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**Three Ways to Get Repeat Sales With Follow-up Marketing**

**By Kevin Donlin**

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If you have customers, that's good.

If you can sell them repeatedly over time, that's better!

Actively pursuing repeat sales, also known as backend sales, is one of the most profitable things you can do for your small business.

Here are three ways to do it ...

1. Say, "Thank you"

Start with a simple thank-you letter. Ask yourself this -- when's the last time you got a thank-you letter from a company after giving them your money? I'll bet you can't remember. See the possibilities for standing out and generating good will?

I created an email template so I don't have to write the same thank-you email over and over. It literally takes seconds for me to send one out to each client.

A heartfelt "thank you" is all you really have to say, but you can go a bit further in your message, by doing the following:

reinforce why it was a good idea to buy from you in the first place -- sell your company after the sale to cut down on buyer's remorse and returns/refunds

offer another product or service to complement their original purchase; you can make this a limited-time offer, as I do (see my example thank-you email below)

refer customers to affiliate programs at other Web sites that pay you

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anticipate frequently asked questions (FAQ) and tell customers how they can get service after the sale  
ask for referrals

Simply sending a thank-you message after the sale will help nip service problems in the bud. By acknowledging people who buy from you and opening a channel of communication, you can turn unhappy customers into raving fans who later recommend your business.

Really, when you think of it, the only thing that differentiates your business — online or off — is service.

Yes, it's crucial to have the highest-quality product/service possible. But

what customers remember (and what they tell their friends) is how they were treated. You can set the tone for a positive, profitable relationship with all your customers simply by thanking them right after they purchase from you.

### 2. Send a survey

Customer feedback, negative or positive, is a crucial tool for fixing holes in your business. You can get that feedback via an online survey.

As of this writing, you can get one free at Zoomerang ([www.zoomerang.com/](http://www.zoomerang.com/)). I've used them for over a year and highly recommend their survey creator.

A good customer survey is like a vigorous massage — you may feel beat up after reading the results, because NO business serves its customers as well as it thinks it does, but the results will energize you.

#### Side benefit

A survey is a window into your clients' minds. If you include a section for them to include their comments, it's like having a free product research laboratory! LISTEN and ACT on what your customers tell you. They'll give you invaluable tips on what new products to sell, joint ventures to form, etc.

#### Side benefit

You'll also find that clients answering your survey will often give you testimonials, which you can later use on your Web site. As you probably know, testimonials are an incredibly effective way to boost credibility and sales.

I've accumulated five or six pages of them over the years (I stopped counting) and prospects continually tell me that my testimonials were a deciding factor in why they chose to buy from me.

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### 3. Introduce them to non-competitors' products

What if customers won't need your product/service again for a long time, if ever? If you haven't done so already, set up affiliate deals from other Web sites that offer items related to your own.

My business offers a perfect example. Buying a resume is a lot like visiting the dentist -- it's not something people look forward to, and they likely won't make a repeat purchase for 6-12 months ... or longer.

To overcome this, I email my clients information about career-related Web sites where they can register for job search services, buy books and audio tapes, refer jobs to friends, etc.

Each of these sites has an affiliate program that pays me \$1 to \$5 every time people register or buy. It all adds up to hundreds of dollars in monthly revenue that would have been left on the table had I not introduced my customers to these other sites.

Need ideas on what kinds of products or services to offer your customers?

You can search for an affiliate program that's right for your customers at one of these sites --

[www.associateprograms.com/](http://www.associateprograms.com/)

or

[www.refer-it.com/](http://www.refer-it.com/)

Best of luck to you!

## **Postcard Marketing - Low Cost Visibility**

**By Claire Cunningham**

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You need to be visible to attract customers, right? But how do you get that visibility when you're short on cash? Here's an idea that's worked for many businesses. It's postcard marketing, and it's very affordable.

You can design your own postcards or hire a designer. Print the cards on 67# card stock to meet USPS requirements. Two or four cards will fit on an 8 1/2" x 11" sheet so you'll have to use a paper cutter. Postage is just \$.23 a card.

Here are some ways to use postcards:

1) REFERRALS -- Send postcards regularly to your best contacts asking for referrals.

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- 2) ANNOUNCE EVENTS - Send postcards to let folks know about events like classes, seminars, sales, open houses, etc.
- 3) PROSPECTING - Send a series of postcard mailings to identified prospects to "soften them up" before you phone them.
- 4) BUILD WEBSITE TRAFFIC - Use postcard mailings to tell people your site is there and when you make significant additions.
- 5) GROW YOUR NEWSLETTER SUBSCRIBER LIST - Postcard mailings can publicize your newsletter to new audiences.
- 6) MAKE AN OFFER – Do you have a booklet to give away? Are you offering a special discount? Postcard mailings can get out the word.
- 7) SAY THANKS - Use postcards to say thank you for business, referrals, or information.

Of course, for best results you need a good list. Make sure your mailings are going to the right people. Also, you'll get a better response if you offer something of value.

Finally, repeat, repeat, repeat! As with any marketing, repetition is critical. A single mailing may get a disappointing result. Don't be surprised or discouraged. Keep at it with a consistent look, message and audience, and over time your message will sink in.

A response rate of 1–3% is the average, but you may be able to generate significant sales from those responses. Referral mailings can yield business that's three or more times the cost of the mailing.

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