

WINNING REFERRALS

As the marketplace has expanded, business techniques have evolved to include dynamic media like the internet. However, referral marketing remains a basic yet powerful strategy. Though all companies and entrepreneurs understand the importance of this technique, many are unsure about how to maximise the potential of market referrals. Here are some top tips to help you make the best of such opportunities for your business:

The most important aspect of any business venture is that the clients should be happy with your products and services. The happier your clients are, the more likely they are to recommend your business to others. The most important step is to actively urge clients to send referrals, by saying, "thank you for your business, we are glad to be of service and we are always keen for more business".

You must ensure that your clients are aware of the full range of services and products provided by your firm. The majority of clients will not purchase every product or service your business offers. However, providing your clients with knowledge about everything your company offers may lead them to refer your business

Finally, focus on quality. If you provide a quality service with a focus on delivering value for your clients, you will inevitably have happy customers. If you ask a happy customer for a referral, they will generally oblige!



INVEST IN TRAINING FOR YOUR TEAM

In the current trading environment, budgets remain quite tight. Businesses are focused on return on investment (ROI). Therefore employee training needs to focus on providing individuals with opportunities to achieve their goals within the business.

Without this type of training, your employees may be unable to meet the needs of the customer and may struggle to achieve their goals. This can lead your employees to become frustrated and leave the firm as a result. To boost productivity and to increase employee satisfaction, businesses need to invest in the right training for their team.



Don't make assumptions

When designing a training programme for your staff, don't assume that they have a certain level of ability. Just because they may have come from a rival firm doesn't mean they know everything. As such, it is often best to assume that they know little or nothing and start training with the very basics. As they are likely to initially find this easy, their confidence will be boosted. As the training begins to focus on more demanding tasks, your team will be confident enough to bring their skills to the next level, thereby offering greater ROI for the business.

Talk about training

In order to truly understand the training needs of your team, you need to communicate with them. If your employees have been complaining about their lack of training it probably means that they need help with certain areas of their jobs. For management this means one thing - listen to them. Understand what they need and what they are lacking so that you can provide them with better tools to fix the underlying problem.

Keep it focused

Focus the training programme on what's most important to the business right now. Don't try to fix every problem in one go. Identify a major business issue and address it. This could be anything from problems arising through a lack of communication, poor customer service or perhaps it is time to teach new sales and business development skills to your team. Encourage the entire team, even those doing things right, to embrace the training program.

BECOMING A MORE CUSTOMER CENTRIC BUSINESS

Knowing that your business needs to be customer centric (focusing on customer's needs and wants) is one thing. Knowing how to go about introducing this customer-focused culture is something else entirely!



Here are some tips to help you implement the changes necessary to become a more customer focused business:

Create a Vision

As a business owner or manager, your teams are looking to you for direction. When they see you focusing on customer benefits when making your decisions, they will follow. The vision of the company needs to focus on the product or service offering, specifically the way it should be delivered and the goals the company wants to achieve as a result. It must also focus on the benefits provided by the product or service to the customer.

Once this is determined, management should actively share this vision with the rest of the business. Only when all parties are aligned with the overall vision can they then work in the same direction. As a result, your team will feel a stronger sense of purpose in their work and will share in the success of the business.

Identify Core Values

Customers do business with people that they know, like and trust. Your business has core values that resonate well with your existing customers. You need to identify these values and communicate them to your team. Then you can build a sales process around these core values in order to ensure that all customers know what to expect when doing business with your firm. If your team constantly delivers a service in line with your business's core values, your customers will be more satisfied and will be more likely to refer business to you in the future.

Focus on the Ideal Customer Experience

Your business model should be designed in such a way that it delivers your products or services in a manner that is enjoyable and efficient for your customers. Whether a customer walks in through the door of your premises or logs onto your website, they should enjoy a consistent, high quality experience. Your team and your systems should be set up and optimised to ensure the delivery of that quality experience.

Please contact a member of our team if you would like to discuss any of the issues raised.

VIDEO MARKETING

Video marketing has really come to the fore this year. Most people might not have the time to read business blogs or articles, due to the demands of their job; but they can watch videos on tablets and smartphones while on the bus or train to work. Here are a few tips to help you generate leads using video content:

Blogs

Blogs don't just have to contain text and photos. Video content can add a whole new dimension to your business blog. Include videos within your blogs and give your audience the opportunity to view your content both as footage and text.

E-zines

Technology now allows businesses to create video e-zines. Increased bandwidth and readily available Wi-Fi mean that networks now have the capacity to stream video. However, don't try to include the video within your email as the file will be too large and will most likely get blocked by email filters. Instead, include a link which directs the user to a video on your website which they can watch. This will also encourage users to visit your website, browse around and possibly even purchase your products or services as a result.

Valuable Content

Your content should give information which is of value to your target audience. Create a range of short videos of up to 2 minutes long and upload them to YouTube. They must contain information which is valuable to the viewer. At the end of each video, encourage viewers to take action by visiting your website for more information.

Education

Videos can be used as a great way to educate your viewers about your products or services. By demonstrating your expertise you are building your firm's reputation - which will influence potential purchasers and may encourage them to choose your products or services over those of your competitors.

Your video content should be short and snappy – about 2 to 3 minutes in duration. It should not be a sales pitch. Instead, your video content should leave viewers feeling confident that your firm has the expertise they need so that when they need products or services, your business is the first firm they think of.



DISCLAIMER - PLEASE NOTE: The ideas shared with you in this email are intended to inform rather than advise. Taxpayers' circumstances do vary and if you feel that tax strategies we have outlined may be beneficial it is important that you contact us before implementation. If you do or do not take action as a result of reading this newsletter, before receiving our written endorsement, we will accept no responsibility for any financial loss incurred.