

COMMUNICATING WITH CUSTOMERS

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http://interpret.co.za/art/Business/Public-Relations/communicating_with_customers.php

Do you know what is staggering? The number of other companies (besides yours) that are making offers to your customers. Some of these companies are in direct competition with you; some are simply competing for the spendable dollars your customers have available to them.

Either way, know that your customers are being deluged with marketing efforts by an enormous number of other companies. Some of these marketing efforts are well thought out, expensively designed and unrelenting. The result is your customers may love you and still leave you. What can you do to keep your customers coming back?

STAY IN COMMUNICATION WITH THEM.

The more you communicate with them, the more willing they will be to do business with you. Two friends who are in superb communication with each other are willing to exchange all kinds of things between each other. The same is true of a business and its customers.

How do you stay in communication with your customers?

One simple way is to write to them. Send them information that they will find valuable. This could be in the form of a short newsletter with tips and advice on how they can use your products more efficiently or more economically. Or the advice could be of a more general nature, but still of real value to them.

A short newsletter works well, but a personal letter from the owner is even better. These days, it is almost unheard of to receive a personal letter from the owner of the company. I am not talking about the letter from the CEO apologizing for the recall of a defective product or the year-ending letter from the Board of Directors summarizing fiscal success or failure.

One does not have to write a completely different letter to each customer, and you would certainly let the computer help accomplish this in some kind of volume. But the letter is FROM the owner. Your customers will definitely appreciate the time and effort you took to communicate with them.

Note: you should have the address (and phone numbers) of all of your customers and if you do not, start a simple project to collect this information. You could run a contest or a prize offering of some kind and ask your customers to fill out a short form with their address and phone number so that they can be contacted if they win. There are a number of ways to collect up address info from your customers.

Here is another way to stay in communication that is very simple, very inexpensive and VERY effective. Ask your customers for their email address, telling them that you would like to send them an email once or twice a month (or more often, if appropriate) and that this email will contain advice and helpful hints on how to (you fill in the blank here).

Note: let your customers know that you will not use their email addresses for any other purpose whatsoever, and that your only use will be to send them helpful information. This is an important point of email privacy.

Email your customers tips, advice, information that they will find useful.

If you have anything to do with cars (selling, fixing, cleaning, etc.) you could email your customers:

- winter driving tips
- advice on keeping salt from damaging the car
- how to clean tough stains inside the car

If you sell insurance, you could email your customers tips on how to keep the house in good repair. You get the idea.

In this email, you may also alert them to a new product or service, or a special discount that is available for a short period of time, but the main focus of the email is to provide help and assistance.

There are many ways to stay in communication with your customers. Give them help, advice, ideas to make their life easier and better. They will appreciate this and they will show this appreciation at the right times.