

Seven Tips To Improve Your Relationship Marketing

Written by Laurie Hurley



"Build it and they will come," the now-famous line coined in the popular movie, **Field Of Dreams**. When you think about it, this applies directly to relationship marketing. Build a solid relationship with your target market and the clients, referrals, sales, and profit will follow –

IF you do it correctly. Because there **IS**

a right way to build strong relationships online. Here are my top seven tips for constructing a robust community that will enhance your business.

1) Forget about selling.

Put it out of your mind completely. Building meaningful relationships with your Target Market means getting to know them, their needs and desires. Schedule a coffee meeting or Skype phone call and pick their brain about their business goals and priorities. Ask key questions, too, about what their biggest challenges are and what they have done to solve them. You will be surprised how the conversation will naturally gravitate to how you can help, without you ever "pitching" a thing!

2) It's all about them, not you.

Similar to Point #1, forming a business relationship is about getting to know someone on a personal level. Now, that does not mean you ask inappropriate questions about private matters. However, asking what your prospect does in their free time, what their hobbies are, how they even got started in business is a good method of finding out more than just surface information. You never know what you may have in common with someone. And knowing more than just their website address and Facebook page will work in your favor should the business relationship grow.

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3) Get to know your customer before you pitch the sale.

There is a time and place to pitch. It is never at a first meeting unless you are invited to pitch and are bidding on a project. Even if that is the case, do your research and look online to see what you can find out beyond the basics.

4) Meet your customers where they hang out online.

Do your homework here. If your new prospect is on Twitter, follow them and become part of the conversation. If they have a profile on LinkedIn, make the connection and share a blog post or article that would interest them. Do more than "like" their Facebook business profile. Leave intelligent comments. A word of caution here, though - do not cyber stalk!

5) Nurture the business relationship by giving great tips, techniques and tricks that resonate with your clients.

This one is easy to do. For example, if you are a social media consultant and your prospect is having trouble finding time to "do" social media, post time-saving tips, or sites that provide scheduling of posts and other great resources. Find their pain point and provide the solution through your educationally-based pointers.

6) Engage on a continual basis online and be an integral part of the conversation.

Be consistent in your communication online, especially after you nab the sale! There is nothing worse than showing up online to court a client, only to disappear completely after you with make the sale or - worse - are turned down. Stay top-of-mind. Just because one prospect doesn't purchase from you does not mean they would not refer you or mention you to a competitor or colleague. Consistency and great content - a winning combination!

7) Approach your clients with a giver mentality.

Your job is to serve your clients – always. All of the above pointers are assuming that you believe in abundance marketing. There is enough business to go around. Giving a free tip, helping someone connect, or taking five minutes out of your day to solve a problem for someone without being paid will come back to you in spades. Remember the movie **Pay It Forward?**

Giver's gain, it's just that plain and simple.

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