
Attracting and Keeping Customers

Attracting and keeping customers. Isn't that what business is all about? Of course! Each entrepreneur started his/her business because they had a love they wanted to pursue full-time. In addition, they saw a need they thought could be filled by their products or services. However, without customers to purchase these products or services, every business in the world would be forced to close its doors.

The two most important business practices that exist now - and have ever existed in the past - are attracting and keeping customers. Federal Express says it best. "Advertising brings customers in the door, all right, but bad customer service sends them right back out the door again."

A balance must be obtained. Advertising is essential to promote your business and bring paying customers in the door. Once there, customer service will keep them loyal and make them life-long, repeat customers.

How is the balance achieved?

Make sure your customers know they are appreciated. How? There are several ways - most will cost you nothing.

- Tell your customers you appreciate them. There is no need to make a scene in expressing your thanks, simply remember to thank each customer for his/her business.
- Send a note. After each purchase, write a short note or postcard thanking the customer for their patronage and asking them to call on you again.
- Go above and beyond. For example: if you sell products that require batteries, tuck a pack of double A's in the bag - free-of-charge! In dollars, it will cost you about a buck... in referrals and good will, it will repay you over and over.

Keep customer service claims out of your advertising.

Unfortunately, so many companies claim "service with a smile" in their advertising and then don't deliver. Most claims of excellent customer service are ignored in advertising. Follow the statement, "Don't tell me... show me".

Make your advertisements user friendly. Be sure to include all the information customers need in order to purchase from you. This should include your business name, a representative's name (if applicable), ordering information (i.e., address, telephone number, web site, etc.). There is too much competition in the world of business today for customers to spend a lot of time searching for the information they need. Make it easy for customers to buy from you.

Under promise and over deliver. Customers love to get a call saying his or her order arrived two days early. When making claims to customers - for delivery times, pricing information, repair turnaround, etc. - promise less and give them more.

If you think you can complete the project by Wednesday, allow a little room for error and tell your customer the date will be Friday. When you call them on Thursday to let them know you're finished, they'll be thrilled!

After all, which call would you rather make? The one telling a customer you're running behind or the one telling the customer you're finished two days early?!

Keep your ads honest.

No one likes to feel deceived. If your ads make claims that aren't true - or that stretch the truth - ill will is more than likely going to be the result. Unfortunately, many companies believe in "polishing" the truth in order to get customers in the door. These folks usually think they can smooth things over with the customer and make a sale once the client walks in.

It may work in some cases. But consider the situation from the viewpoint of the customer. When you are buying a product or service, is that the way you would want to be treated? Keeping ads honest not only shows customers you possess integrity, but also helps avoid future problems.

These are just a few suggestions to continuing on the road of attracting and keeping customers. Above all, always consider how you would feel if you were the customer! Most buying decisions are emotional. Your ad copy should be, too!

Creative Marketing Services provides marketing, creative and sales promotion services on an "outsourced" basis without the high-cost or overhead of a traditional advertising agency. To discover how you can make your marketing more effective, visit www.mysalespromotion.com
