

A Common – Yet Easily Avoidable – Marketing Mistake

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By Kathleen Gage

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December is a month in which many organizations make plans for the coming year. Now is a great time for you to look at your marketing systems for attracting and retaining customers.

Although front end systems such as advertising, public relations, press releases, direct mail, sales letters and promotional items are important, equally as important are what you and your staff do after you gain new customers. It never ceases to amaze me how companies will invest money in campaigns to gain new customers yet have no system to build and maintain those relationships they were so eager to attract in the first place. Having a system in place to keep your name in front of existing and potential clients is a very important part of a great marketing campaign. Additionally, having programs in place that make it easy for people to do business with you is essential to the health of your bottom line.

Any company that depends on repeat business absolutely must have a good customer retention system in place in order to thrive in today's competitive environment. Time and again I have seen this as the primary area of businesses where companies don't succeed at the level they are capable of –

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especially in small businesses. The thinking with many people is, "If they want my services, they know where to find me." While a potential customer is looking for you, your competition's marketing systems may find them first!

As an example, a pet store offering grooming services could increase revenues by having a reminder system in place to notify the customer when their dog is due for grooming or to let them know when a new product arrives. They may also consider using a punch card that gives the customer a free grooming service after a predetermined amount of visits have been made. Many pet owners view their animals as family members and will be more likely to do business with you when they believe you care about their pets just as much as they do.

What would your profit margin be if you were able to turn the occasional customer into a frequent

customer? Customers who regularly visit your business would also be more likely to refer you to their friends and associates. Remember that frequency is determined by your particular industry or service. A grocery store may consider twice-weekly visits a good frequency, whereas a dry cleaner may only be monthly.

Changing customers from being a one or two item purchaser to purchasing several products can increase your bottom line tremendously. With a bit of vision and creativity, one basic service can open several opportunities. Most businesses can take their basic product or service and expand into other offerings. What are your current offerings? Are there other products and services you could develop that are consistent with your market and your company vision?

This is where you can create an incredible backend list of possibilities. Once you think about other offerings, what are some new avenues you could open? Is it possible to partner with other companies where you could offer each other's products and services?

Here are some possibilities:

- ØCar dealerships offering a year's worth of car washes or oil changes at a discount
- ØHair salons who sell facials or nail services
- ØPet shops selling grooming services
- ØRestaurants who provide recipe books
- ØChiropractors and Massage Therapists who promote their services

As you plan for the coming year, include methods for keeping in touch, developing a list of companies you can partner with and increasing strategies for gaining and maintaining top-of-the-mind awareness for your customers.

Marketing is about timing. Just because you contact a client today does not mean they are in the market to buy today. However, if you keep in regular contact with them, when they are ready to purchase, there is a good chance you will be the one they call.

Today's customers are busy. New choices are thrown at them every day. Keep your name on the top

of their list by consistently reminding them of their great experiences with your company. Great marketing systems will help you gain and retain customers.

10 Practical Suggestions For Fostering a Successful Website

By John Karnish

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- 1.) Write every idea and task you have down. Ideas can easily be forgotten and never used. Plus you can miss tasks that need to be done, which is much worse.
- 2.) Keep a pad of paper for spur of the moment ideas. A lot of times you might have a great idea on the bus or in the elevator. By the time you get to your house or office, you can forget that you even had a good idea, nonetheless what the idea was.
- 3.) Always spell check every document before you send it to a customer or a prospective customer. It seems like a simple idea but I notice spelling mistakes on the documents of some of the best internet marketers.
- 4.) Read all your business literature out loud and emphasize each word. This really helps you make sure no words are omitted, a very common mistake. Plus, you can tell if you used a wrong word because the sentence will sound strange.
- 5.) Have at least one extra person read your literature. I personally feel it is impossible for anyone to spot every mistake. One of my college professors said that even he overlooks the same misspelled word several times. With two or more people checking the documents you'll be able to spot almost every mistake.
- 6.) Paste your most common misspelled words into another document and study them so you don't make them over again.
- 7.) If you would like your site to be in English but you don't speak it well, consider making an offer with someone who speaks English fluently. They could help so that your page reads well in English and you

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can translate their page into your native language.

8.) Frequent popular forums and message boards. This will keep you up to date with the latest trends in internet marketing.

9.) It can be very easy to get smothered in daily e-mails. So create some saved responses to common questions. This will save you a lot of time since you don't have to type them over and over again. Make sure to add the person's name to make it look unique.

10.) Always get your visitors to subscribe to some kind of mailing list. You work very hard to get your visitors, you want to make sure you don't loose touch. If you don't have a newsletter, at least get them to sign up to receive information on updates of your site.

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