

YOUR MARKETING OPPORTUNITIES IN LEADERSHIP

I want to see you clearly ahead of the competition out front...and rapidly pulling away! I want to help you utilize your natural leadership instincts, judgment, skills, and experience to bring more value and benefit to each and every customer you serve and every prospect whoever seeks you out. What I'm about to reveal is so powerful - yet overlooked - that merely recognizing its importance and acting on that recognition will improve the size, frequency and number of customers, clients, patients, sales or transactions you have.

People are silently begging to be led, yet most business owners I meet don't assume the leadership role their customers desire. They want someone to help them develop and gain a clear and a complete understanding - and appreciation - of the implications and advantages that a product or service can mean to them in their personal or business lives.

Your willingness to assume more of a true leadership role in the communications you have with customers and prospects is instant leverage. Stated differently, just by deciding to no longer be passive, solicitous or reactive with your customers, your sales and business results can't help but multiply.

Why? It's simple, really. Customers want to feel good about the people they deal with and the decisions they make.

Even something as simple as explaining "why" you're offering a discount can help you satisfy the please-lead-me curiosity of your customers. It's also a humanizing touch that can draw them closer to you.

For example, if you ordered too much of something, and have slashed prices to avoid getting stuck with unsold goods, say that. Put it in your newspaper ad, and in your point-of-purchase display - but, of course, when you do, be sure to emphasize your desire to benefit the customer:

"Come and Profit from My Mistake - widgets Available at Half Price"

Act and function like a true, highly trusted advisor with every customer or prospect, client or patient you ever deal with. Tell them what you honestly believe they should be doing, buying - or the strategy they should (in your best-reasoned professional opinion) be following regarding the purchase and or use/benefit of whatever product or services you sell.

Customers are drawn to people who help them better develop an understanding, education and strategy of use for a given purchase.

You have actually been doing your customers or prospects a substantial disservice if you have been a "follower" of their purchasing decisions.

Being a follower presumes that the customer is always aware of the advantages and

disadvantages of the product or service. It assumes that, on his or her own, the customer fully knows the best purchase option to select. It also assumes that the customer is well skilled in not merely product or service features and benefits, but has carefully and properly evaluated the personal and business value to him or her of each option or combination he or she see.

But more than half of the "customers" I interview don't reap anywhere near the maximum benefits, results or rewards they are entitled to. They aren't knowledgeable enough on their own to know what decisions or questions provide multiple results. And most business owners are content to merely sell them something - instead of guiding and advising them to a higher or better result.

Leadership in Action

Let me give you an example of "leadership" in action, and all the good things - the practical, wonderfully profitable things that can flow out of it.

I advise a computer services firm. Its technical support division had become a corporate headache because it was losing money in its business-to-business work. Reason? The whole approach was reactive; the support people didn't go in to help a client until the client had a crisis problem with its computers.

We switched that strategy completely around. Instead of waiting to be called, the division's people started proactively offering clients ongoing technical support. They kept things running efficiently, alerted them to potential trouble, and pointed out ways to do more with their data systems. In less than a year, the "problem center" had turned into a "profit center." The firm's clients were also dollars ahead, because the cost of ongoing service far outweighed the benefits it produced.

Here's all you have to do:

Recognize that every customer who turns to you is secretly asking for your advice. Also, understand that they all are your friends – men and women with whom you've established (or are about to establish) a deep, long-term relationship.

You wouldn't allow one of your personal friends to buy less of your product or service than they needed, would you? You wouldn't allow a friend or loved relative buy your product or service without understanding its highest or best use and application.

Now that I put it that way, I suspect that you totally agree. So, here's what I want you (and all your people, team or staff, for that matter) to do - starting right now:

* Recognize that you have a responsibility and obligation to every customer and prospect who has befriended you and who you are befriending - to educate them to the fullest use of everything you sell them.

* Visualize a wish or hope that you honestly have for each customer. A level of fulfillment, or happiness or joy or protection – an improved or richer level of success or relationship, health or appearance) again, modified as to what resulting benefit your product/or service provides).

* Try and see into the future - AFTER your customers have made the best purchasing decision. After they've received the product(s). After they've put it/them into use. Visualize those customers or prospects enjoying the maximum results that the best purchase decision will afford them.

* Keep that picture of their improved situation in mind as you talk to them. You should encourage your staff to share this same vision of leadership and apply it to the customer. Your sales communications, sales letters, ads and all customer service, accounts payable or repair/technical support people should want to become leaders, too.

The same leadership principles apply in situations involving your inactive customers.

How would you like to give your business an immediate 20% sales boost and add 20% more customers to your business every year, automatically - forever? Well, if you make the decision today that you're going to reinstate your old forgotten customers - and commit, from today forward, to work together to acknowledge, appreciate, respect, reverse and enjoy every active customer or prospect you or your business ever deals with - it's a done deal. Why?

Because the average business or professional practice I look at has a 15%-30% attrition rate among its customers. That means that by simply not appreciating, leading or communicating enough with them, 15%-30% of your customers leave your business - or at best lessen the frequency and amount of business they do with you. I'll bet you've never even thought about - much less analyzed - what your attrition rate is. Ironically, you probably wrack your brain for ways to grow or build new customers - yet the easiest method you have is to not lose them in the first place!

You lose customers more from lack of connection with existing customers than anything else. Price is rarely, if ever, the factor that loses existing customers - if you're solidly connected to that customer.

This can only become possible if you recognize what a business connection with a customer is made of or from. It's surprisingly simple to do, once you realize that people (your customers and prospects) want to be special in your eyes, and in the eyes and ears of your staff. They want to feel that they are appreciated and valued by you - not merely as dollar transactions, but as complete entities – be they individuals dealing with you on a personal consumer basis, or individuals dealing with you for the well-being of their company.