



Connect!

REAL RELATIONSHIP MARKETING IDEAS



For Long Term Sales Success, Turn Your Customers into Friends!

by CHAD RUEFFERT

Do you spend more time trying to attract new customers than you do working to retain the customers you already have? It may be time to consider a relationship marketing strategy.

The term “relationship marketing” is not a new one. Marketing professors at leading universities coined the term in the early 1980’s and it’s been a staple of big business ever since. Put simply, relationship marketing is a strategy for **DECREASING** customer turnover and **INCREASING** customer loyalty.

If there is a secret to building trust, generating customer loyalty, ensuring repeat business, and creating referrals, it’s to stop thinking about your buyers as “customers” and instead, turn them into “friends.”

There is a big difference between a “customer” and a “friend.” Customers shop around for the best price or respond to the latest marketing lure. Friends remain loyal. Customers are skeptical of your claims and question your motives. Friends trust your expertise and value your opinion. Customers

speak out about your product or service only when dissatisfied. Friends actively promote your success.

So how do you turn a customer into a friend? Try these four simple steps.

1

Show appreciation.

As a kid, every time you complained about having to write a thank you note to your aunt or uncle or grandmother for a present, your mother would ask a simple question, “Do you want them to stop sending you presents?” It’s the same with customers. You must quickly, constantly and genuinely say “thank you” every time you have the opportunity.

2

Stay in constant contact.

A salesperson who disappears after the sale is made proves that she was only in it for the money. Follow up and continued communication after the sale shows a genuine interest in your customer’s satisfaction.

3

Talk about more than just business.

To turn your customer into a friend, you must have a relationship that extends beyond the scope

4

Reward your customers for their relationship with you.

Friendship is a two-way street where both partners benefit. You customer helped build your business. What have you done to help build theirs? Beyond the assistance you gave them in their transaction, have they received anything of value from you?

Relationship marketing is especially important in industries like real estate with long gaps between purchases and a high value on referrals. Creating an ongoing relationship with your customers ensures you’ve laid the groundwork for future sales success.

Chad Rueffert is the president of Braintree Marketing, Inc., and the creator of the “From Your Friends” relationship marketing program. He can be reached at (719) 235-5084 or chad@fromyourfriends.com.

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