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**Relationship Marketing Online**

**By Merle**

**Relationship Marketing Online by Merle**

Forming good relationships is a part of life; not only for ourselves but for our businesses. You should be thinking of your customers as long-term clients, not just one time sales. When you work hard at forming good relationships with them, you'll find they come back and buy from you again and again.

Remember this: It's much easier to sell to an existing client than to find a new one. It's also less expensive. Another "perk" of making them happy is they'll refer their friends and associates to you, which is great for business. Referrals are like a "personal endorsement" of your work. By the time a referral calls you, he's already partially sold on using your products or services. In essence the referral has given your company the "stamp of approval."

So how do you go about forming relationships with clients? Well, first of all you need to care about their wants and needs -- not appear to care, but really care. In our rush-rush hurry-up society, personalized care is hard to find. If you care, you'll stand out from the crowd and be remembered in your customer's mind when he needs another service or product like yours in the future. The point is to establish long term bonds with them.

There are a variety of things you can easily incorporate into your "relationship marketing plan" on a daily basis:

- 1) After finishing a job for a client, always "hand write" a thank you card stating how much you appreciate their business.
- 2) Keep your eyes open when online for anything that may interest or affect your customer's business. Send them a quick e-mail with the URL or send the page itself. It only takes a minute

but really shows you care.

- 3) When you find a newspaper or magazine article that may interest one of your customers, rip it out and send it to them. Watch for business-related as well as anything personal you know that they enjoy.

- 4) When adding new services or updating prices, make sure you send your existing clients a copy. This not only keeps them up to date on new products or services but also serves as a reminder to call if they need anything.

- 5) Make sure that anyone you have done work for is subscribed to your ezine (you do have one, right?) An ezine keeps you fresh in clients' minds and helps to establish trust and credibility.

By giving customers more than they paid for, they'll perceive you and your business as a "real value," resulting in return visits and increased sales.

Work on building relationships with your customers and the profit margins will take care of themselves. After all, they can buy from anyone; make them \*want\* to buy from \*you\*.

### **Fear of Selling**

**By Joann Javons**

## **Fear of Selling by Joann Javons**

When I discuss selling with professionals who want to put their business online, they start to squirm at mention of the very word.

When I ask professionals WHY they want to put their business online, these are their answers:

"I want to build credibility"

"You need to have a web site to be seen as a legitimate business today."

"To get feedback on my product."

"I want to increase my visibility."

"To establish a professional image online."

"To provide information."

True enough. All of these are good reasons but they are really the stepping stones to your end goal. Notice that the words "sell" or "market" aren't even mentioned on this list!

If you want to put your business online 'to build credibility', for example, why exactly do you want to build credibility? Yes, you want to establish credibility and trust in your relationships. But why?

### **Why Are You In Business?**

The reason is that you have a product or service to sell. Aren't you in business to make an honest living doing something you love to do?

But "selling" sounds crass, aggressive, pushy and decidedly unprofessional to many of us. If that's true for you, I suggest you substitute two other words in your thinking: relationship marketing. In the end, the results are the same if you do it right.

If you do any type of professional consulting, you're doing relationship marketing (or selling) because you want your client to say "yes" to the services or products you offer. When a potential client says "yes" to your product or service, you've just made a sale!

No one said you have to be pushy, arrogant, aggressive or obnoxious. Unless you want to go out of business. But you can also go out of business another way: by getting stuck on any of the stepping stones to your end goal. Credibility, trust, information are all part of relationship marketing but if you make these stepping stones your end goal, you have stopped short of having a successful business.

### **Getting Stuck On Relationship Building**

Many professionals get stuck on the 'relationship' part of relationship marketing at the expense of the marketing. It seems easier to build relationships than to market something to those with whom we've built relationships.

But what is really getting in your way is fear, fear of somehow violating the credibility and trust you've built with your relationships.

Elena Fawkner, lawyer, writer, and online business owner, makes an excellent point in her article "Am I Afraid To Sell?" She says, "In other words, the focus on 'relationship marketing' has been so much on the relationship that the marketing begins to feel crass and a violation of trust. Many new online business owners report that they feel like they're taking advantage of the trust of those with whom they have forged a bond." If you feel like this, I recommend you read Elena's excellent article at: <http://www.ahbbo.com/afraidtosell.html>.

You will need to work through this fear if you want to be successful, online or offline. In many ways, it's even more critical online because the web is an impersonal, anonymous medium unless you focus on your goal: for others to say "yes" to your high value product or service. Building relationships is important but don't stay stuck at the relationship step of the process. You can build relationships and never make one single sale.

Make a decision to stay focused on your end goal. Do the stepping stones because credibility and trust are vital to your success. But they are not sufficient. Your end goal is to offer your visitors something that they want to say "yes" to. That's the reason to put your business online.

Set up your online business so that it achieves your end goal, not merely a stepping stone. For more on how to achieve your goal, see our article "Success Myths" at <http://www.private-practice-marketing.com.myths.htm>.



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