

5 Methods to Building Long-Term Relationships with Clients



If you are a business owner then you probably have experienced the value of return customers. A return customer does not require massive amounts of marketing resources and can also serve as a referral source for more customers. The question is, how do you earn repeat sales with competition?

The following are a few tips to develop ongoing customer relationships:

Be A Useful Resource

Do not hesitate to share information that your client may find useful. The more value you offer, the more likely they will request your services.

Keep in mind why customers are working with you and what services you can provide to help them reach their goals. You can serve as an expert resource of information with a weekly blog on your company's website.

Always Meet Your Deadline

Do you have a friend that is always late? It gets annoying. Eventually, you may even stop inviting them to events.

If you do not meet deadlines, your clients will be just as annoyed with you as the late friend. You are showing that you do not appreciate their time. Commit to your deadline.

Make Them Feel Special

Business growth can occur quickly. One day, you are posting fliers on bulletin boards wondering if this is all a waste of time.

Ten years later, you realize that every hour in your day is booked. At this point, your clients are probably not getting individual attention UNLESS you have planned for this growth. Your customers will probably switch to the provider who is more attentive to their needs. Make your customer feel special to avoid this problem.

Valuable Methods to Make Your Clients Feel Special

- Make time to meet with your clients in person rather than only over the phone.
- Send your customer a note or discount on their birthday.
- Thank them for their purchase and show appreciation.
- Remember them.
- Make adjustments based on their feedback.

Provide Value

If you provide value to your company then customers are likely to be loyal to your brand. To build brand loyalty, you need to consider what makes your company different.

Why should a customer be loyal to your product or service?

What are you providing that is unique to your niche?

Inc magazine provides a five-step system on providing value to customers.

Inc Magazine's Method to Providing Value for Customers

Step One: Understand What Drives Your Customers

Step Two: Understand Your Value Proposition

Step Three: Identify the Customers and Segments Where You Can Create More Value Relative to Competitors

Step Four: Create a Win-Win Price

Step Five: Focus Investments on Your Most Valuable Customers

Respond to Every Concern

Communication is key for healthy relationships. A business relationship is not different. Do not ignore your customer's concerns, complaints, or questions. In fact, all customer complaints should be responded to within 24 hours.

There are many review sites that allow you to collect reviews and respond to customer's complaints, such as Yelp, Facebook, and Google+. Each provide a discussion board for positive and negative experiences. Make sure you are replying to comments.

Return customers can create reliable income for your company. Invest in your relationships to build brand loyalty that ensures that you stay in business.

5 Rewarding Team Building Exercises for an Evolving Company



Every business owner strives for a workplace where their team members work together positively. However, building unity within the workplace requires time

and effort. Incorporate team building exercises to help employees adjust to an evolving company.

The following are a few fun team building activities for the workplace:

Provide a Comfortable Break Room with Snacks and Beverages

Everyone needs to get away from their desk during the day. A comfortable break room offers your employees a place to rejuvenate or eat lunch. Inevitably, the break room often becomes a gathering place where employees build community.

Creating a comfortable break room takes little effort. Maintain a few snacks, such as granola bars or fresh fruit, as well as coffee and other work appropriate beverages.

Sponsor Job Shadowing Opportunities for Employees in a Different Position

New employees are often attracted to their job position due to the opportunity for growth. Use job shadowing as an opportunity to introduce the employee to the position while meeting others in the department. Job shadowing is easy to manage with little costs. Job shadowing is essential if an employee is considering transitioning to a new position.

What to Include in Job Shadow

1. Participate in Brainstorming Session
2. Attend a Meeting
3. Take Notes During Planning Sessions
4. Variety of Non-Confidential Activities

Hold Company-Sponsored Team Building

Lunches

Food always has a way of pulling people together! Get your employees out of the office with a barbeque or restaurant outing. If your meal is outside, you can schedule fun games where employees work together. Sports work well for team building.

Sponsor Sporting Event or Team that Employees Can Participate in Together

Create a sporting team for your company to participate in together. This could be a community softball, basketball, or kickball league.

You could also sponsor a sporting event, such as a half-marathon or 5k. Provide your employees with company t-shirts. The t-shirts not only create unity but great advertising!

Encourage Team Members to Volunteer for Charity Together

The camaraderie that people develop when they volunteer together is powerful. Create a volunteer event with a local charity. The event could be picking up trash, building homes for poor families, or cleaning hiking trails. Volunteering together can create positive memories that unite the company.

Host Activities for Employee's Families

Company lunches are great but many employees have families that they would love to involve with events. Hold family-friendly events where employees can develop friendships outside of work. The holidays are a great excuse to hold company parties.

Family-Friendly Events to Host

1. Halloween trick-or-treating at desks in the office and pumpkin carving for

the kids.

2. Luncheon the week before Christmas before employees scatter their own ways.
3. Bringing a big screen to the office for family movie night.

Team building exercises can be an investment for your company. When people work well together, they can get more done faster with a positive attitude. It is important to continue team building as your company grows.

Six Buzzwords to Avoid in a CV



When writing your CV, you may get sidetracked by what you think the employer wants to hear. This can lead to buzzwords that weakens your resume rather than making it stand out - or at least stand out in a good way!

Keep the following buzzwords out of your CV to avoid getting shortlisted by the hiring manager:

Hard Working

Stating that you are hardworking is not enough to prove your work ethic to potential employers. Instead of using the buzzword, mention times when you went the extra mile for your company. This could be an additional project that led to a promotion. Prove that you are a hard worker. Don't just state it.

Creative

Would a creative person list that they are creative or show that they are creative on their resume? Most likely, a creative person would find a unique way to depict their creativity.

Creative Opportunities for Resume

- Color Blocking
- Font Choice (but not too wild or hard to read)
- White Space
- Infographics
- Prioritize Information

Strong Communication Skills

Every employer wants an employee with strong communication skills. However, a more professional method to depicting your strong communication skills is to use well-structured sentences, and perfect spelling and grammar. Also, organize your CV so it is easy to read.

Works Well in a Team

A great team player is important for almost every job position. Demonstrate your ability to work well on a team with job descriptions. Include your interaction with co-workers and clients.

For example:

- Format information for internal and external communication - memos, emails, presentations, reports
- Be the point of contact between the executives and company employees/clients and manage information flow
- Screen and direct phone calls and distribute correspondence

Results-Driven

Everything is motivated by needing a result. Therefore, even if we only get out of bed during the day, we are all results-driven. Employers do not want to hear that you are results-driven but HOW you are results-driven.

- Did you create a new program at your previous job leading to an increase in efficiency?
- How did you generate revenue?
- Did you streamline a process?
- What projects did you deliver?

Show your employer tangible facts and figures of how you create results. Don't just talk about what you did, talk about what was achieved.

Thought Leader

A thought leader is the informed, go-to expert in their field of expertise. Examples of thought-leaders are Steve Jobs, Elon Musk, and Bill Gates. If you are thought leader than you are probably not writing a resume anymore.

A more modest approach would be to explain your expertise in the field, including awards and achievements or any special recognition from your employer or associations.

A great resume can determine whether you receive an interview. The trick is knowing what to include and exclude. Deterring from these cliché buzzwords can help your chances of standing out and getting the job.

Four Causes of an Unproductive Workplace



Have you ever heard a business owner say they want to be less productive? I have not! Most business owners want to save time and money.

However, workplace productivity is not always easy. A healthy workflow requires collaboration for the business owner and team to succeed. Learn how to avoid these common workplace problems to prevent tasks from taking hours to complete.

Poor Systems Communication

We create new client file or update important documents almost every day. If your coworkers do not receive the same information then important company procedures could be postponed.

Cloud-based file sharing has become one of the most efficient methods to collaborate information within a company. No longer will you have to email documents within your company. Simply create shared folders that can be accessed by the necessary team members.

There are several file sharing systems that could work for your company.

Dropbox

Dropbox allows you to take your documents, photos, and videos anywhere you go. Place files in your Dropbox and share quickly with a link.

Lastpass

Lastpass allows you to “organize and create strong passwords”. Login to Lastpass, save a password, and share with essential team members. No longer will you have to ask for credit card information or login information every time you need it!

Google Drive

Google Drive provides file sharing and document creation software. More than 120 million users choose to use Google Drive. Users gain free access to 15 gigabytes of shared storage, which includes Gmail. Files can be shared privately with anyone that has a Gmail Account.

Unfortunately, if the user does not have a Gmail account then the file will have to be made public through a shareable link. Many businesses choose not to use Google Drive since the business owner cannot rely on every team member or client utilizing Gmail.

Pointless Meetings

Have you ever been in a meeting and realized that you really don't need to be there? Most employees have! Verify meetings are operating efficiently to save time, money, and frustration.

Tips to Create an Effective Meeting

- Plan an agenda.
- Make sure you need the meeting.
- Ensure appropriate participation.
- Review work prior to the meeting.

Not Collaborating with Remote Employees

The internet has made hiring remote employees easier and more affordable. Employers also have access to talent from around the world.

A survey completed by The Global Leadership Summit in London found that 34% of business leaders claim that more than half of their workforce will be remote in

2020. The problem is maintaining collaboration with coworkers.

To create a better collaboration process, maintain weekly meetings through a conference call. Also, watch that your team is uploading and maintaining documents through file sharing software.

Unorganized Files

A subscription to Dropbox and Google Drive is not enough to keep your folders organized. Each team member needs to stay aware of folder placement, file name, and more to avoid losing hours of recreating documents. Manage a simple file sharing system to help maintain a productive workflow.

Tips to Organize Your Files

- Collaborate with team to ensure that everyone is using the same file share software.
- Limit folder creation. Think in hierarchies when you create your folders, such as client names or projects.
- Don't save anything on your desktop.

Developing a healthy workflow will not occur immediately. Consistent organization and collaboration can lead to an increase in workplace productivity.

How-To be a Successful Business Person



Successful business leaders are not just lucky. They work hard and develop character traits that make them dependable employees.

If you are trying to get a raise, promotion, or new job, there are adjustments you can make to your work ethics to achieve your goals. Each of these habits can be started today!

Be on Time

Punctuality is not only courteous but conveys respect. However, there are people who really struggle with it.

You must learn to be on time to be a successful business leader. This means meeting deadlines, and arriving to work and meetings on-time.

Respect Your Employer and Co-Workers

Treating employers and co-workers respectfully seems obvious. After all, you probably spend more time with your co-workers than almost anyone else in your life. Why wouldn't you be respectful?

However, many employees develop a superiority complex that prevents them from respecting their employers and co-workers.

Lack of respect can permanently prevent your improving your job title. It is important to start acknowledging and appreciating other's efforts. No one will trust you to take on more work without mutual respect.

Avoid Gossip

Office places always have one or two gossips. Most of the time, these employees

are not the managers of the company. Do not get involved with gossip if you want to be successful. You will only get yourself stuck in a trap of “he said, she said” that could send you looking for a new job.

They Speak Up at Meetings

If you want to be successful then you must make your opinion heard. The best method to voice your knowledge is at meetings. Before every meeting, contemplate the problems, issues, and concerns that the company is facing. Develop a few productive ideas that could help the company improve.

If you create a noticeable difference in the company you could be more likely to be considered for the next promotion that becomes available.

They Don't Over Apologize

The ability to apologize is great but can you ever apologize too much? If you are trying to be successful in business then yes!

The Submissive Guide states that, “while seemingly harmless, stating unnecessary things as apologies tends to result in two effects: you essentially undercut every legitimate moment where an apology is actually needed by constantly apologizing (making your apology less valuable) and the negative phrasing that you use either lowers others’ opinion of you (because you’re constantly associating yourself with a negative exchange of some kind), or insults them because, by apologizing for essentially existing in their presence, you’re indicating that you suspect them to be inconvenienced by everything you do (thereby undermining any positive relationship you have with that person).”

In summary, if you are constantly apologizing then you will paint yourself in a negative light, therefore lowering your co-worker’s opinion of you. Constantly apologizing could also insult your co-worker by conveying that you are constantly inconveniencing them.

Learn to not apologize unless absolutely necessary!

Don't Say "Yes" to Everything

Saying "yes" to everything can prevent you from doing a great job at anything! You will spread yourself too thin trying to please everyone. Initially, you might think that you will impress everyone by your ability to complete a variety of tasks. However, the quality of your work will probably be inadequate, and you may be viewed as someone that can't prioritize.

Wouldn't it be better to produce superior outcomes, even if there are fewer?

Ask for Help

Somehow, we have developed the idea that asking for help is a bad thing. Many people think asking for help is an act of weakness. In reality, most successful leaders will tell you that you cannot do it alone. It can also show you know how to delegate.

Benefits of Asking for Help

- Creates Community
- Achieve Your Vision
- Develop the Skill of Receiving

Own Up to Your Mistakes

Even Bill Gates made a mistake at one point. If you made one... or two... or three... it's okay! What is not okay is shrugging your shoulders and telling management that you had no idea who did it. Most likely, you will be caught for your mistake AND lying!

Steps If You Made a Mistake at Work

1. Apologize (once)
2. Figure Out How to Fix What Went Wrong
3. Make a Plan for the Mistake Not to Occur Again
4. Tell Your Boss What You Learned From the Mistake