



77 Keeping customers happy

Why is this important?

If your customers are happy with you and the services that you provide they will remain loyal and keep buying from you. You will be first on their supplier list. They will also happily recommend or refer your services to others. The happier you can keep your customers, the more likely it is that they will buy more from you. They are also less likely to stop buying from you for no very good reason. Price rises will affect a happy customer less because they appreciate the value they receive from you.

Your challenge

When you make your first sale you may make an extra special effort to communicate to your customer the value they are receiving. This extra special effort may stop once that person becomes a longer-term customer, with you assuming that they know about the value they receive and could receive from you. This may not be the case. People's needs and desires change, they forget, they get offered other options by competitors, they change their mind and they can get buyer's remorse. Your challenge will be to make sure that your customers remain in a happy state of mind about your business whether they are buying or not.

How to keep customers happy

Keeping customers happy requires a long term communication strategy that includes some of the actions described in previous chapters. Here are some additional quick and easy success tips.

- Always thank them for their business.
- Remember something personal about them.
- Make an effort to remember their name.
- Give away ideas and help.
- Do something extra special for them from time to time – send them a relevant article that relates to their business, a book that you think will help them with something they are struggling with, information about some equipment or facilities that they are looking for.

- Remember your top customers' birthdays – set your calendar up to remind you and give them a call on their birthday.
- Send Christmas and other special day cards.
- Remind your customers about the wise decision they made buying from you by reinforcing the value they get post-sale.
- Make sure that you keep the channels of communication open between you and your customer base and regularly ask for their feedback.
- Keep them informed about new products and services and any changes to your operation which may affect them.

ARE YOUR CUSTOMERS HAPPY? – SPECIAL RESPONSE CHECKLIST

- ▶ How do you measure the level of happiness your customers have?
- ▶ How many inactive customers do you have?
- ▶ How many customers have stopped buying from you?
- ▶ How do you get customer feedback year on year?
- ▶ How do you ensure that your customers remember the value they receive from you after they have made their first purchase?
- ▶ How many of your customers' names do you remember?
- ▶ What could you send your special customers in the post to surprise and delight them?

How to use this information

When I work with a client I find I start noticing articles in newspapers or magazines that are relevant to them. All I do is photocopy it and put it in the post with a short note. I am sure it makes them smile.

One of the reasons for writing this book was to have something of value to give my customers that would keep them happily thinking of me at the same time as getting some good ideas.

There are lots of ways you can use this information. Start thinking about how you can increase the level of happiness your customers have and watch your business grow in direct proportion.

Think customer happiness and grow