
Selling To Scientists - A Guide for Engineering & Technology Companies



Selling to Scientists

Engineers and scientists have shaped the world around us, yet the subtle differences in how these vitally influential groups communicate can prove to be a challenge for technology companies looking to make the jump between selling components and systems to engineers and selling instruments to scientists.

One of the reasons is that scientists and engineers are trained to think in different ways: scientists explore the boundaries of systems in order to better define and understand them; while engineers use that understanding to develop optimal solutions to problems.

On the face of it, the challenges should be the same - especially if the new product (or service) is the best solution to a well-recognised problem. However, even the most experienced marketing teams can stumble when trying to make the leap into the laboratory market.

One of the key issues is that engineers are taught to use models that hold true under certain conditions to develop solutions to the world's problems.

In contrast, scientists are trained to develop hypotheses to explain observed phenomena and then devise experiments to test if those hypotheses are robust.

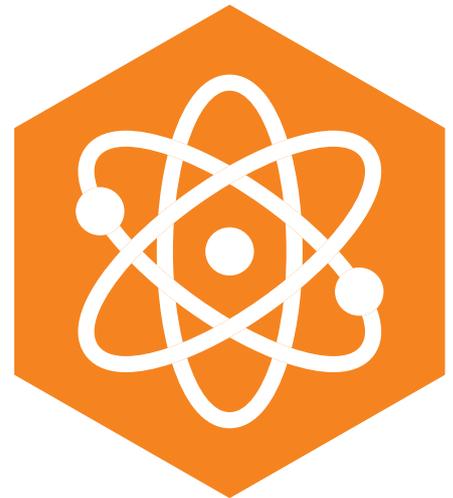
In short: scientists are taught to challenge, while engineers are taught to build and optimise.

To complicate matters further, the scientific decision-making process often spills out from the laboratory and into the buying process, making scientists more sceptical than most when it comes to marketing messages (Hamid Ghanadan refers to them as the world's most sceptical audience in his book 'Persuading Scientists' about marketing for the life sciences industry). This leaves marketing teams the challenge of creating engaging content that is backed up by readily available data.

But it would be a fallacy to suggest that scientists are hyper-rational about their purchasing decision and are not swayed to buy from a brand simply because they like and trust it – many of my chemistry professors were die-hard Apple-fans that wanted to 'Think Different'. I have also overheard passionate arguments about which brand of HPLC instrument is the best – with neither party budging an inch in their beliefs that brand X was the best!

Such emotional attachment to scientific instrument brands is perhaps surprising, yet it is important to remember that scientists, just like engineers, are humans first and professionals second. A scientist may subconsciously decide to buy a particular system in just seconds based on an emotional connection to the brand, but may then spend months developing a rational justification for that choice.

This makes it critical that there is consistency of message and emotive language from a prospect's first exposure to a product or brand to the final piece of sales material. Any deviation from that course may lead to the prospect losing trust in the brand – and end up costing the company an opportunity to gain a customer.



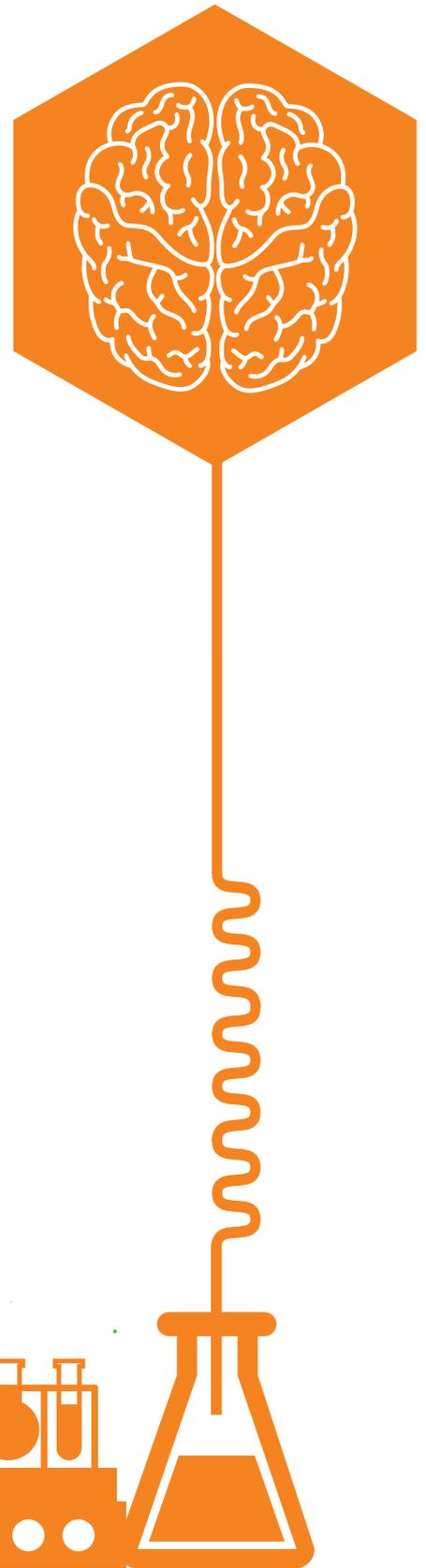
The need to balance the emotional and logical needs of the customer lies at the very heart of the challenge faced by those engineering companies trying to sell to scientists. Simply developing something that is faster, more sensitive, smaller or easier will not be sufficient to overcome the attachment that customers form over years of buying from a trusted brand. And a short advert in the product pages of a magazine is not enough to spark a scientist's curiosity to explore further.

Publitek has developed a process that will help you avoid the pitfalls that can catch out the unsuspecting marketing team, and instead show you the path to generating better leads and sales opportunities.

The Publitek Process

The Publitek Marketing process avoids sparking the scientist's scepticism by eschewing the traditional 'product, product, product' message in favour of a more subtle approach. Some of the key steps include:

- The creation of varied and frequent opinion pieces designed to polarise opinion and get people talking about a subject.
- The publication of evidence to support the opinion pieces, such as case studies, whitepapers, journal articles and other peer-review publications.
- Ensuring that all articles can be easily found and shared by using SEO techniques and enabling distribution via social media.
- The creation of campaign landing pages on your website that ensure that site visitors can easily find relevant and engaging information
- The creation of frequent calls to action that will enable you to more accurately 'diagnose' the challenges visitors to your site are trying to solve and convert interest into actionable leads.





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