

The Importance of Customer Satisfaction and Increasing Clientèle Base

Carve out your niche, clearly identify which customers best fit your business model, and make the public aware of exactly what you do.

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Every business owner wants to grow his or her business, get more clients, and increase the bottom line at the end of every month. So, how do we do this? I have a few insights that I believe can help.

There are two primary ways to develop a solid clientèle base for any business. Lets break it down in simple terms, the two ways to which I am referring to are *growth and retention*. However, there is one common theme that is shared by both of these goals.

That is being clear about exactly what kind of clients best serves your business, and knowing what kind of clients can you serve best.

Let me give you an example.

I have a unique business model. And for me, when it comes to clients, more is not always better. Because I am a personal coach, I have a small group of carefully selected individuals that I train. We generally meet once a week for several hours and in a short time we become very intimate, it's almost as if we are partners. And for that reason, it is crucial that we are a good fit for each other. To insure the quality of this

business relationship, I screen all potential clients carefully. We will meet for the first time, which is basically an extensive interview.

We take as much time as needed to make sure that we are both crystal clear about three things: the future objectives, the path to attain the desired results, and the role each of us must play in the process.

Now here is the rub! If at any point during the “interview” process, I feel that I am not suited to service this individual, or if I feel that the potential client will not be able to take responsibility for his or her role, then I politely say, *“I am sorry, but this is just not the right fit.”* As difficult as this might sound, by being selective the clients that I do serve, will get the best customer service I can provide; and together, we are able to get the results that they want. A win-win for each of us. And remember, satisfied clients want to share their experience with others! And Viola! Retention and growth.

One key myth is the belief that having more clients is the answer. While this is partially true, the real solution is having a clearly defined clientèle base, which means getting the ***right kind of clients*** for your specific business. Unfortunately, sometimes this means saying No! For example, McDonalds and Five Guys both sell hamburgers, fries, and a drink. They both offer food as well as an experience. However, they each have a very different business model and clientèle base. In a sense, they each have a similar product but they have very different niche. They are both very successful businesses because they have clearly defined their unique way they serve their clients. In a manner of speaking, each one says No! to the other's business model.

How does this information apply to others businesses? Well the same idea applies no matter what the business is. If you get to the heart of any successful organization, from Walmart to a little mom and pop grocery store, each has to clearly identify what products or services they can offer, and which clients best fit into their business model.

For example, I generally charge \$150 an hour for my services, which means that I generally target people in the \$80,000+ income bracket. Sure, I can service people making less, but they may not have the financial resources to develop a long-term relationship. Furthermore, with limited resources, they might not be able to implement the business changes or get the training they need to achieve the desired results. This would be an example of less than exemplary customer service, which could lead to an unsatisfied client and could damage the integrity of my business. Furthermore, too much time attracting the wrong kind of client could easily undermine the stability of any growing business.

The goal is to clearly define exactly what products or services your business can offer and then, do it well.

Carve out your niche, clearly identify which customers best fit your business model, and make the public aware of exactly what you do. For instance, Starbucks and Dunkin Donuts both sell coffee, but the manner in which they do it changes the experience, and therefore each one operates from a very different model. *And they are both successful because they do not try to be like the other.*

Growing any business demands retention (hence the need for superb customer satisfaction) as well as developing new clients. Having a crystal clear business model, knowing exactly which customers you can serve best, and delivering what you promise will better serve your clients; not to mention it will be far more rewarding for you.

There is another important fact to consider. In nearly every business model, we can apply the 80-20 rule, which states that 80% of your business is generated by 20% of your clients. Of course, these are rough estimates, however, this means that we should be spending most of our time and energy servicing the 20% that makes up the bulk of the business. Furthermore, when pursuing new clients the same theory should apply. We should be targeting the smaller percentage that constitutes our core clients. But more important than that, it is important to know which clients fit into each category. Do you know?

Another note, just because you want to be selective does not mean you can't offer several options. In fact, highly successful organizations often

include a stratified business model, designed to offer a variety of products and services to a different clientèle base. Simply put that means they are designed to offer two, three or more different levels of service to their clients. A good example involves one of my first clients. She ran a small website and graphic design business. But as I told Carly, websites are like wines; they come in all different price ranges from the \$8.00 bottle of Mirassou Pinot Noir to the \$1,500 bottle of Dom. Romane Conti. In much the same way, websites and custom design artwork can range from a few hundred to several thousands of dollars depending on the nature of the business and objectives of the site.

With that in mind, I advised Carly to begin organizing her design business to service her clients in three distinct price/service ranges. Just to keep it easy I suggested that she used bronze, silver, and gold packages, because these ideals are already in place in peoples mind. We made it clear what each package offered and identified which kind of client would be best served by each level. By setting up these different tiers, when she met with prospective clients she could quickly explain each package and ascertain which one would best serve the new client. Clients who wanted a quick and easy one-page site without the bells and whistles could get what they wanted in the Bronze package, but understood that there would be little or no custom design work. Furthermore, since website design and custom graphics are highly subjective she could justify the higher prices for the Gold package, because it involved sites that were highly interactive, and included large amounts of custom-design work for the individual client.

Before doing this, Carly use to get frustrated because her potential clients did not know exactly what they wanted. So we devised a plan to make it clear exactly what her business could offer, complete with example sites and a detailed list of what services were offered in each package.

Furthermore, by stratifying her design packages in this way, she was better able to service a wider range of clients and it became apparent to all her potential clients exactly what she had to offer. In addition, the way Carly talked with prospective clients gave her business creditability because she was quickly able to educate her potential clients about the different aspects of a complex business, and made it clear how she could serve them. And lets face it, it's easier to recommend someone if you know exactly what they do.

By having a crystal clear business model, establishing a well-defined clientèle base and delivering on what you promise, your business can better serve your clients.

As a result you will have better retention because your customers are satisfied and they will in turn spread the word, because they are happy. And isn't that what we really want?

Best wishes for a happy and prosperous year.

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Author, success-coach, and mentor, **Russell Foster** provides his clients the roadmap to a more empowering mindset. Whether it is one-on-one or in a large group setting, Foster loves guiding others to a more productive way of thinking and acting. Using powerful tools such as self-hypnosis, Neuro-Linguistics and EFT, Foster shares with his live audience and his readers the unlimited power of the human mind and how to tap into it their inner genius. Together he and his clients develop a new way of thinking to adjust to changes in the market and business and create new skills to overcome physical obstacles as well as psychological barriers.

In his upcoming book, *A Clear Slate* he takes his reader on a journey into the power of the mind, and more importantly, he stresses to each and

every one of us, what we can do once purged of the limiting beliefs that plague so many of us.