



Growing Your Business with Relationships Tips

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Retaining your Customers

Customers need to feel validated, this means they have feelings, opinions and considerations. Whether you like them or not they have them and you really need to respect hear and honor them especially when they are dissatisfied with you. Don't say whatever or kiss them off. This just shows how you are not validating or respecting them, this doesn't mean you have to agree with them.

Each customer may or may not want a deeper relationship with you. In this case stay in touch with them whether you just send them a note, a card or newsletter every quarter. If they choose not to have a deeper relationship with you find out why. Maybe it's the timing or they are not sure how they fit into your business. Stay in touch with them, their needs may change over time. Plus, they may know people that can use your services and would enjoy them. This reminds me of businesses who are in the tourism industry. Why, do I need to stay in touch with my visitors? Think about it? Word of Mouth advertising is certainly a ticket for success.

I was speaking to a gal of whom I really wanted her to buy my services, she acknowledged that she really like the the product I was offering her, except at this time she didn't have the means to subscribe to the services. However, when she felt she was ready I would be the 1st person that she will call. We continued to talk about her project that she was working on and I offered someone else that she could use. (I even thought should I?) Yes, it's the right thing to do and she really appreciated it.

Be prepared to offer them help or something gratis as a marketing tool. For example how many times have you engaged using a service and as soon as they have provide a service or product to you the communication ends? Quite often someone who I have helped and they have paid me for my service - I will still give them a 15-30 minutes of my time to help them with their challenge or problem. My customers will refer me or try to help me in some way.

“Best Steak in Town.” signs are rarely backed up with the best tasting results or after guest service care. Do you have a “we care program” in place after your quest has eaten the Best Steak in Town?

BE GENEROUS, share, reach out and be valuable.

Ask yourself, what have I done to value my customers lately? Besides saying to them Thanks for coming in or see you again..what else have you done or plan to do. Simple things like Birthday Cards, Anniversary card or special offers just for them.

“Customer retention is very important in business. The reason is because it provides a strong relationship with the customer and continues throughout the entire lifetime of a relationship. The most important thing about customer retention is making sure you give your customers more than they expect, so that they can become loyal advocates for your brand.” by Gary R. Johnson

How to get more Referrals

In order to get more business we need to allow to have more relationships in our business.

Build Your Reputation 1st

What do I mean by allow? We are either busy networking or working or promoting and not taking the time to engage with people having conversations or discussions with people.

For example, one of the groups on LinkedIn I manage 1 out of every posts to the discussion board are about promoting their blogs or about themselves. Or you may feel, well if you read my blog you'll get to know me better. It's not about you it's about the other person that matters. In another group, a gal calls herself a Queen of networking, even asking her not to post her articles in the discussion ..what does this tell you about this person? Is she interested in other people? No. It's all about her. The best way to develop your reputation is to allow people to get to know you 1st.

Meet someone face to face

Could you take the time and just invite people to coffee, lunch or? When someone is on the opposite side of what you believe in, "Take them out for lunch." You'll need to set some ground rules so you can really get to know them like: Be curious, Listen, Ask questions like "What issues really matter to you?" "Can you share a life experience with me?" By dropping your pretense you can let go of knowing it all. Just for one lunch put down your battle gear. Since we have so many ways to meet people, you can do it in a Google Hangout, on Skype, or meeting them face to face.

Invites

Inviting them to find out more how you can help them in their business. Maybe you have a product or service that will really help them. Your marketing is scalable which means to expand and grow..people aren't scalable. Your marketing needs to include an invite to someone else. Invite to learn more about how you can help them. Send them a sample; give them a free report; host a call to ask questions; view a presentation. Whatever you can give them, or you receive it's an opportunity to learn more.

From there you can get to know the other person, and find out if it's a fit for them. I used to do many, many and many more calls - cold, warm and warmer calls. The thing I learned was a NO was not a no..the more no's I got I knew I was going to get many yes's!

Get an Introduction

Getting an introduction is not quite the same as a referral, however it's better than a cold call. And after a while your cold calls can become warm. Introduce other people together. Same sector people like health professionals or a variety of financial services or one person to another person. See the magic that happens. Ask people to introduce you to their connections or friends.

Ask for Referrals

Ask for referrals, these are people who have the same customer as you want to do business with. Be reciprocal, do the same for someone else or the same person.

6 Ways to Grow Your Relationship Capital

When you are growing your relationship capital, you want to create a strategy to have more friends, colleagues and customers. Here are six ways you can design your plan:

1. Start with your objective - once you write out your clear and specific objective it will boost your overall design
2. Create a data base of your friends and categorize them, I use my address book and GIST.com to help me stay connected
3. What's your soul of your brand? This isn't about features and benefits ie. Apple = Innovation, Disney = Magic. What's on the the other side of your brand?
4. Build trust and loyalty - be friends 1st, share and help others
5. Be where your customers are..listen and observe
6. Work your design - it will take time, keep your profiles updated, this alone with add more value than you can imagine.

The following are real people sharing how they find their customers.

Michelle -The most effective way, so far, has been a combination of networking and education based marketing (speaking, writing, providing useful & pertinent information).

Dr. Shayne Tracey - Inviting people to presentations that will help them in in their businesses.

Rich Casto - By far the most effective way for me to get new business now that I have been doing this for 8 years is just to report the results I get with the companies I have consulted with. I set up my consulting so the results could be measured. Now I just let them speak for themselves.

Dr. Tony Alessandra -Today, it's social networking. Being active on Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Plaxo, etc. with print, audio & video posts that are much more informational/ educational than promotional.

Doug White -The most effective thing we have done to generate business is to write a book. As a part of the research we interviewed more than 100 small and midsize business owners. These were interviews, not sales pitches

Gerry Donaldson- I think by far, the best way is to Network through your own contacts, then the contacts of those you interact with. Regardless of whether you are a gregarious type or shy and retiring. If you start the ball rolling within a trusted space, the opportunities seem to appear from nowhere!

Gerald Bricker - Networking is definitely the number one way that works for me.

Jim Edward Caudell - Simply put, just being a part of the conversation. Whether your talking to a group of like-minded business professionals or to an individual client (online OR offline) As I've said all along, you have to consistently and personally engage your following in order to gain more clients. It's a simple rule but does require some daily discipline. A defined business process helps to keep things in order.

17 Ways to Keep Your Marketing Funnel Working

Who's doing your marketing and promotions for you while you are busy with clients?

This has been one of my BIGGEST lessons to learn in having my own business as a consultant. It's been great to work for my clients, getting paid and helping them, to grow their business,... until the day arrived that I didn't have any clients next to look after.

Does this sound familiar?

We need to keep the funnel going. Many of us have hidden profits in our business, so where is it? Do we know where to look to find the hidden profits or opportunities to keep the flow going?

Some of the action activities' that we need to implement is developing a system that allows us to keep attracting more clients in the funnel. Here are seventeen ideas in how you can improve your marketing:

1. Write down everything you do when a client arrives - this will help you to develop your own system.
2. Set-aside extra cash so that you can spend if you need it for marketing purposes
3. Book time just for you. This way you are making space for more opportunities to come your way. Refrain from panicking that you don't have any clients or work.
4. Surrender
5. Spend time with friends, family and activities or hobbies that you have
6. Be flexible with what comes to you, don't just grab it because you don't have anything.. you'll resent the work.
7. Write down what you can do for your current clients in getting referrals from them
8. Write a list of things that you can do to help you attract your clients faster
9. Make a list of things your clients have been asking for that you don't provide and see if somehow you can offer it, even if it means you partner up with someone else to deliver it.
10. What communication tools or tactics do you use, make a list.
11. Do a newsletter, FREE Report to start building your list and develop a relationship with them
12. Offer a mentor program
13. Offer a book of the month series
14. Find other ways to distribute your products like podcasts, Webinars, videos to a wider audience - they will buy these singularly or in a bundle
15. Offer a discount to your customers, if they go on a auto ship or be a subscriber
16. Publish a book and become the expert in your field.
17. Take the questions you get and put together a class

20 Tips on Developing Partnerships

First, tally up all your marketing assets of what you can offer to a potential partner in terms of exposure. Find a niche that you can own.

Nurture your relationships as it may take anywhere from 3 months to one year to finalize a partnerships.

- 1) Develop referral sources - these are warm to hot people who have used your services or they know what you are capable of.
- 2) Develop partnerships for your products or services. This could be affiliates or vendors or other people that you do business with.
- 3) Adopt a cause marketing partner - these are nonprofit groups or causes. It will help the both of you tap into markets or customers you would not have gotten on your own.
- 4) Join a Barter exchange, this is another source to tap into of reach a customer base that you may not have or be able to reach. Get rid of extra stock.
- 5) Be an expert. Create a special unique name for yourself. Be known. Write a report or White paper.
- 6) Start a brag book, if you haven't got one already. List your media exposure, articles that have been published. Awards that you have received
- 7) Teach a class by using your expertise or something that you are passionate about
- 8) Raise your prices - so often we under price ourselves.
- 9) You can't achieve new goals without putting time into them. Delegate duties you don't want to do - shave off 5 minutes and put that time towards something new.
- 10) Get a mentor, take a tele-class or join a mastermind group to keep you motivated.
- 11) Take one day off to rejuvenate yourself. No calls to customers or biz stuff. Rest, meditate, play or just be with your friends and family.
- 12) Develop a strategic plan in attracting new customers and retaining the ones you already have
- 13) STOP LISTEN WRITE EXPLORE for new fresh ideas
- 14) Up sell your present customers - by offering more product or services you offer. Or partner up with a non-competing business share your offers.
- 15) Maximize the value you give your customers
- 16) Throw a 'nice' party, for all the people who are nice
- 17) Be mission based - Why you do what, you do
- 18) Create a loyalty program for repeat business
- 19) Use surveys - ask what your customers would like that you are not delivering
- 20) Assign yourself or someone else to help you to develop partnerships

Relationship Marketing is about Being of Service

To people whether they are your clients, referral partners, JV partners, the people you are close to. How do you find these people? You'll find them on LinkedIn, Twitter, groups, Facebook and by sharing your expertise, more people will come to you and want to get to know you.

My favorite Relationship development tools are:

- ✓ Using Video's - sending welcome messages to new people, giving tips that may help them, they are more personal as they can see you and they build instant trust with you.
- ✓ Twitter - You can share your expertise, share your blog posts. promote someone else, appreciate and thank people with this tool Follow people that you are connected with and watch what they post. RT them, or comment if they ask a question.
- ✓ Telephone - Nothing like having a conversation with someone. This will allow you to find out what they are really like and if you would like to stay in touch with them or not. Over the past month I have been calling people I am connected with on Facebook, LinkedIn or even Twitter, just picking up the phone to say hello. Some people are shocked, some are receptive some are annoyed. You need to decide which of these people you really want to get to know more or let them go.
- ✓ Facebook - My personal profile has become more and more business connections, however it's an opportunity to get to know those people on a personal level. Plus, if you have a business, it seems to work better for businesses who do B2C better. This has been my experience so far.

- ✓ LinkedIn - This is a professional network, therefore it's a great place to meet B2B people on a professional level.
- ✓ Address Book - Whether you use Outlook, or Mail or another program like GIST or a CRM program, you want to be able to make notes, record their Birthdays, find out what kind of referrals work best for them.
- ✓ Skype - conference calling, video calling, plus it's another whole networking platform
- ✓ Google Alerts - Pick your niche that you want to know more about; about people you know and get an alert for, so when their name comes through you can send them and note to congratulate them. People like to be acknowledged. You don't need to ask for anything, just give your new friend recognition.
- ✓ A newsletter - is a great way for people to get to know your expertise. Not every article or issue may be something you are interested in, however it's still a great way for you to be of service.
- ✓ Joining groups - whether you are on Facebook, LinkedIn, or Focus groups, or Mastermind groups or referral groups. You will meet many new people, which will give you an opportunity to develop friendships and other partnerships.
- ✓ Following up -By being proactive and following up, you will soon have a network of people of who you will

About Mari-Lyn Harris

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"Making a difference by working together."

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