



The Builder of **SALES CHAMPIONS!**

February 2009 Newsletter **Ignoring Clients = Lost Sales** by Tom Hopkins

The average business loses 15% of their clients on an annual basis. It's safe to assume that some clients move away or sadly, pass away. If you sell to businesses, some of them may close. But, many simply stop coming. That's because you haven't established relationships with those clients. The clients feel no loyalty...no obligation to return.

With the cost of gaining new business five times that of keeping current clients, it's wise to do all you can to keep those people coming back for more.

Even if your product has a long life span and people shouldn't need to replace it for a long time, you still want to work on keeping those clients loyal to you. The reason: They'll tell their friends, relatives and even strangers about what a great experience they had with you. They'll be your biggest fans and provide free advertising for you with their testimonials and referrals.

Build Loyalty

In order to thrive in business, it's important to make each client feel important. If they have a negative feeling or are even indifferent to your business, they won't feel obligated to continue to do business with you.

You start by being grateful for their business. You and anyone who works for you should make good eye contact with clients and say the words, "Thank you for your business," at least once on every contact. Variations might include: "We appreciate your business." Or, "Your business is important to us." Focus on saying those words so often that they come out by reflex. And, don't forget to smile when you say them!

Follow up every transaction with a thank you note. This may sound old-fashioned, but it really works to make them feel important. How many thank you notes do you receive from people you do business with? I'm sure it's not many. Believe me: people remember those who do send them. Be sure to include a business card with each note.

Schedule a follow up phone call within a few days of every service or contact. Ask your clients if they're still satisfied with the information or service you provided. Even if you have to leave this in voice mail, that's okay. You've made



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the contact. These calls shouldn't take more than a minute or two per client even if you do reach them in person. If they have a challenge, of course, you'll need to allow time to address it. But it's worth it to get something resolved rather than let it fester with them.

Handling Challenges

When clients do have a challenge with your product or service, listen carefully to what they say. Make notes of the conversation and assure them that you want to get things resolved. Even if you can't resolve it right away, knowing that you listened to them and are making an effort will go a long way toward giving them a positive, loyalty-building experience.

If the challenge takes several days or a week to resolve, call the client daily to let him or her know your progress. Even if there is no progress, letting them know you're still working on it...keeping them in mind...will go a long way toward their satisfaction and repeat business.

Remind Them to Return

If your product or service is something the client should schedule periodically, such as oil changes or carpet cleaning, put a reminder program in place. Send post cards, emails or make quick phone calls to get them set up for their next service. This is viewed by clients as a courtesy, not an intrusion.

If you offer add-on services or have added a new feature or option to your service, contact them about that as well. Start with, "Mr. Johnson, we so appreciate your past patronage and think you might benefit from..." State the benefit your add-on service or new product will bring them and ask what they think about it rather than pushing to sell it to them. Their feedback will tell you whether or not it's right for them and whether or not now is the time to consider it. If this isn't a good time, schedule a repeat contact with them when it is convenient for them.

Building client loyalty is all about providing service...whether it's the product itself or your time in considering their needs doesn't matter. What does matter is to keep them loyal requires making them feel important.



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TIMELY TIP **Objections as Hurdles**

Objections are not meant to stop you in your tracks. While you may envision them as brick walls, learn to see yourself hurdling over them. When you really want what's on the other side (like a closed transaction), you'll do everything in your power to jump over, tunnel under or take down any walls brick by brick to get there.

Objections are nothing more than your potential client asking you to slow down, clarify a point or educate them better before asking them to make a decision. In many cases a brief summary recap of what you have covered thus far is enough.

In other cases the client will raise a new question or provide you with new information that requires more time and attention. Either way, the sale is still moving forward. It hasn't been completely blocked. People just won't waste their time objecting to something they aren't feeling motivated to own.

Your job is to keep them emotionally involved in the benefits they'll receive from your product or service. Once they own it emotionally, they (and you) will find plenty of reasons to rationalize the final ownership decision.



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CLOSE OF THE MONTH **The If You Say 'Yes' Close**

Since most clients have a 'say no' mentality when you first begin talking with them, you would be wise to have a way to counter it. In fact, I encourage you to incorporate the phrases "If you say yes..." and "When you say yes..." into more of your presentations. It mentally takes them from withholding making a decision to enjoying the benefits of your offering.

"When you say 'yes' to this investment program, you'll have the satisfaction of knowing your daughter will have the resources she needs to complete her college education and walk across that stage on graduation day."

"If you say yes today, Mr. James, we can complete the installation of your new system by March 15th. Not only will you have this decision behind you but you'll be enjoying all the benefits we've discussed here today."

This close turns the tables on your potential clients' fears. Fear is very likely telling them to say 'no.' By demonstrating with words what happens when they say yes, they are forced to think about what won't happen if they continue to say 'no.'

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