

Using Customer Follow up to Create Lifelong Customers

Retaining
customers
in your business
to maximize
profits.

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& Debi Hamuka-Falkenham

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Follow-up to build customer relationships

If you are in business then you are also involved in the sale of your products or services to consumers. It is a fact that the cost of obtaining a new customer far outweighs the cost involved in retaining someone who has already purchased from you. The problem comes in how to keep those customers you already have on the books.

Take a look at the millions of dollars spent every day by major companies to build “brand or service loyalty”. Yet the true loyalty is on the local level by the company, salesperson or store management.

In spite of the millions spent by manufacturers or service companies to build loyalty and retain their customers a professional salesperson who goes to another company will take a large number of his customers or clients with him even to a different brand or service.



The question is why?

“Why do most businesses lose customers? Poor service? Nope. Poor quality? Nope. Well, then why? It’s apathy after the sale! Most businesses lose customers by ignoring them to death.

A numbing 68% of all business lost in America is due to apathy after the sale.”

To understand why a customer will go back to the same person or store is that they have built a relationship with the customer. The person who has had the personal contact with the person, over time, builds the relationship with the customer.

By regular and frequent contacts with the customer they forge a bond with them, which ties the two together.

The customer comes to value the salesperson as a trusted adviser who can guide them through the transactions related to their products.



To start building the relationship the customer must first have a positive buying experience. The transaction must go smoothly from start to finish.

Any promises made in the sales process must be fulfilled totally.



It's also very important to make sure the customer gets the proper instruction to use whatever is purchased.

If there are any bonuses or freebies to be given you must ensure they are received promptly. I can't stress this point enough.

I know you might not believe it but people have bought products or services in order to receive the bonuses listed with the offer.



However, when the customer failed to receive the extras they had been promised something started to happen.

They began to share their bad experience with friends, business associates and family.

Some have gone as far as going online in forums and literally blasted whomever they made the purchase or service from. It does happen!



Just take a look at the rise of web sites such as *Angies List!*

Don't let this happen to you!

Word of mouth advertising can make you or break you...

It's a known fact that everyone tells more people about a bad experience than a positive one and this is the type of negative advertising that can really hurt you.

When you make a promise or offer something extra for free it should be as important as the product you sold or the service given. Remember to value your customer, without them you would not have a business.

By staying true to your word, you will ensure a positive experience in the transaction.

Once you have a customer, who has had a positive experience in making a purchase from you, you then have to start building the relationship with the person in order to keep them as a customer.

One fact you should be aware of is this person already has a degree of trust in you



They believed and trusted you enough to buy something from you and your company.

Now you must build on the trust already there to keep this person as a customer

Is this really all that important you ask?

Let me give you an example from the world of online marketing. There are marketers making anywhere from thousands to millions of dollars by marketing to e-mail lists of people who have subscribed to a newsletter or online magazine.

Any online marketer who is successful can tell you to the penny what the value of a subscriber to their list is worth.

They are able to achieve these results because they have built a relationship with the people on their lists. This is how important the building of relationships is to you.

Now you understand the value of the relationship let's get started on how you build that bridge.

The first step was taken when you made sure the purchasing experience was a positive one. This gives you the base and now you can build on it.



Step one... is to send a thank you card or note within 24 hours of the finalization of the purchase or receiving the service.



Another point is that the card or note should be as personal as possible.

You achieve this by handwriting the note and signing the card personally. If possible you should insert a picture in the note or card, of yourself and or of the recipient as it adds to the personalization.

You also create a greater positive impact and memory thru the card.

These points will make an impact on your customer and will cause them to remember you.

You should also schedule and make a phone call to thank the customer for choosing your company as well to see if there are any questions, which have come up regarding the purchase.

In today's world of voicemail and robotic phone systems when a person receives a personal call they remember the caller in a positive way.



You will now have established a base of trust and loyalty with your customer and the next step is to cement the relationship.

You should keep your name in front of your customer at every possible chance you get.



One way to make it work is, to find out everything you can about your customer and their family.

Every holiday, birthday, anniversary or other special occasion should be remembered by you and the appropriate observance made by you.

Show Your Customers You Care...

The most effective system people have used, and continue to use, is the regular sending of greeting cards to their customers or clients. It really can work wonders in helping to create and maintain a positive business relationship with your customers.



Sending a personalized greeting card can be a very important step to achieving this.

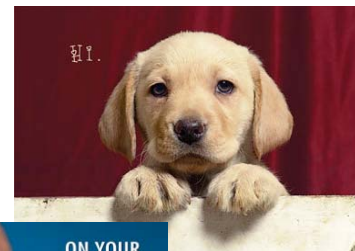


Your greeting card should include your customers name with a personal message to them. This should be done in your own handwriting and with your signature.

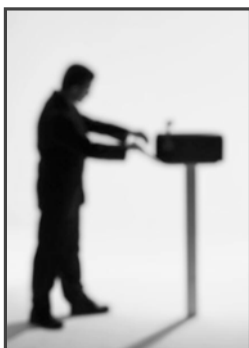


It's also good to put a photo in of yourself to remind them of who you are. Most people will remember a face way before remembering the person's name. So it's a good idea to jog their memory. It's also a good practice to include your business name, your logo and your business card with all your contact info.

Sending a card is a great way of reminding clients and customers how important their business is to you. The more times your name is seen by others, the greater the chances of it being remembered.



A thoughtful greeting card from you and your company will show your clients and customers that they truly matter to you. It is sure to leave a lasting and positive impression on all those who receive it.



As a side point, are you aware that greeting cards are 11 times more likely to be opened often than any other piece of mail?

Not only will your client open the card and remember you, they will keep the card and display it, particularly if it contains a picture of them or their family.

**You're probably saying to yourself,
does sending greeting cards really work ---
it sure can!**

Just ask Joe Girard...

Joe Girard, who is listed in the Guinness Book of World Records as the greatest salesperson in the world, used this contact system.

Joe made a consistent effort to show all his customers that he truly appreciated them and their business



Joe Girard would send hundred of thank you and other cards daily in his business, and it paid off for him... and it can for you

Joe Girard

World's Greatest Salesperson!

For 12 straight years Joe sold more cars and trucks than any other salesperson. More as an individual than most dealers sell in total.

No other salesperson has ever attained this title for more than one year, and not for both cars and trucks. Joe is the only salesperson ever inducted into the Automotive Hall of Fame. He was inducted in 2001 and is renowned for selling more cars than anyone else in the World.

Joe Girard sold more retail "big ticket" items "one at a time" than any other sales person in retail industry including houses, boats, motor homes, insurance, automobiles, etc. During his fifteen year selling career, he sold 13,001 cars, all at retail - no fleet, wholesale or used cars*.

We can all learn from Joe Girard. Following are excerpts from Joe's 13 Rules To Success which can be found on www.joegirard.com

- ❖ **Listen** - People can tell if you're not listening.
- ❖ **Return All Phone Calls & E-Mails**
- ❖ **Tell The Truth** - if you get caught in a lie even once, you will always be a liar.
- ❖ **Lock Up Every Sale** - after you have closed the sale, ask your customers why they bought from you - if they tell you why, they are reinforcing their trust in you. Therefore no more buyers' remorse, meaning no more cancellations

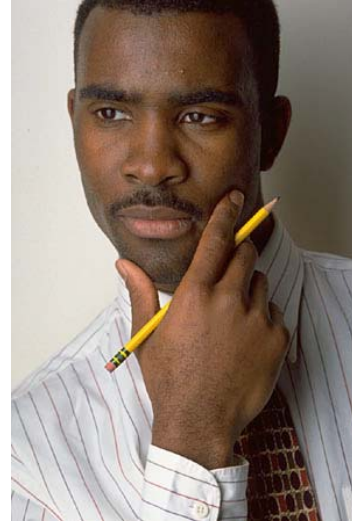
Now's the time to work this system...

The only problem with using this method is the time and expense involved in getting the cards purchased, addressed and mailed.

Remember you want the card to be personal so no mailing labels or preprinted cards.



Fortunately there are many ways to implement this system where you can get the results from following up with your customers and prospects.



If you are just starting out you may have to do the work yourself by hand. Also, if you have an administrative assistant or secretary you could have it done by them.

There are also paid services available which can handle the processing for you. One thing you must make sure of is that all contacts with your customer are of a personal nature.

Systems are available where you can actually send a real card right from your own computer. Now I don't mean you print it – they do.

There is one system where you can actually upload your database, pick a card, type your message and this can even be done in your own handwriting. They also have the ability where you can upload your business card and numerous photos and even sign the card with your own signature.

This particular system is pretty user friendly. Actually once you are satisfied with the card you put together all do then is just click send and they take over. They print it, stuff it, stamp it and mail it for you. You can send 1 or 10,000 with just a simple click of your computer mouse.

The best part is that each card can be personalized inside with your client's name. They also offer another feature where for an additional charge you can include gift cards or even send actual gifts with the card. Now that's a card sending system Joe Girard would have loved!

So sending your cards doesn't have to be a headache or costly.

Now you can stand out among the thousands of other businesses who are constantly vying for your customer's business.

Your next step is putting together a plan...

The Right Plan For The Right Results



Consider the following sequence of contacts with a customer and decide if anyone you are currently doing business with is putting this much effort to keep you as a customer.

You should follow this plan as soon as your customer takes delivery of the product or service is completed.

Sequence of follow-up contacts:

1. Customer receives follow-up phone call within 24 hours.
2. Customer is mailed a thank-you card within 24 hours.
3. Customer receives a call or card after 30 days.
4. Customer receives a call or card after 6 months.
5. Customer receives a birthday card
6. Customer receives a Christmas or Holiday card
7. Customer receives a Valentines Day card from you
8. Customer receives a card on the anniversary of their purchase or service
9. Customer receives a card on anniversary if indicated or just thinking of you card for no reason at all.
10. Customer receives a card in the summer celebrating Happy Watermelon Day or maybe an unusual card, at an unusual time, to get their attention, so they remember you.



In addition to those cards we recommend that you mail birthday cards, sympathy cards, congratulations cards or other appropriate cards as indicated from your knowledge of the customer and their family.

If you follow the above schedule in a year's time the customer will have received at least 10 friendly contacts from you not counting other contacts to family members. What this does is keep the customer reminded of you and what product or service you represent. The person begins to think of you as a friend... someone who cares, someone they would want to do business with again.

If you are like me then you don't get anywhere this much contact from people you purchase from. For most people in sales or marketing the focus is on the next customer not retaining customers.



**People don't care how much you know,
they want to know how much you care.**

It's about the personal touch

In today's world the personal contact is being replaced by voicemail, robot phone systems and preprinted form letters. The more personal contact you have with your customers the more loyal they will be to you.

When you send out cards to your clients and customers, make sure to use the proper business greeting card etiquette.

❖ **Buy Quality Cards**

Good quality business greeting cards show that you value your clients

❖ **Update Your List**

Make sure your list is up-to-date with correct names and addresses.
The worst thing you can do is send a card to someone who is deceased

❖ **Sign Cards Personally**

Even if you have preprinted information on the business greeting card such as your name, you need to add your handwritten signature.

❖ **Handwrite the Address**

Or find a font that looks like handwriting. It's very important to not use computer-generated labels. They are impersonal and will make your cards look like a mass mailing.

❖ **Mail to Home Address**

Mail your business greeting card to the home if at all possible and if you can try your best to include the spouse's name.

❖ **Use Titles**

Whether you are addressing the envelope to an individual or a couple, titles should always be used. It's "Mr. John Doe," not "John Doe," or "Mr. and Mrs. John Doe, rather that "John and Mary Doe."

❖ **Be Sensitive to Traditions**

Find out whether your business greeting card recipients observe Christmas, Hanukah, or Kwanzaa. If you decide to go with one card, choose a generic one that will not offend. "Season's Greetings" and "Happy Holidays" are safe bets.

If you check with the super successful salespeople and companies you will find that the personal touch is the ingredient increasing their market share.



Your Customers Have Value

You should know what the lifetime value of a customer is to your business. Once you know the value of a customer you will see why retention of customers should be a priority for you.

Suppose for each sale your profit per sale is \$50.
You make \$50 each time your customer comes in and makes a Purchase.

So each customer has a value of \$50 to you.

Not bad. But you could make more from each customer you make a sale to.



Suppose you put into practice the methods discussed here. Because of your follow-up and relationships you make three more sales to your customer over the next year,

Now the yearly value of the customer to you is \$200.

If you keep using the follow-up methods discussed it's a good bet, you can keep your customer for say twenty years.

Now the value of your customer to your business is \$40,000.

If your customer sends you four more customers as a result of your follow-up you will make an additional income of \$160,000.

Now the lifetime value of your customer and their referrals is \$200,000

Who can't use an extra two hundred thousand or so.



Showing you care can make a big difference



This same principle can apply to any type of sale; small to large purchases, services rendered or even the sale of a big ticket item...



Increasing Big Ticket Item Sales

A good example is the Real Estate market

This is a typical business where customers make big ticket purchases

For example, an average home sells for about \$200,000 and as an agent after all expenses and brokerage fees are paid, you net a 1% profit of \$2000.

The value of your customer is \$2,000.

Now this person will not be buying 3 more homes in a year, yet they are still important customers to your business.

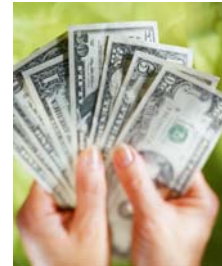
If you treat them right and follow-up with them on a consistent basis you will end up receiving referrals from them. If they refer just 3 more buyers to you in a year and the figures are the same, you will earn an additional \$6000 as a result.

Now your customer's referral value is worth \$6,000.

If you keep using the follow-up methods discussed you can feasibly keep your customer for say twenty years

Again if you maintain the relationship over twenty years you will earn yourself an extra \$120,000 just by referrals. You know they told someone, who told someone and so on.

You will also probably sell them a new home when they upgrade or even downgrade over the twenty-year period.



Now the value of your customer to your business is \$122,000.



▶ Danielle Kennedy Biography

Danielle Kennedy – The Six Million Dollar Woman

This above principal works very well in the real estate market just as it did for [Danielle Kennedy](#) who is known as the 6-million dollar woman

Danielle sold over \$6,000,000 dollars worth of real estate over 20 years ago when money was worth a lot more

Danielle attributed a good part of her success to referrals.

Remember that follow-up is customer service in work clothes



So who needs a follow-up system?
Anyone in business needs a follow-up system

Greeting Cards are an incredible follow-up tool for any time of business...

From Realtors, Mortgage Brokers, Insurance Agents, Auto Dealers, Attorneys, Small Business Owners, Restaurants, CPA's, and Employment Agencies.

But let's not forget Plumbers, Dentists, Chiropractors, Salespeople, Ad Agencies, Network Marketers, Hair Stylists, Teachers, Printers to Financial Advisors – the list can go on and on.

Here are just a few examples of ideas of where a card could work, but the possibilities are endless.

Realtors –

Take a picture of people in front of their new home and send a “Congratulations on Your New Home” Card. Also send Birthday Card for their house, send it on the date they moved into their now home.



Mortgage Brokers –

Thank you cards for business, or on the anniversary of their new mortgage.

Auto Dealers –

Take a picture of potential customers sitting in the car they just test drove. Send them a “Thank you for the Test Drive” Card. Remember they are probably visiting many dealerships and this will make you stand out. What about after the sale is completed... don't forget their birthday, remember they'll need to buy a car again

Network Marketers –

Make a card with your picture and / or of your products and send it to prospects.

Attorneys –

Send out your entire Christmas card list in minutes at the click of a mouse! I know an Attorney who sends birthday cards to the children of his clients. The parents love him and send many referrals his way.

Dentists / Chiropractors –

Send out appointment reminders and don't forget to ask for referrals!

These are just a few business ideas, but I think you get the general idea.

So What Does the World's Greatest Salesman have to say...



Joe Girard, the world's greatest salesman had a rule he called the rule of 250. He said:

"If you treat someone well he will tell 5 people but treat them badly and they will tell 250".

He developed this rule by observing that the average attendance at a funeral was 250.

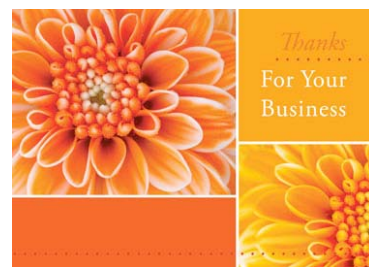
In today's world of Utube, Angies List and online forums it is much easier for an upset customer to make flaming comments about you and your business.

Don't let that happen to you!

Some Important Points To Remember...

In designing your system for your business there are certain ideas you should include in the portfolio.

The basic and most important card to have is a thank you card. You will build your follow-up to all your contacts on a simple, yet heartfelt, thank you card.



There is another card to be included that is often forgotten by a lot of businesses. It's the apology card. An apology card for an error or mistake can go a long way towards repairing a relationship with a customer who feels you haven't held up your end of the transaction.

And a third card to have is a referral card where you ask for and make it easy for a customer to refer business to you. After all the best advertising in the world is a satisfied customer.



And when you receive a referral from a customer you should always send a Thank You card for the referral. You may add incentives to the customer for referring someone but be careful, as some people will be insulted if you do.

"Stamp out the competition with a 42 cent sales call."

Yes-u-can-succeed... and we can help!

As part of being in our community you will receive periodic emails from us, regarding specific sources and methods to install efficient, cost effective systems to enhance your customer's experience with you and your business.

If you choose to not receive these emails or any further information you may cancel or opt out at any time. It's all up to you!

About The Authors



David Phillips

David Phillips is an Internet marketer and network marketer with over 30 years of business-to-business and direct sales experience.

David is also developing his career as a copywriter, and has decided to share his experience and knowledge in customer follow-up and customer service to assist you in developing the proper service attitude for your business.

Debi Hamuka-Falkenham

Debi is a professional illustrator and creative writer with over 30 years experience in the greeting card industry, as well as 20 years of experience in marketing, direct sales, and business to business promotion

Over the years Debi has developed numerous follow-up and promotional programs for various clients nationwide. Debi also uses a greeting card follow-up system for her own art studio,... she practices what she preaches



Using Customer Follow-Up To Create Lifelong Customers

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Please feel free to share this book with your friends and colleagues

Legal Mumbo-Jumbo

The following statements are in order to satisfy the lawyers who abound in this world.

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Using Customer Follow-Up To Create Lifelong Customers

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We are giving you the right to pass it on to anyone you want.
So e-mail it to all of your friends...

To your future success...



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