

## **Customer Loyalty Just Doesn't Happen, You Have to Work at It**

It's true, you have to strategize and plan for loyalty. Does this sound familiar... "It takes a lot less money to increase your retention of current customers than to find new ones." Do you even have a specific plan for building customer loyalty or haven't you given it much thought?

According to Streetwise Business Tips, these four factors will greatly affect your ability to build a loyal customer base:

1. Products that are highly differentiated from those of the competition.
2. Higher-end products where price is not the primary buying factor.
3. Products with a high service component.
4. Multiple products for the same customer.

## **Market To Your Own Customers!**

Giving a lot of thought to your marketing programs aimed at current customers is one aspect of building customer loyalty. Are there additional products or services you can sell your customers? Keep all the information you can on your customers and don't hesitate to ask for the next sale.

## **Use Complaints to Build Business!**

Make follow-up calls or mail satisfaction questionnaires after the sale is made. If you promptly follow up and resolve a customer's complaint, they might be even more likely to do business than the average customer who didn't have a complaint. Your customer may have more interactions after the sale with technical, service, or customer support people than they did with the sales people. These interactions should be handled with the same attention and focus that sales calls get because, in a way, they are sales calls for repeat business.

## **Reach Out To Your Customers!**

The more the customer hears from you, the more likely you'll get the next order. Send holiday cards, see them at trade shows, stop by to make sure everything's okay. Send a simple newsletter to tell them about the great things happening at your company and include some useful information for them. The more they know about you, the more they see you as someone out to help them, and the more loyal a customer they will be.

## **Loyal Customers and Loyal Workforces!**

Building customer loyalty will be a lot easier if you have a loyal workforce. It is important to retain those employees who interact with customers such as sales people, technical support, and customer-service representatives. Compliments from customers make it clear that they really appreciate specific people, especially in customer service and support.