

Follow Up, Plan Renewals, and Increase Sales Today

The marketing emphasis for most business owners is on new customers. Statistics show that it costs five times as much to get a new customer as to retain a current one. The key to profit is customer retention.

Follow up cements the sale. Questions like, "How is the product working for you?" or, "What questions do you have about our service?" are two conversation starters. Many hotels, wireless services, software sellers, and other companies who benefit from repeat customers program follow up calls into their sales cycle.

The follow-up call also works perfectly for service providers. A check-in shortly after a complicated sales training, for example, is an opportunity to re-connect with the customer. If there are questions, they can be easily handled at that time; if there are no problems, the customer appreciates the unexpected call.

Take the time to analyze your sales cycle to determine if a follow up call could work for you. Some of the advantages it offers include: keeping your company name in front of customers, demonstrating courtesy and professionalism, reminding customers of your willingness to serve, and emphasizing the advantages of doing business with your company.

Follow up calls eventually morph into repeat sales. A surprising number of companies neglect to ask a customer to renew his/her purchase(s) prior to the end of contract. An ideal time to request a renewal is

at 80% of a contract. A one year contract would be renewed at ten months.

Contact manager software makes it easier than ever to automate reminders. Think about the florist who could provide a service by notifying you of a birthday or anniversary bouquet that you sent last year. What if your auto repair store sent a card reminding you that it was time for maintenance?

Some industries already embrace this type of scheduling. You complete an address card before you leave the dentist's office. Other service providers such as hairdressers, nail techs, chiropractors, and the post office use similar renewal techniques. My veterinarian sends me a reminder about Tommy's rabies shot requirement; he personalizes the notice with my cat's name.

Earlier this summer I received a card from a window cleaner. "It will soon be a year since we washed your beautiful windows. Given our climate, you've probably had plenty of dirt and dust since we last saw you. Let us work on your view." No surprise. I booked an appointment.

You provide a service when you invite satisfied customers to renew easily and effortlessly. The power of a follow-up or a request for renewal is that each strategy is growth-oriented, adding dollars to the revenue line. The company that implements these practices will consistently move forward, increasing revenues in the process.

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