



## **Building Stronger Customer Relationships**

Allocating your marketing efforts between acquiring new customers and getting additional business from existing customers can be a challenging decision. Businesses that can sell additional products or services to existing customers can have a built in advantage. Here are some ideas to help strengthen your existing customer relationships and perhaps get some new customers along the way.

### **Customers want to feel that their business is valued.**

While a simple “thank you” can help convey your appreciation, going an extra step can strengthen the relationship. A gift, or at least a card during the holiday season, can show that you remembered the customer and may stimulate a “thanks for the gift” conversation.

### **Customers want to feel that their vendors care about them.**

If your business sells to other businesses, try to establish a means to offer some insights into their business. If you sell to others in that industry, share some ideas you have gained from others. Be careful not to divulge secrets, but telling a customer about a success someone else has had may give them an idea for improving their business. At a minimum, it shows you are thinking about them.

### **Customers want to trust their vendors.**

Consider offering a guarantee on your product. Few things speak louder than the confidence you show when you offer to refund a customer’s money if the product doesn’t measure up to what is expected. Even if your product is immediately consumed after purchase, there may be some way to create a guarantee to demonstrate your confidence in the product.

### **Most customers want their vendors to be successful.**

Being able to rely on the same supplier saves customers time and effort. Be sure to let your customers know that you will be there when they need you. You can do this by being visible when you land a new customer by issuing a press release (if appropriate in your business). You can also demonstrate your success by telling customers about what you are doing. You may find including a story of a recent success in a conversation will prompt even more business.

### **Customers want a pleasant relationship with their vendors.**

Everyone wants to be happy and few things create happiness like pleasant conversations. Make it a point to meet or call customers on a regular basis without making a sales pitch. If appropriate, a simple contact on their birthday may create more goodwill than almost anything else.

While you are having these types of contacts with customers, don’t forget to ask for referrals.