

The End User & Back

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Recently, during a sales meeting at United Sales Associates, comprised of channel members, manufacturers (principals), distributor, end user, and reps, one of the main topics was "How will our industry change most in the next five years?" Most of the energy of the discussion, early on, was focused on manufacturers, distributors and reps, when Dr. Rick Fulwiler (President of Technology Leadership Associates and recently retired from Procter & Gamble where he was director of health and safety worldwide) also asked us, wisely, to define "end user" - and then urged our future discussions to include the end user needs first (remember - the "ultimate mouse"?) and then work back.

A good lesson for us all! - Back to the basics - let's understand where the "end user" will be 5 years (or 3 or 2 years) from now and let's include him (or her) in needs evaluations to determine where we must go from here to get to there! Peter Drucker, management guru and author of 'Management: Tasks, Responsibilities, Practices' and "The Effective Executive" among others, states "selling focuses on the needs of the seller, marketing on the needs of the buyer" (or end user). He goes on to say

"Selling is preoccupied with the seller's need to convert the product into cash; marketing with the idea of satisfying the needs of the customer (or end user) by means of the product and the whole cluster of things associated with creating, delivering and finally consuming it."

I think Dr. Fulwiler is suggesting we properly market our products not just sell them! Too many times we all get wrapped up in what the competition is doing - or what the distributor may want -or what our needs are instead of going to the real source - the END USER - of products or services to really understand their needs in order to build the solution for them.

Think about it!

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