



ideas & inspirations

FOR CUSTOMER SERVICE PROFESSIONALS

Issue 59

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WORDS OF WISDOM

The quality of a person's life is in direct proportion to their commitment to excellence, regardless of their chosen field of endeavour.

Vince Lombardi

monday morning motivations

In early 2007 *ideas & inspirations* will introduce a weekly customer service success idea.

Each Monday we will help you start your week with a short dynamic message that will inspire you to focus on one aspect of your customer service. Print it – review each day – and it will get your mind stimulated to look for ways to implement real customer service improvements.

Registration details will appear in next month's *ideas & inspirations*.

FIVE KEYS TO NETWORKING



Networking, whether through business associations or other means, is the most prevalent and cost effective way SME's to attract new and repeat sales.

Networking and "word of mouth" together are seven times more likely to bring in business than all forms of traditional advertising and direct mail combined.

How does it work? More importantly, how can you make it work for your business? Here are five tips to get you started.

1. Select a few key associations or organizations and participate actively. Go to meetings as often as possible, work on one or two committees. Your goal: to be the first person everyone remembers and suggests when others ask, "Do you know anyone who...."

2. Get to events early and plan to stay late. You can't meet and talk to people while a meeting is in progress. Be sure you circulate. If you spend too much time with any one person, you can't meet others. You also prevent the person you've attached yourself to from circulating, and they may resent it. If walking away from a person or group makes you feel awkward, have a few exit strategies ready to use. "Excuse me, I really need another cup of

coffee" works well for early morning meetings.

3. Greet people you've met in the past. Ask how projects they are working on are going, mention news articles you've seen about them, and congratulate them on any recent successes they've had. Sales grow out of relationships, and this is a good way to establish relationships with key contacts and prospects. Be sincere, though. If you're not, you'll be written off as an opportunist.

4. Follow up on leads. All the leads in the world are worthless if you don't follow. Make that phone call or send the information you promised. Then, at the next meeting you attend, ask if your contact got what you sent.

5. Be generous about sharing business tips, referrals and leads with non-competitors. You'll be remembered for your help, and may get business or referrals as a result later on. (You win in another way, too. Helping others become successful is as rewarding as being successful yourself. ⁽¹⁾)



KIWIHOST



editors insight

When the first issue of Ideas & Inspirations appeared in June 2001, my life, your life and the market place were very different from what they are today. KiwiHost's vision was to create a publication that reflected and commented on the underlying concepts of doing business in a changing world, whilst using specific illustrations to stimulate readers to see and act upon the opportunities that these evoke. Now 20,000 people each month are touched by Ideas & Inspirations.

As we open the door of the New Year, the vision of opportunities that 2007 will provide must be at the centre of our thinking.

We are living in the most exciting time in the history of the world.

We have more opportunities and more challenges than any previous generation.

We have, if we so desire, the freedom to pursue our own dreams and to create whatever level of involvement in both our social and business society that we choose. This means taking responsibility for our own lives and choices, and making an emotional investment in continuing to create a future for our business or organisation.

We have the opportunity to turn our dreams into reality.

However customers will continue to have expectations about value and integrity and their expectations will constantly change.

So dream about how you can make the customer the centre of your business and how you can make that dream come true.

We at KiwiHost and Ideas & Inspirations will be here to help you.

ideas

BUILDING CUSTOMER LOYALTY

If you want loyalty, you have to give it. Make a list of your most important customers or clients. For your general customers or clients, demonstrate your commitment in general terms and especially when they need you. For your most important customers, demonstrate your commitment by letting them know how much you appreciate them. Sometimes loyalty requires sacrifice.

Communicate.

Building a lasting relationship requires communication. Communication means listening to your customer, as well as conveying your own message. One-sided communication is a speech, mutual communication is conversation.

Communicate when things are going well and when there are problems. When things are going as expected, bring it to their attention. When there are problems, provide your solutions, preferably before the customer even knows that the problems exist. This builds credibility, confidence and trust. The only surprises should be pleasant ones.

Understand Your Customer's Goals.

The products or services that you provide are only meaningful in the context of your customer's objectives. As a supplier your role is to help your customer achieve their financial or strategic objectives, or fulfil a need. Understand and communicate your value from the perspective of the customer. Be aware of changes that may affect the customer requirements and your perceived value so you can adjust what you do to reflect those changes.

Be Consistent.

One of the best ways to manage expectations is to be consistent. Be consistent with your quality, your responsiveness and delivery of goods or services. Establish a routine schedule for communication with your most important customers, so you can call "just to talk" and to check the pulse of the relationship.

Build Credibility.

There are two easy ways to build credibility. First, do what you say you are going to do. If you leave a message to call back or make a commitment for follow-up, then call when you said you would call. Even if you do not have all the answers, call

when you commit to call back. The second way to build credibility is to take time to get the best answer. Sometimes you may not know the best response to a situation or request. Ask for time to research and come back with the most accurate answer or information that you can obtain. Taking time to establish accuracy is far more beneficial to your customer than a quickly but incorrect reply.

Create Surprises.

Give your customers something more than they expect. Don't tell them in advance, just do something to demonstrate your appreciation. It can be as simple as a greeting card or a small token to show your appreciation. Loyalty is a relationship, and it should be nurtured. Never take it for granted. ⁽²⁾



business booster idea

BUILDING CUSTOMER LOYALTY

These ideas can apply to virtually any profession or industry. Print this page and keep the list on your desk for one week. Place a checkmark next to each item when you conduct an activity that fulfils one of these objectives. Are you actively practicing the commitment that you desire from your customers?



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IT'S TIME FOR YOUR TUNE-UP

Just as your vehicle has needs that should be addressed regularly, you can also benefit by giving yourself a "tune-up." During your personal mental tune-up, you can examine the old routines that need to be replaced or identify new actions that will rev up your engine. Here is a checklist you can use for your next tune-up.

- Take a class or study a new subject. Learning something new will be exciting and will expose you to new people and new situations. Whether it's art history, ballroom dancing or learning another language, this will rejuvenate you as you rediscover the joy of learning and broaden your horizons.
- Stop participating in activities or organizations that no longer interest you. The fact that you joined an organization or have engaged in an activity does not mean that you entered into a lifetime contract to stay involved.
- Support others in the pursuit of their dreams. Take every opportunity to support friends, relatives or colleagues who are pursuing their dreams. From your own personal experience, you know how tough it is to blaze a new trail, start a new business or try to achieve something ambitious. Give support to others. It will make a world of difference to them. In addition, getting involved in their dreams will rekindle your enthusiasm and encourage you to pursue your own dreams.



by Joseph M. Sherlock
When you give yourself a regular tune-up, you will be firing on all cylinders.

- Confront a fear that stands in the way of your personal or professional growth. Fear holds us back from reaching our potential and living an exciting life. We have dreams and goals, but we don't take steps toward them because of a variety of fears – the fear that we might fail, the fear that someone may criticize us, the fear of the unknown, or even the fear that we might succeed.
- Examine whether your activities are in line with your stated priorities. Ask people about their priorities, and they'll probably tell you that it is their family, faith or their health. Bring your activities in line with your priorities? If you will not make any changes to be more consistent, then don't kid yourself any longer. Your priorities are simply not what you say they are.
- Have you gone through the checklist for your tune-up and are you ready to attend to each of these items? You wouldn't want your mechanic to skip over any areas when checking your car. So, don't cheat yourself by ignoring these areas. When you give yourself this regular tune-up, your body, mind and spirit will be firing on all cylinders. ⁽³⁾

debbie's delectable's



Million Dollar Customer Service

You're going to love Bob's story with its adaptable message .

Proactively Drive Business

"Debbie, we established our travel agency 15 years ago. Our location had no foot traffic, so we knew a customer database would be very important for us."

Strike First

Bob continued. "When our cruise wholesaler gave us two days notice about a new one-off cruise around Australia, we knew we had to move immediately. We:

- 1. Selected everyone from our database that had been on a 3–4 week cruise or on that specific ship.*
- 2. Emailed them suggesting they act urgently.*
- 3. Gave a special offer—1/2 price travel insurance."*

Million dollar customer service

Their result? 60 passages sold. Over one million dollars in revenue from that email.

"Bob" I asked. "Could any other agency have done this?" "My guess, less than a handful in the whole country" was his reply.

I know what you're thinking. "Nice story Debbie. But I'm not a travel agent and what's this got to do with customer service"?

- *How well do you employ your computer?*
- *How detailed is your **customer** database?*
- *How closely can you target ? (**relevance to them**)*
- *How fast can you **move** when customer service or sales opportunities arise?*

*Use your database to **add value** to your service **AND** bring in **\$\$\$**?*

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Sign up for Debbie's free Business Quick Tip Newsletter:
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From one hour in house motivational presentations to half and full day workshops KiwiHost has the solution to your training needs.

Gain long term customer and employee commitment by investing in KiwiHost for your staff today. New Zealand's only nationwide network of professionals in customer service training – we have something for any business, any industry.

Call 0800 801 233 now and we can discuss your training needs.

www.kiwihost.co.nz

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CURING THE LOST CUSTOMER BLUES

Here are some questions.

Be brutally honest as you answer them.

Yes or No?

1. Do you know how many customers you lose each year?
2. Do you identify a customer as lost?
3. Do you conduct defection interviews among lost customers?
4. Does your company have a system for identifying customers who are at high risk of defection?
5. Do you know what percentage of you customers you are able to win back?

Getting a lot of "No's"? You're probable suffering from Lost Customer Myopia. Symptoms include substantial untapped revenue, escalating customer attrition and low staff morale. What drives this condition? Behaving as if a lost customer is a lost cause. And that large false assumption is costing you opportunity. Need convincing? Consider these surprising research findings:

Any business has a higher probability of successfully selling again to a lost customer than converting a prospect into a first-time buyer.

How do you cure Lost Customer Myopia? Build win-back strategies into your marketing strategy. The average company makes little or no investment in winning back lost customers. So don't make that same mistake. Address this issue in a positive and creative way.

The KiwiHost Advanced Customer Service Skills Workshop helps to build critical skills that not only win back customers but also reduce the number of customers that may become lost.

So if you answered "NO" to any of the five questions above, please call KiwiHost at 0800 801 233 and discover how we can help you. ⁽⁴⁾



business booster idea

BE LIKE WALT—STOP THINKING 'CUSTOMER'

"Walt's philosophy has been passed down to generations of Disney employees. And the key to that philosophy is this: The people who come to the park are not customers, they are guests. When you see a person as your guest, it changes the way you relate to them. That concept came straight from Walt, and it's the key to everything Disney does to this day."



Paula Sigman, Disney historian

ideas & inspirations WHITE PAPERS

Through 2007 we will be offering to Ideas & Inspirations subscribers exclusively "White Papers" on critical customer service issues. The White Paper will be two to five thousand words. They will provide insights into new thinking and approaches to customer service tactics and strategies. We will announce the White Papers in Ideas &

Inspirations with a brief review of the content. You will then be able to register, following which a PDF copy will be directly emailed to you. This is another service offered by KiwiHost through Ideas & Inspirations to enhance the quality of customer service provided by New Zealand business.

Articles in I&I include reference to the following sources:

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