



Ideas in Action

Customers Have The Answers

For any creative entrepreneur, success comes from creative talent combined with smart business thinking.



Sophie Nzinga Sy is successful both creatively and commercially. Because she's not only a talented fashion designer, but she's customer focused too.

Many businesses claim to be 'customer-focused' and it has become a cliché. But what does it mean in reality?

Sophie is an excellent example of a customer-focused creative entrepreneur. We can all learn valuable lessons from her successes in developing her enterprises.

Proudly Senegalese and based in Dakar, Sophie has an international outlook and has travelled extensively.

After studying economics in the USA she transferred to the prestigious Parsons School of Design in New York. By following her passion and bringing her Senegalese sense of style to Parsons, she flourished.

Sophie launched the Sophie Zinga brand in 2012 and opened her first store in Senegal in 2013.

In 2020 she also launched a new lifestyle brand, Baax.

Sophie says: "We focus on a particular type of customer. Socially conscious women, well travelled, and part of today's cosmopolitan world."

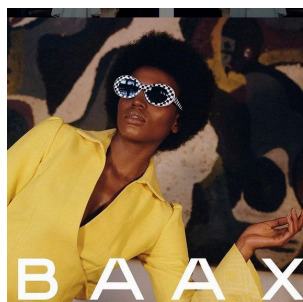
Sophie knows her customers, not in an abstract way, but directly. Many businesses have abundant data about customers, sales, product lines etc, but rarely interact with customers as people. This is where Sophie is different, and it's one of her major strengths as a creative entrepreneur.

She said: "Running a creative business is complex and hard work. Only a small part of my time is spent designing because there's so much I have to do, including managing 17 members of staff."

Despite all these pressures, Sophie takes time to talk with customers. This is not just a matter of 'selling' to them, but genuinely listening to them. She has authentic conversations, woman to woman.

"I love my customers and enjoy talking with them," she said. "And from these conversations, I get new ideas. Customers tell me what they really want and even suggest new products. If only we take time to talk and listen, we find that customers have the answers, including answers to questions we didn't know we had."

In this way, Sophie's genuine conversations are a kind of market research. But somehow the term 'market research' sounds too technical, deliberate and 'scientific' to describe Sophie's very human touch.



Whatever you want to call it, this approach leads to new insights that drive the business forward in harmony with customers' genuine needs.

"It was from one of these conversations that we decided to design and launch a new line in stylish pants. For us it was a kind of 'pivot', in response to customers' requirements. The idea came

from them, not us. And it was a great success!"

Customers have the answers, if only we give them a chance to talk, like Sophie does so well.

Links

www.sophiezinga.com

www.baaxstudio.com

www.davidparrish.com

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