



Inspired Incentives

How to Stop Amazon from Taking Your Business

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The Amazon Problem, Part 2.

Amazon can be a menace for a lot of businesses, large and small. Its aggressive expansion into any and all industries, along with its long list of competitive advantages, make the online retailer almost untouchable. In a past post, we lamented some ways in which this not-so-friendly giant might be encroaching into your territory.

Fortunately, we pride ourselves on being solution providers, so we've got some insights up our sleeves that may be of some use to you when you find yourself having to compete with Amazon. Throughout our 35+ years of experience dealing with clients within the HVAC industry, we've noticed one major thing that distinguishes one company from another. It all boils down to **adding true value**.

So, How Can You Add Value?

Becoming a valued asset is the best way to compete with Amazon. There just happens to be several areas of value that you uniquely possess, areas that Amazon simply can't get its hands on. Here they are.

Expertise Breeds Relationships

One thing you have over Amazon is depth. While it may be infiltrating every industry it can find, but that means it's spreading itself out. The giant may be gobbling up commodities, but it doesn't have the expertise that you do, just the products. You have depth, whereas, it has breadth, and only a fraction of its business involves yours. Depth, in your industry, beats breadth every time. Use your expertise to create meaningful relationships with those who buy your products.

One thing that Amazon certainly won't do is go out to your dealer's warehouse and run a meeting to educate the salespeople on how your new product works, or invite distributors to a conference to discuss strategy. If your dealers were to purchase a cheaper version on Amazon, he'd be on his own to try to sell it. Hopefully he doesn't have to take the thing apart to know how it works.

Fill in that value gap and seal your relationships while you do. A loyal partner will always be more willing to give you more share of his wallet than an unfaithful Amazon customer. Loyalty is key, and you're more than capable of inspiring it.

Stay Ahead with Associations

Another area of value that Amazon won't reach is the ability to join associations. If you're working within the HVAC industry, you're most likely a part of an organization or two already.

Associations like HARDI, ASHREA, and ACCA are leaders in the industry and are always ahead of the curve when it comes to trends and topics that could be useful to you when adding value for your dealers. Many of these associations have perks for their members. Perks that can help educate you and your employees.

Take HARDI, for example. Their membership comes with resources and benefits such as education, networking, and professional development tools. All of these are invaluable weapons in your battle against the e-commerce giant.

Another ground breaking aspect of HARDI's membership is HARDI's Proven Vendor Program. This program allows members to see peer-reviewed references of HARDI-certified vendors. If you're looking for some value to add to your business, that's a good place to start.

Incentivize

What do the two areas of value above have in common? They can be combined to germinate into an incentive strategy. The two things your dealers get from purchasing with Amazon are ease and, most likely, pricing (Amazon has actually been found to skimp on this).

You, on the other hand, can provide so much more. By establishing an incentive strategy, you can actually provide the expertise mentioned above and reward your dealers for taking part in the learning. Quick and easy eLearning modules can be set up to teach them the ins and outs of products and services so that they can be more efficient at selling the products you want to push.

You can also push certain products through dynamic promotional strategies. If you're not hitting your goal in one aspect of your business incentivize it to make it more attractive and rewarding to buy and sell. For example, maybe a product didn't launch as successfully as you'd hoped. The problem may lie in how it's being sold. A product push with an eLearning module can help to hit that launch goal.

Most associations have partnerships with companies that provide incentive services like this. Make sure you're looking into the ones that best match your needs. Chances are these companies are also members of your associations.

Now that you've been armed with some strategic insights for fighting the battle, go compete! Slay the Amazon dragon by simply becoming more valuable to your vendors. Stay ahead of the HVAC curve, make some meaningful connections, and help your dealers sell your products. Also, hang on for a few incentive strategies to try that work perfectly for HVAC companies.

Interested in what you can do to stay ahead of the game? Stay tuned for more details on how to win against this giant.

Or

Contact TIMBR - HMI to learn more about how you can add value to your business.