

Earning Customer Loyalty – Stand Out From Your Competition

by Deborah Chaddock Brown

Out of the eleven speech topics I offer chambers and rotaries, the most popular by far is the one entitled Earning Customer Loyalty. Why is that?

Don Neal, Director of Business Development for Hallmark Business Expressions has this to say: “Companies spend 6 to 10 times more to acquire new customers than they do to retain existing customers. But a 5% increase in customer retention can have a bottom-line profit increase of 75%, depending on the industry.”

What percentage of your marketing budget and more importantly – your marketing focus – is attached to enticing prior customers to return? What programs do you have in place to ensure they remember, refer and return?

One of the ways to earn customer loyalty is to make it a point to develop a relationship with your customers, rather than just fill the order and move on to the next opportunity. You have to engage in an ongoing conversation with your prior customers through the use of:

- * Thank you notes and phone calls
- * Newsletters
- * Press releases and announcements
- * Post cards

But conversations need to be two-way. So ask your customers what they want. Ask them how you can make the experience even better and then LISTEN. Find out where your customers hang out – locally and online – and then engage them in conversation to learn how you can make their life easier. Chamber meetings, chat rooms, blog platforms, business expos, industry conferences are just a few places you can learn more about your customer.

Carl Sewell, author of the 1990 book *Customers for Life* talks about turning one-time buyers into a lifetime customer. He offers the 10 Commandments for customer service – most are familiar (the customer is always right, under promise and over deliver) but one might be something new to consider:

“Systems, not smiles. Saying please and thank you doesn’t guarantee that you’ll do the job right the first time, every time. Only systems guarantee you do that.”

Do you have a system in place for building that lifelong relationship with each and every customer, every time? What does it look like?

Donna Greiner and Theodore Kinni have written a book entitled *1,001 Ways to Keep Customers Coming Back* in which they share tips and techniques and most importantly actual examples that you can put in place today.

Customers that have already purchased from you understand your product, your service and the quality of the experience/product. What percentage of them return? Could it be better?

For examples of creating customer loyalty through email marketing, visit The E-List Builder to read their 7 Key Strategies to Earn Customer Loyalty.

Make a vow to your customers today to try one new method for earning their loyalty. Need additional help? Give me a call. **330-414-8792**.

NAWBO Recognizes Top Business Women

This past month the international organization of women business owners recognized the top 10 business women in northeast Ohio for their entrepreneurial efforts.

Each offered their thoughts on success; one more inspiring than the next. However, the most inspiring was the Tower award recipient, President of Southwest Airlines, Colleen Barrett. Colleen believes that to be successful you need to have three things:

- * A warrior’s spirit
- * A servant’s heart
- * A fun-loving attitude

Which of those three are your strong suit? Which needs a little extra attention? For the complete post on the awards dinner visit: [Websites People Read](#).

Cool Tool of the Month

Have you ever noticed that some URL addresses have a little piece of artwork to the left of the “http?” That’s call a Favicon – a recognizable symbol (your logo) that is associated with your online address. For more information on how you can add a Favicon to your website or blog address, visit [Favicon.com](#).

Where is Deborah Speaking Next?

TODAY! At the 3Chamber Business To Business Expo in Solon, OH 4pm-7pm

“30 Marketing Tips in 30 Minutes”

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