



Episode 4: Customer Service

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Cultivating Customer Loyalty Through Great Customer Service – by Benjamin Yoskovitz

Show Summary

Customer service is critical to the success of any small business. It separates the good companies from the bad. And great customer service is essential to cultivating customer loyalty.

Here are four ways of providing great customer service with an eye to cultivating customer loyalty:

1. Respond Quickly. Respond to issues in 3 hours or less. Longer than that and you're losing the opportunity to make a great impression. Even if you don't have the answer, respond anyway. Try and start a dialogue with the person as quickly as possible so they feel important, as if they're your #1 customer.
2. Be Thorough. When responding to people be as thorough as you can. A dialogue is great, but having to go back and forth on something 50 times is going to cause trouble. Ask all the questions you need to ask as soon as possible, and provide any advice you can immediately. If possible, give people an estimated resolution time, but don't B.S. this. If you don't know, admit you don't know. If you do know or you think you know, buffer your time estimate by 25% -- when you get the problem solved quicker than that, you'll look like a star.

3. Be Friendly. Sounds obvious, but that's not always the case. Customers can be a handful. There is such a thing as a "difficult customer." Great customer service means staying friendly, and building loyalty means responding in a way that's not robotic. Try to get to the point where you genuinely care about the answer to the question, "How are you doing?" If you care, the customer is likely to reciprocate, and even if you're not best friends, you've built a strong relationship.

4. Read Your Clients. It's important to understand and learn how your customers want you to respond to them. Some will be strictly professional, others will want to chit chat. Some will be responsive, others won't. Communicate with your customers at the level they want, meet them at that point and you'll build more customer loyalty than before.

Customer loyalty is never to a product itself or the price of a product, but to a company, and more importantly to the people running the company.

Loyal customers stick around.

Loyal customers will be more willing to accept your mistakes or faults.

Loyal customers will give you referrals (even without asking for them).

Loyal customers will accept price hikes.

Loyal customers will be more understanding and willing to "work with you".

Loyal customers break out of the "client-vendor" mold.

Loyal customers will make your business successful.

And loyalty is cultivated through great customer service.

About Grasshopper New Media

Grasshopper New Media was founded by Chris Brogan in 2006. His goal in creating the network is to use digital technologies to tell stories and start conversations. GNM Networks creates podcasts, video podcasts, blogs, and other new media products for passionate niche markets, building audience through viral marketing and strong word-of-mouth efforts, and keeping them by providing consistent, quality content that both entertains and informs.

For more information, visit: <http://www.grasshoppernewmedia.com>

About Benjamin Yoskovitz



Benjamin Yoskovitz has been an entrepreneur for over 10 years, with businesses in web and software development. More recently he co-founded IGotNewsForYou.com (<http://www.igotnewsforyou.com>), where people can send friends and family, hilarious, personalized mock news pages via email, by putting them in the news.

Benjamin is passionate about building great software, customer service and humor.

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