



Why won't you talk to me?

In this latest article we share practical (or shall we say "advanced thinking") tips on how you can win more business from your gold mine: existing customers.

If you are not yet in business, don't worry; read on, the stuff will work for you soon or you should be including these tips in your marketing strategy.

First a little honesty.....

The Free tips I am giving actually cost us quite a bit of money. As a member of an exclusive VIP club for one of the world's leading marketing companies (it's based in London) we do get some really powerful insights into how businesses (in any country and sector) can actually grow their customers and sales, despite the challenging economic environment.

The reason we do pay is really plain and simple: The stuff they share is not only simple to implement, it actually works really well. It works for us (in Uganda) and it can work for any business (and I mean any business).

Golden rule for marketing strategy

If you are in business, and I mean any business in any country (whether it's the down town "Owino market" stall, a farm in Bukomansimbi or an up market shop at the Oasis mall) and you do not have a list of customers, yes a written list of your customers including contacts and their worth to you i.e how much sales then, first and foremost remember this:

***"In marketing I've seen only one strategy that can't miss -- and that is to market to your best customers first, your best prospects second and the rest of the world last."* - John Romero**

Next, if you do not know who your best customers and best prospects are then please stop reading this and go fix it i.e know who these customers and prospects are (their names, contacts, how much they give you in sales).

It might seem cold but I am being honest here, these tips are designed for ambitious businesses and as a minimum, you must know your customers.

You should know: Of your total sales, which customers are bringing in the most money (the 80% of sales) and which ones are not (the 20% of sales). The 80% of sales as a matter of fact will most likely be coming in from only 20% of your entire customer list. This is the famous 80/20 rule.

You must know their contacts, perhaps even their birthdays!

A word of caution...

Now please do not be fooled by the simplicity of the concepts. The true magic or genius is that behind all the simplicity is tests which have been carried out to prove that they work (for many different businesses in different countries in many different sectors).

So it's not that the stuff is complex like "rocket science" No. Actually, we pay for this stuff because it is simple to implement and yet grows sales quickly. It is working for us (and we only implement some of these strategies).

These tips are basically like "putting your marketing strategy on steroids." And that's why we love them.

Here are 5 practical tips you can apply to increase sales from your existing customers.

1. The 'Do Anything but Do It Now' Approach

Find any excuse to send a communication about anything to your customers – the only condition is – you do it right now. It can be a mailing, email, phone calls, SMS – anything. But action it IMMEDIATELY.

This strategy is designed for those of us who are just too good at planning. Sure, you'll send something to your customers when you've created the ideal offer, with the ideal brochure for the ideal product – and of course this will all have to wait until you're far less busy doing XYZ.

The 'do anything but do it now approach' addresses the simple but ridiculously profitable fact that even if you send your customers an email telling them what a great/bad day you're having (you choose) it will remind a percentage of them that they meant to get in touch with you and within minutes they'll be wanting to spend money with you again.

2. Phone Ten (10) customers

Clear one hour off your schedule and call ten customers. Don't try to sell them anything. Tell them you're just calling to thank them for their custom and see how they are.

Expect them to be pleasantly surprised and maybe even stunned. Expect at least two of the ten to try to spend more money with you (that figure may be as high as eight or nine.)

When you put down the phone on caller number ten, do a rough estimate on what that will do for your income. Then work out what it would do for your business if someone was doing that every week, of every year, forever.

3 Send your best Customers an unexpected gift.

Just because you can.....

4 Referrals

Remember that the goldmine that exists in the relationship you have with your customers is not just about them re-purchasing from you. If each customer recommended you and brought in two new customers, you would probably never have to do any traditional marketing again.

So create a strong incentive for your customers to give you referrals. That could be a financial incentive, or a gift (e.g buy 1, get one free, subscribe - get a free report, get a free bottle of wine) – whatever you choose. Then communicate it to them in your favoured media (email, letter, telephone etc).

5 I've saved the best for last.....

Now stop. Close the door (or the curtain). Put the phone on voicemail and above all, please don't be deceived at how simple this is. A few people reading this will make a fortune when they do it. I hope you're one of them. All you have to do, is contact your best customers and ask them one, simple question.

It doesn't matter how you contact them. It can be email, letter – probably the best option is a phone call.

It doesn't matter what you say either side of the question. You can chat about the weather, the upcoming Kwera concert, anything.

All that matters is that at some point, you ask all of your best customers this question:

“What are we currently not selling / offering you, that you would like us to be offering you?”

Ask the question. Then shut up.

If they need time to think, let them think. If they're not sure, ask them again.

The answers you receive may surprise you. But those answers represent the easiest way to grow both your business and your existing customer relationships.

When you've finished counting the cash we'll talk again soon.

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About the Writer

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