

BUILD YOUR BUSINESS THROUGH RELATIONSHIP MARKETING



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Do you ever ask yourself the question why your customer's leave you? Or are you so busy looking for new customers that you don't even notice the customers who have left you already! The reasons customers leave you probably isn't what you think.

The US Small Business and US Chamber of Commerce researched this subject and their findings were extremely interesting. Here are the reasons most customers leave within the first year of doing business with you:

- 1% Die
- 3% Move
- 5% Buy from a friend
- 9% Leave due to price, choosing to go to a competitor
- 14% Leave due to being dissatisfied with your product of service
- 68% Leave due to perceived indifference

So what is the definition of indifference?

Noun: lack of interest or concern

Adjective: having no particular interest or sympathy; unconcerned

As a business professional, ask yourself this ...

Is this what YOUR clients are thinking?

Is this the message YOU WANT to be sending?

Customers will always leave for various reasons but those customers who feel valued and appreciated will tend to stay longer than those who don't. They often stay for a combination of reasons:

- Product/Service
- Price
- Brand Identity
- Good Customer Service
- Friendly Staff
- Kept Informed
- Recognition

Losing customers, or customers who will recommend your services, is completely unnecessary and you don't want this happening to you. Research has shown that it can cost 4-6 times more to attract a new customer than to retain an existing customer. Existing customers also respond more readily to promotions and market campaigns than new customers, as they are engaged with you and your business. It is vital to the success of your business to realise that repeat customers, and the goodwill they provide, are an extremely valuable commodity to your business and that you ensure you have a strategy in place to retain these customer.

Do you overlook appreciating your business contacts?

This is a really important question you need to ask yourself. If you are not appreciating your current customers you are literally throwing future business away. As a business owner showing appreciation to your business contacts to thank them for placing business or referring business to you is the key to expanding your business exponentially.

Many businesses forget to stay in touch with people who have placed business with them which can result in them losing their hard earned customers. Most businesses don't even ask for referrals from customers who have been really pleased with the product they have purchased or the service that has been provided for them.

Unfortunately many businesses have customers desert them simply due the fact that their contacts don't know that a business is still trading. If a customer doesn't hear from you, you will lose their loyalty. If there is business to be placed, instead of returning to you, they will place business with the latest person they have come in contact with or ask a friend to recommend them to someone. Remember that in the first year of doing business with you **68% of customers, who do not return as repeat customers, do so because of perceived indifference.**

Many businesses are unaware that just through communicating more effectively on a regular basis with their existing customers, they can reap the rewards of more business and referrals just by implementing a **simple system**, without having to go out and look for new customers.

Here are some different ways you can thank your contacts:

- In Person – when you see your business contacts always remember to thank them personally for their business or referrals, without any other agenda.
- Phone – make contact and simply thank a contact for their business.
- Cards and/or gifts – sending a physical card or gift to say thank you, which your customer will find meaningful or useful, is something that many businesses don't do.
- Host a Client Appreciation Lunch or Dinner – invite your top customers and show your appreciation on an annual basis.

You can use one or all of these suggestions but whatever you do, do it systematically. If this is something you don't do, it is never too late to start appreciating your business contacts. Put yourself in the place of one of your customers. Have they heard from you in the past year? If not, what will their thinking pattern be when you pop into their mind?

- “They obviously didn't appreciate me placing my business with them!”
- “They didn't thank me for the referral I gave them, so I won't do that again!”
- “I'd like to place some more business with them, but as I've not heard from them perhaps they aren't in business anymore!”

Unlike price, product quality or service delivery strong customer relationships are hard for your competitor's to replicate. The strong customer relationships you form help to give you a competitive advantage over those supplying the same product/services as yourself.

If you don't learn to appreciate your business contacts what is to stop them from looking on the internet and finding someone else, who offers exactly the same service you do, and for them to place their business with a competitor instead of you.

So what if you add Relationship Marketing to your strategy?

Relationship marketing is used in business to foster customer loyalty and also emphasises customer retention and satisfaction rather than focussing on sales only. As a practise, relationship marketing differs from other forms of marketing in that it recognises the long-term value of customer relationships and extends far beyond just a one-off sale.

“Appreciation wins out over self-promotion every single time” ~ Kody Bateman

The main reasons businesses are often not committed to relationship marketing is due to: a lack of resources, not having a clearly defined strategy and not having a simple system to follow-up effectively. Loyal customers are extremely important to any business as referrals are free, whereas attracting new customers is a much more costly process.

In today's technological age it is more important than ever to develop and maintain a good relationship with your customers, clients or prospects. E-mails often remain unopened or aren't even received due to spam filters. Phone calls and text messages are easily forgotten. However, a greeting card or postcard is often kept or passed on if it includes your business details.

Many top sales professionals have built their businesses on the strength of their personal relationships with clients, which are built over time through the sending of personal notes.

Why Building Relationships Should Be At The Top Of Your List!

Statistics show that every month a business is not in contact with its customers, **it will lose 10% of its influence over them.** Customers who feel appreciated generate more referrals, without any advertising costs by you, and can generate 80% more results for your business due to your current client knowing or liking your product or service. Why keep chasing after new clients if you could generate an endless stream of repeat and referral business through focussing on building better relationships with your current clients?

Would you like to spend less money on advertising and marketing? Having a successful relationship building strategy in place is critical to ensure you are connecting and gaining the attention of your prospects and customers and instead of spending out all the time on marketing, if you look after your contacts wisely, you could secure the majority of your business **for FREE.**

A good follow-up system is absolutely essential for any business. If you don't have a system that works you are losing sales, customers and money every day. A follow-up system could include direct mail, phone calls and e-mails. However, direct mail can often be discarded as 'junk mail', phone-calls are time-consuming and often viewed as an intrusion or interruption and e-mails are often unopened, filtered or deleted before being read. You need a system that is personal, easy to use convenient, not time-consuming and cost-effective.

Are the methods you currently use ineffective, due to cost and length of time taken, or you may not even have a follow-up system in place and don't know where to start?

What if you also used Targeted Marketing in your business?

Do you know what Targeted Marketing is and, if so, are you using it in your business? As previously mentioned, if you have been in business for a while you should be aware that it is much more expensive to keep looking for new customers rather than looking after your existing customer base to gain repeat business and referrals.

Of course all your customers are important to the success of your business, but your top customers are even more important. It is essential for your business to split your customers into three categories:

Your Top VIPs

Who buy your product/service on a regular basis and refer you to others

Occasional Customers

Who buy your product/service every once in a while

One-Off Customers

Who have bought from you once but are unlikely to buy again

It is extremely important to not simply identify your three different customer groups, but to ensure you keep in contact with your VIP customers on a regular basis, at the very least, and for these VIPs to be contacted more often than someone who is only likely to make a one-off purchase.

Do you keep track of when a current VIP last purchased/used your product/service? Do you call or send a note/gift of appreciation for a referral or invite them to see your newest products? Do you make sure that your top VIPs get special invitations for key events?

Remember that a customer who spends £1,500 per year deserves more of your attention and an even better service from you than one who spends £50 per year. Having said that, it is important to ensure that your Customer Service is exemplary for all your customers, but the personal service given to your VIPs should be elevated to an even higher level.

So the big question is **are your very important customers getting enough of your attention** and in their eyes **do they feel like your VIPs?**

What's the solution to stop losing customers?

1. Build Relationships First Using the 80/20 Rule

- ◇ **80%** of your communication should be based on Friendship and Celebration. Marketing messages should come second.
- ◇ **20%** of your communications should involve asking for the referral, and other promotional messages.

2. Build YOUR Personal Brand

- ◇ **Friendship:** Offer your friendship and develop the client/agent relationship through texts, calls, cards and the web (social media/email).
- ◇ **Celebration:** Celebrate your clients through pictures, gifts and the written Word.
- ◇ **Service:** Offer top notch service and your clients will refer you over and over again.

The key is to systematically keep in touch with your customers on a regular basis to ensure you are never forgotten. There are a number of ways of doing this: e-mail, phone, text, social media, flyers, direct mail, etc.

However, **direct mail** is one of the best ways as nowadays only 3% of post received is personal. Handwritten correspondence, due to its personal nature, has a power that other methods lack and should be at the core of any follow-up system.

A personalised follow-up system is KEY. Why? It says to your prospect or client that you've taken the time to recognise them as an individual and they are important to you. This is also a really good way of differentiating yourself from your competition because so few people bother to follow-up at all, let alone in ways that will impress prospects and existing customers. If your competition sends only e-mails or flyers and you send a personalised card who do you think is more likely to get the sale? So why not be different and show your business contacts that you care about them and their business. Whatever you decide to do, you should **at least use direct mail** in combination with the other methods of staying in touch, mentioned previously.

Taking action to put this strategy in place

I'm really excited for you to realise the power and importance of direct mailing for your business. Don't delay, make it your mission to appreciate your customers so they become your raving fans. How can you do this? By doing what you're doing - joining my 30 Day Business Relationship Marketing Challenge.

What you will get out of joining The Challenge

**More referrals and more repeat business,
which will COST YOU NOTHING!**

If you haven't already done so, please visit The [30 Day Business Relationship Marketing Challenge Facebook Group](#) where you will receive lots of tips and support throughout the 30 days. It would be great to personally connect with you via [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#) too.

Thanks again for signing-up. I look forward to assisting you in getting your Relationship Marketing strategy in place and if you need any help, at all, please tag me in the Facebook Group when I will do all I can to assist you.

Nicky

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