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Satisfied Employees, A Powerful Marketing Strategy

By Kathleen Gage

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by: **Kathleen Gage**

Even in today's still uncertain economic times, there are companies who are doing extraordinarily well. Why is it that some companies are thriving while others are barely making it? You can always blame the economy, but is that the only reason? The answer could be as simple as how respected and appreciated your staff feels.

Recently I visited a store to buy pet supplies. I was given a pleasant greeting, assisted with my purchase and made to feel like a valued customer. It was a good experience until I paid for my purchase. The clerk began badmouthing the fact that her boss, the owner, took the afternoon off. The clerk seemed to feel obligated to tell me how much better she could run the business if she had the authority. I simply smiled, secretly wishing for the experience to be over as quickly as possible.

I considered this to be an isolated case and dismissed it. The clerk was just having a bad day. I went in on another occasion and had a similar experience with another clerk. However, this time the other clerk didn't seem to care if I bought anything or not. All she wanted to do was put down the owner.

I haven't been back since the second experience, nor do I feel comfortable referring anyone to the store. Based on my experiences, I have to assume that these employees do not feel valued by their boss. If they did, I hardly think they would talk so poorly behind the owner's back. I assume these employees work just enough to justify their paycheck. I can also assume they won't do anything to generate new business. What a pity. And what a missed opportunity for everyone.

In today's competitive business environment, companies can foolishly waste phenomenal amounts of money on what they assume are effective marketing strategies in order to gain more customers. Yet if their marketing strategy does not include employee satisfaction, these new customers may have a less than pleasant experience and will be less likely to return.

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How many companies spend a fortune on marketing in order to gain a larger customer base yet miss the key ingredient to the foundation of their success? A successful foundation lies within their employees. Do they enjoy working for the organization? How good do they feel about their role within the company? What do they say and do on the job (both during and after business hours)? Most importantly, do they feel respected and appreciated?

A committed staff can literally turn a floundering company around. At a minimum they can help to keep it afloat. When people feel appreciated, they are more likely to be loyal, creative, and trustworthy. They are willing to do what it takes to keep customers happy. They are less likely to undermine the success of the organization or merely be in a state of complacency while at work. Satisfied and loyal employees make excellent public relations representatives who truly have the desire to make your customers happy.

There are many owners and managers who still maintain the outdated belief that an employee should just be happy to have a job. They seem to think any investment in their people is a waste of time and

money. Have they ever thought that this could be the reason for such low productivity and morale and poor customer service?

Smart managers and owners are taking a much more progressive and holistic approach to how they run their businesses. One such approach is setting up programs to express appreciation and respect for their staff. A good incentive program for your employees not only makes excellent business sense, it is also a very powerful marketing strategy.

Key to the success of any incentive program is sincerity. If you implement a program only to see how much you can get out of people, chances of failure are high. Additionally, the actions of the management team have to match the philosophy of the program you implement in order to succeed.

The greatest key to success with an incentive program is to commit to a high level of respect for your team. Remember always that without your staff you are not likely to succeed.

Kathleen Gage is a business advisor, keynote speaker and trainer who helps others gain marketing dominance and visibility within their market. She is the recipient of the 2004 Giant Step Award for Business of the Year in the State of Utah. Call 801.619.1514 or email

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Does Your Organization Need a Marketing Makeover? Take The Quiz!

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1. Does one of your employees "do the marketing" in his/her spare time?

Yes No

2. Have your customers pointed out spelling errors in your materials?

Yes No

3. Has it been more than 6 months since you read through your marketing materials or web site to check for out-of-date names, number, prices, photos?

Yes No

4. Are you having a problem finding your web site on search engines?

Yes No

5. Have you added new products or services in the last 12 months?

Yes No

6. Have you run out of marketing ideas? Or the opposite, have too many ideas that don't get executed? Yes No

7. Are you satisfied with what your marketing dollars are producing?

Yes No

Scoring: Count up your number of yes responses.

0–1 Yes. You're doing great! Wise use of your marketing budget is producing the desired results.

2–3 Yes. Put more time and effort into marketing. While your budget may be tight, there are some economical ways to squeeze more out of your marketing dollars.

4+ Yes. Commit to being a marketing-driven company. There's some upfront planning involved, but in the long run, you'll have long-term customers.

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