

## Marketing's Greatest Enemy

You work like crazy trying to attract attention and business, operating from a marketing calendar, committing to your strategy and doing everything right, resulting in an influx of customers -- but you lose them. They never come back. You did your marketing so well and marketed so wisely that you're almost in a state of shock at how your customers ignore you.

You treated them well while you were making your business transactions. You gave them a fair price, knew that the quality you put into your offering matched the quality they got out of it. You assured them that service is your middle name. You smiled and used their name when you said good-bye, thanking them for the sale. And then, after all that caring attention on your part, they completely ignored you, never set foot in your business again.

Do you want to know why they ignored you, why it was so easy for them to put you out of their minds? It's because you ignored them.

It's because you made the sale and then made the grave but all-too-common error of thinking that your marketing job was over. That was a terrible error. But at least you've got a lot of company making the same terrible error. Nearly 70 percent of business lost in America is lost due to apathy after the sale. Apathy is the deadliest enemy of marketing. A "love 'em and leave 'em" attitude is usually fatal to profitability.

The opposite of apathy is follow-up. Guerrillas have a "love 'em and love 'em" attitude, marketing to prospects like crazy till the sale is made, then continuing to market like crazy to them after the sale. Apathy never sets in. Customers never feel ignored. Guerrillas do all in their power to intensify the relationship with caring follow-up and loving attention. They know that once they have established a relationship, their product or service is no longer thought of as a commodity. Businesses that offer commodities often lose customers due to competitors offering lower prices. Businesses that form warm relationships transcend being thought of as a commodity and maintain their customer relationships with service and constant contact.

No wonder they don't lose business so readily. People want relationships, want the businesses they patronize to stay in contact, want to feel cared for and not ignored. All guerrillas know that their customer relationships are their most precious assets. They know that if customers purchased from them one time and had an enjoyable purchase experience, they are very likely to buy from them again. And again and again. And to provide many referrals over time.

To nourish these kind of lasting relationships, guerrillas send thank-you notes after the sale -- within 48 hours. They contact customers within a month of the sale to make certain they are satisfied and have no questions. They get in touch with customers once again three months after the sale, this time suggesting new items that may tie-in with the original purchase. And three months after that, they make another contact. This kind of guerrilla follow-up not only prevents dreaded apathy from setting in, but also increases business anywhere from 20% to 300%. That's because customers, in their hearts, silently hope for recognition, acknowledgment, information, advance opportunities to purchase, and new calls to action.

Instead of the kind of apathy that loses customers forever, constant attention and follow-up results in healthy back-end sales. This means repeat sales, ancillary sales and referral sales. And this means big

profits to you -- because it costs six times more to sell something to a new prospect than to sell that same thing to an existing customer.

These days, all the true marketing experts ask you to calculate the lifetime value of a customer. If you don't understand the damaging effects of apathy after the sale, that lifetime value is pretty small, probably a few hundred dollars, if that. If you do all in your power to prevent apathy from ever setting in, the lifetime value of each customer may be measured in hundreds of thousands of dollars, maybe even more. You'll profit from the initial sale, from the repeat sales, from the referral sales and from the long, mutually beneficial relationship. It happens only when you defeat the most deadly enemy of marketing. And now you know how to do that.

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