

How to Market Your Products Without Sounding Like a Used Car Salesperson

Introduction:

Welcome to the School of Sellers podcast, a teacher business show that is short on time but big on action. Full-time, part-time or just getting started? No matter where you are in your teacher seller journey, there's something here for everyone, making your online teacher business feel doable every step of the way. Here's your host, Erin Waters.

Erin Waters:

Hello there and welcome to School of Sellers. I am Erin Waters and I have been a teacher seller for eight years and I created this show to serve sellers just like you and me who go through all of the ups and downs of being a teacher seller and oftentimes feel like we're kind of alone in this thing. Because the TPT world is very unique and it's own special little corner of the universe. So, I wanted to just say thank you for joining me on this journey as we explore what it means to be a teacher seller and share all of the happiness and pain and stress that comes along with it but also, giving ourselves the sense that we are not alone because we are surrounded by sellers just like us who understand it and get it and know what we're going through. So, thank you, thank you, thank you for being a part of School of Sellers community.

Now a lot of the time on this show I talk a lot about what it means to be an accidental entrepreneur and I believe that most of us are accidental entrepreneurs, meaning we never meant to be business people, right? We always had dreams of being teachers, we became teachers and then through the teaching world discovered this crazy little world of Teachers Pay Teachers. And now we find ourselves running classrooms and a digital boardroom so to speak. So, with putting on the businessperson hat comes a whole new host of challenges and wins and these are some of the things that I love to talk about here on this show. And today we're going to be talking about something that doesn't come very naturally to us. Not having a formal business background and an innate desire to become a businessperson results in some of the things we have to do feeling not very natural and kind of forced. And today I'm talking specifically about how we can sell our things when we hate selling our things, right? So, I am one of the people who hates selling things the most which is very ironic because I have a very successful TPT business, I run School of Sellers where I give all of you advice and ideas about how to sell your products.

But when it comes down to actually selling and being salesy and promoting my things, I find it very difficult because it doesn't come naturally, it makes me feel icky and I basically want to do everything in my power to not come across as one of those gimmicky, salesy, spammy people that we so often come into contact with in the marketing world. Now as teacher sellers, I'm sure you know what I'm talking about. If you follow any business pages, Facebook will definitely target you with other marketers who they think are a good fit for you and we have all been flooded with those ads with the clickbait titles and false promises and all these things that give salespeople their bad rap. So, I think that's part of me hating selling. And also, I just feel bad sometimes being like hey, pay me money for this. And guys, I get it. That's our business. That is what my whole entire life revolves around. So, I get the necessity. I understand I just need to kind of get it together and feel better about that situation. But my School of Sellers team laughs at me because every time I launch a course, they're like just go for it, like come on, just tell them about it and share it and blah, blah, blah. And to me, it's like I don't want to share it. Like I feel weird doing that. I created it for people to have but I don't want to have to sell it. I just want people to buy it. But unfortunately, guys, we have to sell things. That's the name of the game.

So, I'm here to tell you a couple of things that you can do to make this process a little less painful and still be able to be a successful businessperson. Now the first important thing to note is that in order to sell a product, you sometimes don't even have to mention anything about buying the product. One of the best things you can do for your sales technique is to focus on the problem and the solution. So, you're going to pitch a problem to your audience that is very well-known to them. As teachers, you are wanting them to buy a product that's going to solve their problems. But instead, you're first going to talk about the problem that you are solving and create just enough urgency and a feeling of yes, I know exactly what you're talking about. I need an answer to this problem so that they stick around to hear the solution. This is where your product comes in and you can offer your product as the direct solution or at least a smaller part of the overall solution to the problem that you are talking about.

So, for example, let's say you are trying to sell a, I'm going to use an example of my own, my morning journals. Okay? I create these morning journals that are paperless and are used on the whiteboard. So, instead of hoping on Instagram and saying hey, buy this notebook. Instead, I say don't you hate when you walk into your classroom ready for a calm morning and when the kids arrive, all of a sudden, there's 500 things to do. You have to take attendance, you have to get the lunch count, you have to make sure kids are sitting down, you have to make sure kids are putting their backpacks away. You know, the whole list. And you present that type of situation and you say well, luckily, I found the answer to our problems. And that's where you bring in your product as the solution. And I think that's one of the greatest things you can do for your audience because they're able to see exactly what problem you're solving for them but at the same time, you don't feel like you're selling to them. You truly are giving them a solution to that problem.

I was unable to find the original source for this quote but something that I heard a while ago towards the beginning of my journey as a teacher seller was to sell a good night's sleep, not a mattress. And I think that fits in perfectly with this overall idea of talking more about the problem and solution rather than talking about your product. Not only is this going to feel better for you as the seller but it's also going to come across a lot more naturally than it would if you were just pitching the product and sending them to your link to buy it. This also helps to do this approach when you have a lead magnet that is a free sample of a paid product. So, if you have a larger product line and one of your lead magnets is a free sample of that product line, then this would be a great technique to use because now people are getting the problem, they're feeling the urgency, feeling the need and they're able to download the solution as a free solution which will hopefully then later lead to them buying the paid solution. But at this point, you're still helping them out and you're still getting your product in front of their eyes which is exactly what you wanted.

Another workaround if you will to being salesy when it comes to marketing your products on social media or through email, however it is you choose to market, is to show other teachers using it in their classroom. Anyone can post a perfectly edited stock photo, or I'm sorry, a photo of their product being used on their feed but when teachers are able to see other teachers using it in a real classroom, it really resonates differently with them. Ideally, your audience wants to be able to relate with you so if they can see themselves in as much of your posts as possible, then the more effective your marketing is going to be. If they can see teachers just like them using the product in classrooms just like theirs, then their sense of wanting that product, needing that product and knowing that it's going to work in their classroom will be heightened versus just posting a product, some stats about it and asking them to buy it.

Now there are a few different ways you can get people to share photos of your products. One of the things you can do is offer an incentive for sharing. I have a few friends who offer a gift card giveaway every single month for any followers who share their products on Instagram or Facebook and tag them in it. You could also get together a Facebook group of product testers. Just send a quick little feeler out to your email list and say hey, I'm creating a group where I will give you free products in exchange for photos. If you'd like to join, fill out this Google form. Usually, I'm looking for people that fit certain grade level or grade range and other parameters that you might choose. And then pick 10 to 20 people to be in that group and give them free products in exchange for photos of that products in use in their classrooms. This is especially helpful for those of you who are not in the classroom any longer and less possibility of sharing photos in an actual classroom. Of course, teacher friends in real life are always great resources for this. Email them a couple of products or keep a shared Google drive and just ask them to send you photos every once and again as they use those products in their classroom. If you do choose to do a giveaway or promotion to get your buyers to use products and tag you in pictures, you could also include a little tidbit about this on your product description on TPT or even use a page in your preview or the product page to share that information on how they can share that photo.

And finally, I think it's really important to remember that we can't neglect the non-product posts. Now as a rule of thumb, I try to put my products front and center with the majority of my posts and they are always at the top of my mind when I'm creating my content plan for social media and email and my blog. However, you still need to build that know, like and trust factor and this comes with adding personal posts on top of your product-based posts. Like I said, I'm super guilty of neglecting these personal posts simply because it's still a little uncomfortable for me to share about myself on social media. But it is very true that building that know, like and trust factor with your audience is priming them to buy from you eventually even if they're not ready to buy from you right now. Make sure amidst all your product posts that you throw in photos of yourself, your family, your kids. Give them a look at the person behind the product. Even if they aren't ready to buy it, one day they might be and your pitch won't feel like a pitch to them anymore. It'll be a no-brainer, it'll be a resounding yes to a person that they know, like, trust and follow for a reason beyond the product. I can think of at least two or three sellers off the top of my head who even though I haven't bought a lot of their products, if they decided to start selling one to me, I would probably buy it because everything I've followed from them in the past few months has been right up my ally and I look forward to seeing them on my feed. I always watch their stories and I feel like I know them in real life now. So, I feel like if they just asked me to buy something, I probably would do it. So, you want to be that seller for your audience.

The bottom line here is that we work our butts off creating these products for teachers and at heart, teachers can be very giving, sometimes overly generous people and sometimes that gets in the way of our business tactics. And again, I am so guilty of this. So, at the end of the day, you can try these techniques but we should also remember that we need to take pride in our work and we need to remember that it's valuable. It's worth something and if they're not going to get us from us, they're going to get it from someone else. So, we need to start thinking this way in order to be able to sell our products since we already spend so much of our precious time making them. That is just half the battle. Marketing them and getting them seen by other teachers is why we made it in the first place so that is what we need to focus more on and it really helps to have some workarounds for not feeling so salesy. Thank you so much as always for tuning in and I will see you here again next week.

Welcome to the School of Sellers

What is the School of Sellers?

We are a group that is committed to helping teacher sellers in all stages of their business. We like to provide tips, tools, and resources that aid in building your business while making it feel doable every step of the way.

Connect with the School of Sellers!



Join our community of new TpT sellers to learn more about creating a successful teacher business from day one.



Join our community of teacher sellers who are looking to grow their business. This is the perfect place for collaboration, marketing advice, inspiration, and support.



Listen to the podcast. Each episode is full of actionable tips that make your teacher seller business feel doable.



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