

“Why Won’t you Talk to Me?”

You were introduced in the classifieds, or maybe in an online search.... Or maybe they found you while looking longingly through the Yellow Pages.

When you met, it was instant attraction. You gave them your un-divided attention. They happily gave you their cash!

Then.....

Nothing.

You never call.

You never send cards.

If they’re lucky, maybe an occasional email. But why all those strange graphics and irrelevant links??

OK, so maybe your customer communications have not sunk quite this low – but I never want to stop reminding you that your customers are the easiest, most profitable group to market to. They are your fastest source of additional profit and they may well be frustrated that you don’t communicate to them frequently enough.

“In marketing I’ve seen only one strategy that can’t miss -- and that is to market to your best customers first, your best prospects second and the rest of the world last.”

- John Romero

I’ve yet to come across any business anywhere that’s doing everything possible to communicate effectively to their existing customers. It’s almost an impossible task. If you’re the first, stop reading this feature and take a vacation – you deserve it.

If not, here are ten immediate ways for you to improve your customer communication:

1 The 'Do Anything but Do It Now' Approach

Find any excuse to send a communication about anything to your customers – the only condition is – you do it right now.

It can be a mailing, email, phone calls – anything. But action it IMMEDIATELY.

This strategy is designed for those of us who are just too good at planning. Sure, you'll send something to your customers when you've created the ideal offer, with the ideal brochure for the ideal product – and of course this will all have to wait until you're far less busy doing XYZ.

The 'do anything but do it now approach' addresses the simple but ridiculously profitable fact that even if you send your customers an email telling them what a great/bad day you're having (you choose) it will remind a percentage of them that they meant to get in touch with you and within minutes they'll be wanting to spend money with you again.

2 Postcards

If you're looking for an easy, cheap, quick way to keep in your customers' minds, send them a postcard with a compelling offer.

If you're looking for an easy, cheap, quick way to bring in some serious additional revenue, spend a few hours writing 12 postcards – one for each month of the next year.

3 Phone Ten Customers

Clear one hour off your schedule and call ten customers. Don't try to sell them anything. Tell them you're just calling to thank them for their custom and see how they are.

Expect them to be pleasantly surprised and maybe even stunned. Expect at least two of the ten to try to spend more money with you (that figure may be as high as eight or nine.)

When you put down the phone on caller number ten, do a rough estimate on what that will do for your income. Then work out what it would do for your business if someone was doing that every week, of every year, forever.

4 Send your best Customers an unexpected gift.

Just because you can.....

5 Write a one page Letter with an irresistible offer

It's simple maths. If you look at how much it costs to mail a compelling offer to either your entire customer list, or at least your best customers – and compare that with the income it generates, it should nearly always be profitable.

Often the best approach is a simple, one page letter. Make an offer that's only for your customers and rewards them for their loyalty.

For added zest, add a sprinkle of an email to the same list two or three days later to maximise conversions.

6 Ask yourself this question.....

What's the one piece of knowledge or expertise you have about your business that your customers would be most interested to know about.

It could be some knowledge that saves them money, makes their life easier or maybe just makes them smile.

Once you've decided, write a personal email and send it to your best customers. Ideally automate the process using an autoresponder.

Sometimes, the best customer communications don't sell anything.

7 Referrals

Remember that the goldmine that exists in the relationship you have with your customers is not just about them re-purchasing from you. If each customer recommended you and brought in two new customers, you would probably never have to do any traditional Marketing again.

So create a strong incentive for your customers to give you referrals. That could be a financial incentive, or a gift – whatever you choose. Then communicate it to them in your favoured media (email, letter, telephone etc)

8 Birthdays

It can be a slight hassle setting up a way for your customers to tell you their birthdays. It's probably a slight hassle to set up a little system to send them birthday cards. But it's one of the nicest things you can do for your customers and it's certainly one of the best ways to create extraordinary relationships with them.

9 Plan ahead

If you really 'get' the significance of what we're looking at here and take action on these points, you'll be way ahead of the competition. But if you really want to excel, create a one year plan that covers and implements how you're going to communicate to your customers over the next year.

Whether it takes you a couple of hours or a week to do this, it will be one of the most profitable business activities you engage in this year. Ideally, create a one year plan that can roll on and duplicate itself every year.

10 I've saved the best until last.....

Now stop. Close the door. Put the phone on voicemail and above all, please don't be deceived at how simple this is.

A few people reading this will make a fortune when they do it. I hope you're one of them.

All you have to do, is contact your best customers and ask them one, simple question.

It doesn't matter how you contact them. It can be email, letter – probably the best option is a phone call.

It doesn't matter what you say either side of the question. You can chat about the weather, your new Madonna CD, anything.

All that matters is that at some point, you ask all of your best customers this question:

“What are we currently not selling / offering you, that you would like us to be offering you?”

Ask the question. Then shut up.

If they need time to think, let them think. If they're not sure, ask them again.

The answers you receive may surprise you. But those answers represent the easiest way to grow both your business and your existing customer relationships.

When you've finished counting the cash we'll talk again soon.