

Is Bottled Water Making You Stupid?

Bottled water is one of the most profitable drink products in the world, selling for 3000 to 9000 times what most of us pay for the perfectly safe, inexpensive liquid that comes out of our tap at home.

To put this in context, paying \$2.40-3.90 for a 750ml bottle of water is equivalent to:

- \$10,000 for a tuna sandwich at your local cafe or
- A bill from your water company for \$3000/tonne (vs. the going rate of \$1.2/tonne)

According to the Australasian Bottled Water Institute, Australians consume over 250 million liters a year at a price of \$385 million. We have been systematically brainwashed by the beverage industry to believe that our tap water is somehow unsafe or insufficient - look around and you will see that there are now hundreds of brands competing for your attention with clever marketing campaigns designed to scare, seduce and mislead us to part with our hard earned money.

Despite its association with prestige, purity and pristine conditions, bottled water is often no better than tap water (in terms of taste and cleanliness) and the production process it is extremely harmful to our environment.

Did you know that:

- For every 250million liters of bottled water, it takes 125million liters of oil to produce the plastic bottles, refrigerate and ship them from one part of the world to another
- For every liter of bottled water, another 2 liters are used up in the production process
- More than ½ of the brands on the market are derived from municipal water supplies, despite the fact that the packaging would lead us to believe they come from unspoiled mountain streams or underground springs
- Over 80% of the bottles end up in landfills and are never recycled

It is estimated that bottled water has become a more than \$45 billion dollar industry worldwide. Surprisingly, 97% of it is consumed in countries which have plentiful sources of clean, safe drinking water. We can afford to turn our noses up, avoid the tap and fork out millions for bottled water: our choice however is purely a lifestyle one. A lifestyle choice for us, with life and death consequences for others and the planet.

For 2.6 billion people in the developing world, lack of clean water and basic sanitation is a life or death situation. It is estimated that half of the people in the developing world are suffering from diseases associated with inadequate water or sanitation and that 5 million people die each year. According to the International Water Management Institute, clean water and improved sanitation could be provided to everyone on earth for an outlay of \$11 billion a year (less than a quarter of our global \$45 billion spending on bottled water), yet to date, there has been no impetus to re-channel the money and change our thinking on this important issue.

So you may be sitting there and thinking, what does this mean for YOU and your business?

Well, nothing... and yet perhaps everything.

How often have you (or someone else in your team) said:

- "if we had more money, we could invest in X and improve our business?"
- "if we put our prices up by 10%, we will lose customers." or
- "we can't afford to advertise because it's too expensive."

We already have enough money to do and buy all of the things that we need - it's simply a matter of common sense and priorities. We are all affluent in this country: It is our mindset and our language which is lacking, not our bank accounts.

In fact, each and every day you and I waste money by overpaying for bottled water and other convenience/impulse items. When do you stop to think about the true value of what you got vs. what you paid? Bottled water is just one obvious example and I'm sure you will agree that it is not difficult to see how this might be playing out in other areas of your life.

You have happily overpaid for products. Yet in many instances you struggle to charge what you are worth or put your prices up because you fear that no one will buy. Isn't that interesting?

Perhaps you need to take a lesson from the bottled beverage industry and focus on how you are marketing and selling your products/services? Is fear more powerful than selling benefits? Is perception more influential than reality? Are you seducing your customers with sizzle or merely putting them to sleep with your low prices?

Think about it. Beverage companies have managed to package and sell to you something that is practically free and plentifully abundant, for thousands of times what it is worth. And up until now, you have paid willingly. Bottled water has in fact made us all look a bit foolish.

Maybe it's not the price you are charging that is the problem? It's the way you are choosing to promote your product/service. The best time to change your mindset and your approach is now. Anything is possible.