

## **Customer loyalty works – 7 tried and proven ideas to inspire your customers to do more business with you!**

**by Keith Abraham**

*Creating Loyal Profitable Customers* is about developing ways of working ‘smarter’, not harder in business and concentrating on issues that are vital to business success — primarily keeping customers happy and coming back for more.

When the market place gets tough, we think about how we can sell more products and services by finding new customers – rather than going back to our existing customer base and turning the one time buyer into a second time buyer. When the world goes crazy as it has in the last 12 months – people in business need to go back to the tried and proven ways of business development. We need to retain our existing customer base and look at ways to optimise them and maximise their growth potential.

In this series I will share with you 7 great low cost ideas on how to increase your loyalty with your customers, so they come back time and time again.

### **1. Put into place a referral system**

Ask your customers for referrals. Happy customers are happy to refer you onto like-minded people. The secret here is to ask for those referrals. Remember people who have referred their friends to your business are in the process of becoming loyal advocates. It could be as simple as giving your advocates two business cards, one for them and one for a friend. On the back of the cards make sure you write your customers name so you know who to thank when the prospective customer walks in with your card.

### **2. Make available your library of information**

If you have a number of books, tapes, articles or industry related materials in your business why not put some of this information together in a catalogue and make them available to your customers. It could be an additional service you promote or it could be a faxed out special offer as a free service. Don't become too concerned that you may become a librarian overnight, on average 95% of your customers will never use this service. What will they think about you because you have offered it to them?

### **3. Special program for your “A” customers**

You need to look after your “A” customers, as they are hard to replace. Don't take them for granted. These customers may need a shorter contact cycle, at least every 30 days, if not shorter, depending on your business and product. Make sure everyone in your business knows who these people are so that they know to go the extra mile for them when necessary.

### **4. Movie night**

One of my clients conducted a movie night where he hired out a movie theatre and arranged for a pre-release movie to be shown. He only invited 50 “A” Customers and asked each one to bring a like-minded associate. These “A” Customers will refer you to prospective “A” Customers. It was a great customer loyalty function and an excellent networking event. Most of all, it was a great way to gain 50 new referrals.

## 5. Business newsletter

I don't know if you have ever thought about writing either your own newsletter or articles for your customers newsletters. There are some basic rules when writing your newsletter. The first is that you need to use the **80/20 Rule**. Eighty percent of your newsletter needs to be; how people can save time or money; make more money; make people more productive or how people can improve their lifestyle. The 20% needs to be about you, your business and your products. If you mix up this formula, people will not read your newsletter.

Listed below are a few other points you could include in your newsletter to make it compulsory reading by your customers?

- Use satisfied customer testimonials
- Profile one on your staff members – their background, role & experience
- Interview some of your more interesting or famous customers
- Use an interesting headline for your newsletter articles
- Give some hints and tips about points of interest - sport, travel, entertainment
- Profile one of your new or popular products
- Welcome any new customers by name
- Thank those customers who have referred customers to you
- Recommend other strategically aligned services that would be of value
- Include a photo of yourself or your business to create some visual association
- Use quotes, examples or human interest stories in your newsletter

Your goal, when you write your newsletter, is to have people contact you and have your customers feel that you are adding value to them and their business.

## 6. Find unique ways to thank your customers

Be different when you go to thank your customers. Find unique and different ways to say “Thank you” or “We appreciate your business”. One of the things we have done that received a great response – is we gave a bottle of wine as a thank-you gift. We teamed up with a winemaker and got him to autograph the bottle of wine for our customer. (This was very well received.) Other gifts we have given have been: framed motivational postcards; movie tickets; gift vouchers for a specialty retail shop; day spa massage; car wash and a dinner for two. Here is the basic rule: if your competitors do it, don't do it. (Be different.) I did a seminar for a company sales team and they told me that they took their customers out to lunch as a thank you. I asked them what their competitors did to thank their customers and their reply was that they did the same as their competitors. My response was, “Do something different to create a point of difference, otherwise you won't stand out from your competitors!”

## 7. Establish your own V.I.P. club

Give your best customers a special discount or incentive card that they can present every time they buy your product. As a V.I.P. they may receive an additional bonus product, special offers or express service. Your customers will be appreciative of the extra recognition and V.I.P service. This is a great way to gain loyalty from your customers. If they are tempted to buy somewhere else, they will come back to you because of the additional bonuses or discount. I'm not a great believer in discounting, but I do believe in finding ways to create loyalty ideas that keep your customers coming back.

These ideas are excerpts from Keith's 'Creating loyal profitable customers book'  
Keith Abraham is a Professional Conference Speaker the Author of the Best Selling  
book, 'Creating loyal profitable customers.' If you would like to receive his  
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