

# marketing sider

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NEWS AND KNOWLEDGE FOR  
TODAY'S MARKETER

TRANSFORM CUSTOMER  
FEEDBACK INTO

# MARKETING MAGIC



Dear Fellow Marketer:

The dictionary defines people skills as “the ability to work with or talk to other people in an effective and friendly way.” Sales, marketing, medical and legal fields are typical occupations for those with strengths in negotiation, presentation and public speaking – all abilities that enable relationship building.

Whether people skills come naturally to your company’s public-facing employees or they work at honing them, solid relationships grown through dependable and consistent customer care are essential for the health of any business or organization. According to global trade organization ICSC, 65% of consumers say the quality of customer service is a factor when deciding where to make their purchases.

In this issue, we’re shining a light on customer retention and growth strategies to get you thinking about managing the most important – and lucrative – relationships you have.

How do you decide who your best customers are? You may be relying on the recency/frequency/monetary value formula to segment your customers, a great way for analyzing past purchase behavior. But it doesn’t always tell the full story.

Consider, too, “wallet share” to determine total customer value, meaning they may be spending a small portion of their budget with you and more of it with your competitors.

Deploying satisfaction surveys. Responding promptly to online reviews. Delivering handwritten thank you notes. These are just a few of the strategies and tactics we’re exploring in the following pages. We hope you’ll take a look and find a nugget or two, as you move into planning your marketing programs for 2020 that support your retention, acquisition and brand building goals. Let us know how we can help!

Happy Marketing,

From your friends at Allegra



## C o n t e n t s



### 06 SPOTLIGHT

#### Six Tips to Transform Customer Feedback into Marketing Magic

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# A BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO CUSTOMER SURVEYS

While most would agree a survey is a good way for a company to gauge someone's satisfaction with a recent purchase, others might be surprised at how effective it can be as a business-building tool to cement relationships and increase the lifetime value of their customers.

To find out more, *Marketing Insider* reached out to John DiPippo, CEO and owner of SurveyAdvantage, to talk about the basics of customer surveys.

**Q MI: Why conduct customer surveys?**

**A DiPippo:** Successful businesses employ processes that create outstanding experiences for customers. You need to keep them happy, engaged and coming back for more.

The use of ongoing surveys is one of the best tools to create a "loyalty loop." They are excellent – and efficient – ways to obtain regular feedback from clients and prospects. All sources of input are good, but compared to personal interviews, online surveys are optimal. They can garner feedback from more customers, more quickly, and in a data-driven format that invites analysis and prompts action. At a minimum, you should be surveying active, revenue-generating customers, because without them you don't have a business.

**Q MI: Who should use surveys?**

**A DiPippo:** Just about any company, organization or nonprofit that's dependent on customers, members or donors for its success. In short, almost everyone.

# “You need to keep them happy, engaged and coming back for more.”

– JOHN DiPIPPA

The only exception may be if your organization is so small that the owner has an extremely close personal relationship with each client, and the feedback loop already exists.

Today, if a customer wants to find alternatives to your business, it's a click away. This change in consumer behavior needs to be recognized and embraced by businesses. Ultimately, we want to create a growing following of loyal customers who can be brand advocates for our businesses.

## **Q** MI: What information should you try to get?

**A** DiPippo: You may want feedback to determine how satisfied a client is with the product or service they just purchased. You might seek to understand how well your team provided support. Of course, you'll want to measure how likely it is that the customer would recommend your business to others.

It's also critical to solicit open-ended comments from customers to help you qualify their answers. Your goal is to gather actionable data that is both quantitative and qualitative.

## **Q** MI: What frequency or schedule should be set?

**A** DiPippo: Customer experiences change over time, so it is critical that any process you implement is continual. Don't fall into the trap of doing one customer satisfaction survey during the year, getting positive results and thinking all is OK.

There are pros and cons to the frequency you choose, but it should be often enough to detect changes in customer attitudes so they can be addressed in a timely manner. Surveying too infrequently can miss these changes and expose your business to client dissatisfaction or worse, customer defection.

## **Q** MI: What's the best way to distribute one?

**A** DiPippo: Customer surveys can be conducted via phone calls, sent by mail or email, posted on websites or handed out in person at events. Of all these methods, consider email first.

Email allows you to time the survey with your customer's purchase transaction so that the feedback you receive is recent and relevant. The electronic format also makes it easy for you to collect and tabulate results.

## **Q** MI: Can customer surveys build business?

**A** DiPippo: Absolutely! When you have a culture focused on creating great customer experiences, all the things you do – including sending surveys – demonstrate you care. Remember, that which you do not measure cannot be improved.

Surveys can also inform shoppers about products or services of which they may not be aware. For example, a question on oil changes followed by another on brake repairs may prompt a buyer for one service to try another.

## **Q** MI: Once we've collected the data, then what?

**A** DiPippo: If you receive negative feedback, focus on engaging unhappy customers and resolving issues to their satisfaction. When dissatisfied clients are ignored, they may express their frustration online to hundreds of thousands more in social media forums.

Looking at the big picture, you'll want to create a business culture centered on building loyal customers. So, share survey feedback with your staff. Focus on listening, learning and making continuous improvements to your organization. ■

**Looking for assistance with creating, distributing or analyzing customer surveys? Let us know; we can help.**





# THE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE: Why It Matters



On average, **women tell** about **10** people when they've had poor customer service experience; **men tell 21** people.

– American Express

## 7% loyalty increase

can boost lifetime profits per customer by as much as **85%**, and a loyalty increase of **10%** can correlate to a **10%** cost reduction.

– Brand Keys

## say customer experience

is more important than price when making a purchase.

## TOP 5 WAYS TO ENGAGE

- Surprise offers/gifts for being a customer (**61%**)
- More convenient shopping process (**50%**)
- Solve a problem or question (**45%**)
- Recommend products based on needs (**27%**)
- Keep customers up-to-date on the latest news and products (**23%**)

– HelloWorld

A **5% lift in customer retention rates** increases profits by **25% to 95%**.

– Harvard Business Review



**Y**ou've signed up to exhibit at an upcoming trade show after defining your goal (e.g., generate sales leads, launch a new product or raise awareness of your organization), researching the number and types of past attendees to ensure they are your target, and evaluating the booth space and location you'll get.

In a crowded and visually noisy environment, how do you lure eventgoers from the entranceway and past competing displays to your booth?

Consider this three-part signage strategy to make the most of your opportunity.

**1. Attract attention from afar with long-range signs.** Think big as in signage that can be seen across the convention hall from about 100 feet away or more. Consider back wall systems, overhead hanging signs and wall banners. Another option is to post your event signs from a tower or other elevated position.

**2. Draw visitors ever closer with mid-range signage.** Mount banners on the back wall of your display or signs on the front and sides of your booth. Retractable banner stands in front of your space are another attention-getting option.

Your mid-range signs should be positioned at or just above eye level, five to eight feet from the floor. The text should be sized so it's readable to those passing within 10 to 50 feet of your booth.

**3. Convey key messages with short-range graphics.** The visitors have arrived, and so has your moment! Now, the focus of your booth signage should be informational rather than promotional.

With tabletop displays, wall signs, X-banner stands and other up-close solutions, tell guests your story. Charts, infographics and photos should be mounted at eye-level – five to six feet from the floor – and sized for easy readability from up to 10 feet away. ■

## Steps to Prep Your Booth

- **Update your brochures and flyers.** Keep the higher value ones aside for those who express genuine interest.
- **Get your giveaways.** Choose promotional products that have plenty of space for your logo, website address and phone number.
- **Promote special deals.** Offer incentives to those who purchase on site or agree to a follow-up meeting.
- **Put the right people in place.** Trade shows can mean long hours and require high energy, stamina plus marketing and sales strengths. You may need a mix of staff with differing skill sets to meet and greet . . . then extend the conversations.

**Need help with your event marketing? Count on us for pre-show communications, onsite signs and displays, and post-event follow-up ideas.**


A close-up photograph of a person in a black tuxedo jacket, white dress shirt, and black bow tie. The person is wearing a white glove on their right hand, which is pointing towards the right. A black wand is held in the hand. The background is a vibrant purple with some light effects.

REVIEWS, TESTIMONIALS AND CASE STUDIES

**SIX TIPS** TO TRANSFORM  
CUSTOMER FEEDBACK INTO

**MARKETING  
MAGIC**





**W**ouldn't it be great if you could simply wave a wand and convert all your customers or donors into raving fans; the kind who -worldly lifetime value and use their influence to drive new business and supporters your way?

The reality is, there are no easy tricks to conjure customer retention and loyalty. →



It takes effort to build and grow customer relationships so that you can capture the power of advocacy in your marketing messages. Consider:

- Nine out of 10 consumers are influenced by positive reviews when buying a product.<sup>1</sup>
- 80% of 18- to 34-year-olds have written online reviews.<sup>2</sup>
- 74% of consumers identify word-of-mouth as a key influencer in their purchasing decision.<sup>3</sup>

Marketers in organizations of all sizes can benefit from a little help with overcoming prospects' natural skepticism of unfamiliar providers. Here are six tips to parlay your positive customer interactions into marketing and promotional content that can motivate buyers and inspire new sales:

## 1. Collect feedback as part of your sales process.

Satisfaction surveys can give you fresh perspectives on your products or services that help you differentiate from your competitors. And with a steady flow of feedback, you can better identify specific marketing messaging that resonates with your customer segments.

What did they say they liked best about doing business with you? You may think they like it "fast." They may say "knowledgeable" or "friendly staff" is most important and could be key differentiators from your competitors.

Surveys can also reveal ways for you to upsell and cross-sell to current customers when you inquire about their needs beyond what you're currently providing. (See page 2 for more on customer surveys.)

## 2. Ask for testimonials.

Through a survey or during a sales follow-up call or visit, if you want a testimonial or review, simply ask for it. The more, the better. Research shows the number of reviews for a business is becoming more important to develop trust: Consumers say they require an average of 40 online reviews before believing a business's star rating is accurate, up from 34 in 2017.<sup>4</sup>

## 3. Do a deeper dive with case studies.

The most effective case studies are narrow in subject, data-driven and clearly outline how a specific challenge has been overcome. Avoid obvious, "salesy" language and focus on the positive results or improvements achieved by your product or service. Case studies can be particularly effective to influence those in the middle (consideration and intent) and late (evaluation and purchase) stages of the buyer's journey as they are at the point when they are seeking confirmation of their decision.

## 4. Focus on storytelling.

It's no mystery that storytelling is a powerful way to connect with your buyers and potential customers. Stories can be entertaining and emotional, and as a result, relatable and memorable. Chances are, your competitors know it.



According to the Content Marketing Institute, the majority (64%) of business-to-business content marketers increased their use of audio/visual content, written digital content and images compared with a year ago. Three out of four say they've used or developed more long-form content, ideal for in-depth narrative tales.

## 5. Integrate digital, social and print marketing channels.

You've done the research. You've developed some original content. Now it's time to squeeze the most value from it by repurposing. Case studies can be condensed and reused in newsletters (printed or electronic) and in brochures to be mailed or distributed at trade shows and expos. Online, you can recycle statistics and testimonials

as social posts or website content, and reuse case studies in blogs or marketing emails.

## 6. Reward advocacy.

Referrals are like gold to any business and should be recognized. The top two incentives provided by organizations with referral programs are free gifts or merchandise, and account credit.<sup>5</sup>

If you don't have a formal referral program to incentivize and reward satisfied customers, there are still plenty of ways to show your appreciation and build loyalty. Host an invitation-only sales event (live or online) with discounted pricing or deploy a "sneak peek" sales promotion campaign with exclusive offers. ■

### What to Do About a Negative Review

*It would be nice if you could just snap your fingers and disappointment would disappear. Unfortunately, with online business listings and social media pages, private business matters move into the public square with a tap of a keyboard.*

*If your organization hasn't had the task of handling negative comments, it's likely only a matter of time, no matter how refined your customer service and quality standards may be.*

**To note:**

- *One in two millennials has complained about a brand on social media. – Microsoft*
- *89% of consumers read businesses' responses. – BrightLocal*

*So what can you do when your reputation is on the line?*

*Before you post impulsively, determine if there is truth to the review. If yes, respond by clearly outlining the steps you're taking to make it right. And be grateful for the knowledge. It's a learning opportunity for your team and a chance to save a relationship. Research shows most people who are unhappy with a brand will just leave without complaining.*

*If you disagree with the comments, it's appropriate to offer your perspective using a polite and professional tone. Then take any follow-up communication offline, if you can, by asking to make direct contact with the reviewer to address the situation.*

<sup>1</sup>Dimensional Research <sup>2,4</sup>BrightLocal <sup>3</sup>Ogilvy Cannes <sup>5</sup>Demand Metric

## YOUR 2020 VISION

# TOP 20 MARKETING IDEAS

Y O U C A N  
T A K E T O  
T H E B A N K

**E**ffective marketing communications plans all have the same general goal: Say the right thing to the right people at the right time through the right channels to generate the action you want . . . at lower costs than can be accomplished with personal meetings.

Following are helpful tips for a new multi-channel campaign or to improve upon what you are already doing. While it's best to avoid "random acts of marketing," we encourage you to experiment with some of the ideas to strengthen your communications efforts and help you reach your goals in 2020.

### 1 START PLANNING BY ANSWERING THESE KEY QUESTIONS:

- What's the goal that communications can help meet?
- What is the size of your target market?
- What combination of channels should be used to reach them?
- What can be offered to generate the action you want?
- How will you measure success for future improvement?

### 2 DEVELOP BUYER PERSONAS.

A semi-fictional representation of your ideal customer based on market research and real data about your existing customers, personas describe the pains, motivations, processes, trusted sources and daily lives of your buyers. In turn, this data collection allows marketers to tailor messages that are more likely to resonate.

### 3 MAXIMIZE DIRECT MAIL.

Do small tests in advance of bigger, more expensive mailings, and gain a realistic expectation of response rates. You can also split your list to test different offers or creative and learn more quickly what works best.

### 4 USE THIS SIMPLE FORMULA TO STRUCTURE YOUR SALES MESSAGE:

Define the problem, promise a solution, explain the promise, offer proof and give a call to action.

### 5 TRY LUMPY MAIL.

Tubes, boxes or lumpy envelopes with promotional items inside can all pique the recipient's curiosity to open your mailing. Have a follow-up plan in place for your sales team.

### 6 DON'T CONFUSE DIRECT MAIL WITH GENERAL ADVERTISING.

Target the most likely audience for your mail piece and include an offer, a call to action and a response vehicle. "Blanketing" with mail can be ineffective unless you're reaching a specific geography.



- 7 FOR E-NEWSLETTERS, INCLUDE A "FORWARD TO A FRIEND" LINK.** Better yet, also include a link for sign-ups from those friends and colleagues who want to hear regularly from your organization.
- 8 MONITOR UNSUBSCRIBES, BOUNCES, OPEN RATES AND CLICK-THROUGHS.** These analytics might cause you to change the day of the week you're deploying emails, adjust the frequency, try a different offer or include new content.
- 9 HOST A SEMINAR OR WEBINAR.** Provide certificates of completion to attendees; "certification" gives your prospects another reason to attend.
- 10 CLEAN UP YOUR DATA.** By some estimates, businesses lose as much as 20% of revenue due to poor data quality. Misspelled names and incorrect or incomplete addresses are some of the most common errors in a company database. All spell disaster when you want to personalize your message.
- 11 TARGET PAST INQUIRERS.** Research shows those who are interested but didn't make the final step toward a purchase may just need a little more convincing (or perhaps a stronger offer).
- 12 SET A SOCIAL MEDIA ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY.** Always respond to posts, comments or questions. You should also ask questions related to your industry or the interests of your followers. For added interest, post photo and videos, and make sure to tag your followers. Also watch for spam, and inappropriate comments.
- 13 CURATE CONTENT.** Do you have trouble creating enough material for social posts or blogs? Be a content curator, too. This means reading, reviewing and passing along information that you come across, with credit to the original source.
- 14 APPLY KEYWORDS TO VIDEOS.** Make sure your title, description and tags are all keyword rich, so your visual content appears more often in search engine results.
- 15 GO BEHIND-THE-SCENES.** What might seem like common processes to you are likely to be new and different to a potential customer. A florist might show a visit to a flower market. A manufacturer could show a production line in action.
- 16 INCREASE YOUR ONLINE VISIBILITY.** According to Google, 70% of online searchers will use local search to find offline businesses. Claiming your local listings with popular directories (Google My Business, Google Maps, Yelp, Bing, YP.com) is the single most valuable thing you can do for online marketing.
- 17 "REMARKET" YOUR ADS ONLINE.** Via a code added to your website, you'll automatically advertise again and again to site visitors who have not purchased a product, filled out a form or otherwise taken your desired action. For 30 days, ads will follow these prospects whenever they visit any of over a million other sites on the Google Display Network.
- 18 CONSIDER A WEB-TO-PRINT SOLUTION.** A print eCommerce site offers a competitive edge with better brand consistency, easy versioning, improved time management and faster turnaround of personalized marketing materials for your sales team.
- 19 INCREASE THE FREQUENCY OF YOUR MESSAGING.** Optimally, use at least three channels. The Ebbinghaus Memory Curve shows that 80% of what someone is told will be forgotten within 30 days, and 70% is forgotten after 48 hours.
- 20 OUTSOURCE WHEN YOU CAN.** According to the Content Marketing Institute, more than half of marketers outsource at least part of their content marketing. Content like videos, ebooks, case studies, infographics and illustrations all are easily outsourced to relieve or augment internal marketing teams. ■

Need extra support w  
planning or executing  
campaigns? Let us kno  
we can help.





# The Business Benefits of the *Handwritten Letter*

By Jacqueline Whitmore

**Y**ou open your email in the morning and you are greeted by dozens, if not hundreds, of emails. You meet the postman and collect the day's flyers and bills. Every day it's the same old thing, so why not break out from the norm, stand out, and make an impact? Bring back the handwritten letter.

Because the internet is so convenient, it is easy to dash off an email. But electronic messaging simply does not have the same impact as a carefully composed letter.

It has become so rare to receive a handwritten correspondence that the receipt is a celebration to be savored. In the words of writer and literary critic Anatole Broyard, "In an age like ours, which is not given to letter-writing, we forget what an important part it used to play in people's lives."

Here are some ways this simple act can boost your visibility and business success.

**You show you care.** Taking the time to gather pen and paper and put your words down without editing tools or spellcheck takes consideration, an effort that is appreciated by the recipient. Your heartfelt message in your own handwriting speaks volumes to convey friendship, thanks, sympathy or congratulations.

**You advance your customer relations.** Strike gold in your customer relations initiative by dropping a handwritten note to your best customers or clients. I recently made an investment in my business by purchasing my very own bespoke thank-you notes designed by internationally renowned master calligrapher Bernard Maisner. Whenever someone receives one of my notes, I always receive a compliment.

**You create a keepsake.** Letters can be kept for years and re-read over and over, which brings your thoughtfulness to mind frequently. "Letters are among the most significant memorial a person can leave behind them," said Johann Wolfgang von Goethe.

**You set yourself apart.** When was the last time you received a handwritten letter? Probably not in many years. Stand out from the crowd with a few well-crafted phrases set in your unique handwriting. You will surely be noticed and remembered for your effort.

**You use more of your senses.** While typing can be mindless, studies show that writing integrates three brain processes: visual, motor and cognitive skills. You see the paper and your words, you use your fine motor skills to form the words, and you stimulate your brain to remember the shapes of each letter as you write.

**You have to focus.** The act of writing causes you to fully concentrate on the words you are putting down on paper. You are forced to move more slowly and are more likely to focus your thoughts into the message than be distracted by numerous other tasks. Before I begin writing, I always compose my letter on the computer first. That way, when I put my thoughts on nice stationery, I avoid making mistakes.

**You reinforce tradition.** Up until the 1990s, people used letters instead of emails to correspond. They cherished the arrival of a letter that shared news, conveyed affection or sealed a deal. We lost a piece of history when we stopped writing letters.

Letters are tangible and tactile. They last, while electronic communications do not. With your letter, you will follow centuries of tradition and create a memoir to be treasured long after it is written and sent.

Handwriting a letter may take a little more time, but the effort will reap benefits many times over. It is a tool worth nurturing for your business success. ■

Jacqueline Whitmore is the founder of The Protocol School of Palm Beach (EtiquetteExpert.com). This article was originally published on Entrepreneur.com.



**FUN.**  
**FUNCTIONAL.**  
**TRENDY.**

According to the Promotional Products Association International, these are the three qualities most often cited for why someone keeps a business gift or giveaway.

Above are a few idea-starters for logoed customer appreciation gifts that fit the bill for saying,

*"We Appreciate Your Business,"  
"Thank you" and "You're the Best!"*

Allegra businesses are independently owned and operated.

# Loyal customers are...

**5**  
**Times**  
as likely to  
repurchase

**4**  
**Times**  
as likely  
to refer

**7**  
**Times**  
as likely to try a  
new offering

Is it time for you to explore new ways to drive customer loyalty?  
Allegra can help!

See us for customer retention strategies like surveys, direct mail  
campaigns, newsletters, ad specialties and gifts, and more!

Source: Temkin Group

**Contact Allegra today to get started.**