

# BUILDING CUSTOMER LOYALTY THROUGH POSITIVE EXPERIENCES

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There's no doubt about it; customer loyalty is key to profitability. A mere five percent increase in your customer retention could as much as *double* your bottom line profits! On the flip side, it costs anywhere from *6-30 times more* to get new customers than it does to keep the ones you have - that is, if they'll stay!

The key to customer loyalty? Creating *consistently positive experiences* time and time again. That involves knowing your customer's expectations, delivering service basics *brilliantly*, and maintaining an upbeat, can-do positive attitude throughout every interaction and at each touch point. Here are 5 'positivity pointers' to keep in mind so you can reap the rewards of creating more awesome experiences for your customers, co-workers and yourself:

## 1. **Positive thinking is a habit.**

Some people are born with a positive outlook; others have to work hard at shifting their focus away from depressing media stories and from the things that are going wrong in their own lives. The great news for those born 'attitude-challenged' is: You *can* prevent yourself from being tossed about by the winds of worry and negativity by making positive thinking one of your good habits - it's just like exercise and eating right!

## 2. **Positive thinking is a choice.**

As with the creation of any new habits, the first step is to *choose* to do it, to *commit to and intend to be positive*. At first, learning what keeps you in a positive state of mind and remembering to make time to use those tools can be challenging - especially when you're focused on professional or personal goals that require a lot of your time and energy. Sometimes it's actually easier to stay stuck in a negative place than to break the cycle, brush yourself off, take a breather and consciously change your state of mind. That's because we all love our comfort zones, even if they're bad for us!

Think back to past commitments you have made and kept to yourself. Think about what motivated you and sustained you as you reached your goals. Can you apply some of your strategies and techniques to becoming a positive thinker? Then think about what you need to do to remind yourself to do frequent attitude checks and, if necessary, adjustments. Would Post-it® notes help? A timer that goes off every half hour? A daily phone call from a supportive buddy? The extensive pay-offs of positive thinking (which you're about to get a peek at) are worth these efforts.

## 3. **A Positive Attitude makes change easier to take.**

Change happens all the time in every aspect of life - and it's happening especially fast in today's business world. If we don't keep up, we fall behind - and no business today has that luxury.

Some changes feel welcome and comfortable; others elicit resistance as they push us out of our comfort zones. The fact is, retaining a positive attitude about change makes it much easier to flow into. Example: Think back to when the Internet began to catch on as a 'must have' form of communication.

Those who embraced the technology, or who were at least positive about it, had a much easier time adjusting than those who resisted. They unlearned their old habits and learned new ones more quickly, and benefited from the changes earlier than later.

To stay positive during times of change, remind yourself of past changes in your life that pushed you out of your comfort zone and into an even better situation than you'd imagined. Remain open to the idea that change can continue to create all-new possibilities and opportunities. Think about how your self-esteem and self-confidence have grown every time you've risen to whatever changes a challenging situation called for. Just thinking back to those moments can make you feel *great!*

#### 4. **Positive thinking is chock-full of benefits!**

Optimistic people - people who believe the world is inherently 'good' - are healthier than pessimists. Let's count the ways:

- They have higher energy levels, stronger immune systems and, no surprise, tend to live longer.
- Their optimistic viewpoint stimulates fresh and creative thinking - it gives the brain the go ahead to stretch and to play with different solutions and options.
- They may feel the fear of change or of trying something new, but they have more energy to act despite the fear. You might say they have more courage!
- Their faith in themselves enables them to more quickly learn from their mistakes.
- They interpret problems as challenges - not obstacles. That means they experience less distress and more easily access the emotional boost they need to get through tough times.

Clearly, we can alter and enhance our lives by altering our attitudes. Positive or negative, it's a choice. Choose the rose-colored glasses, the ones that brighten up the view!

#### 5. **No one likes you when you're grumpy.**

Sure the people who love you still love you even when you go through a grumpy spell. But that doesn't mean anyone likes you while you're in a foul state of mind. Customers don't like a grump, co-workers don't like a grump, bosses don't like a grump...nobody likes a grump!

Positive, life-affirming, optimistic people attract goodness to their lives. They attract positive people and circumstances, and they achieve great results. And why wouldn't they? They're a joy to interact with! Whether they're waiting on your table, checking you in at the hotel, repairing your computer, writing you a check for your new mortgage, selling you a new network or solving a billing problem at your credit card company, they can make a genuine difference in the quality of your life in that moment if they treat you with a positive, up-beat and can-do attitude. And *you* can do the same for *your* customers. It's so much easier to keep customers and create profits when you give your attitude some altitude!