you are a software vendor this is easy. If you are a consumer electronics vendor or sell a service, you must determine a way to give your “tester” a chance to try it.

With services you can offer a free “one-time” offer. As an electronics vendor you must be more careful. You might have a “tester” masquerading as a buyer who will quickly buy the product to test it and just as quickly return it. Be fair with your return policies, but be clear that a sub-set of this group is going to return products no matter what you do.

#### Areas to target:

**Downloadable software**—this area needs to be operable from the day of product launch. I have seen companies postpone providing a trial until other areas are in place. You miss a big opportunity if you allow that. Some testers will show up on day one never to return.

**Free limited offer**—if you are a service provider, have this in place and expect people to try it. If you need to assign resources to it, do so. Nothing is worse than having an online message say “check back with us later...” They won't.

### **Audience Type Three —“Fact-Checker”**

You may notice we are moving to the harder audience types. You knew they were coming. The “fact checker” is a cautious person who weighs information very carefully and doesn't

buy until every question is answered. This is the person that websites were made for. If you provide a variety of different information formats, e.g. audio, video, PDFs, etc. it makes it more likely that this type will find what he's looking for and make a purchase.

Areas to target:

**Multimedia Product Movies**—I call these “Digimovies (sm).” They are generally done in Flash, are no more than three minutes in length and they provide the most “bang for your buck.” Feature these prominently as little infomercials wherever you want to alert your audience to top features and benefits of the product.

**Written Information**—these are the most common type of information available on new products. Provide free articles, links to online reviews, White papers, online brochures, anything the fact-checker can study at his leisure.

**Webinars and Tele-seminars**—these are relatively new formats, ideal for the fact checker. A Webinars allows you to invite website visitors to an online presentation about your new product. She can view your presentation and ask questions via a messaging facility. If you can't afford a Webinars, consider a tele-seminar that allows your audience to join a phone-conference setup to discuss the merits of your product.

**Audience Type Four—“Mr./Ms. Remorseful”**

We all know and dread this audience type. This is the person who buys on impulse, repents at leisure and obsesses about returning the product as soon as he gets it. Obviously, the goal here is to overcome his feeling of being “duped” and make him feel that buying the product or service was a good idea after all. Believe it or not, you have more control over this than you realize. You need to quickly contact him and reinforce his reasons for buying.

Areas to Target:

**Monthly newsletter**—you should have a product newsletter (that is track able) ready as an auto-responder after product purchase and/or registration. In this newsletter you should have links to:

1. **Step by step tutorials** that are easy to follow and get her started using the product. Don't count on her finding the area herself; she's too busy regretting her purchase.
2. **Community**—Provide an area that brings users together to discuss the product and share information. This idea is as old as the Internet and is often overlooked.
3. **Online help**—make it clear that help exists and can be found online. This can be in the form of FAQs, a knowledge database and links to other helpful resources.

About Digital Media Works

Digital Media Works, Inc. ([www.DigMediaWorks.com](http://www.DigMediaWorks.com)) is an Internet marketing and design firm that specializes in solutions for high tech and e-commerce companies. . A seasoned 25+ year management/marketing professional, founder Stephanie Diamond is experienced in building profits in a broad range of product and services businesses. She created a highly successful line of multimedia software products that sold millions of copies for America Online, and has developed unique business strategies and products for a variety of companies, including AOL Time Warner, Redgate New Media and Newsweek, Inc.

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