# How to Court and Keep Customers in Uncertain Times

Posted by SherylNash01 - 2009/08/05 19:42

---

Maybe the economy is showing some signs of life, but don't expect your customers to rush back to buying your products and or and services. They may be a bit gun shy for a while, even if they have the money to spend, it's a mind thing. They may still feel somewhat insecure about loosening their purse strings.

The Corporate Executive Board offers some insight on how to keep and grow customers in uncertain times.

Make high-order emotional connections. Even the hardest hit consumers reward favored brands with loyalty. A common purpose, passion or philosophy leads to bonds that can be hard to break.

Introduce rearguard brands or brand extensions. Consider offering less expensive extensions of your big sellers, for example.

Catch category jumpers. Some folks will quit buying certain types of products altogether. See where you can sneak in. Maybe someone decides to ditch dry cleaning but will be interested in home laundry products.

Remove purchasing obstacles. It's not an accident that some companies have created buyback guarantee programs. If someone loses their job, they won't have to worry about that car or other item they just bought.

It's time to get creative. What are you doing to ensure your organization gets and keeps customers in this environment?

==========

# Re:How to Court and Keep Customers in Uncertain Times

Posted by SherylNash01 - 2009/10/23 19:38

---

A new report from Grant Thornton International brings home just how important customers are.

According to Grant Thorton, globally, 41 percent of businesses say that customers are their leading source of innovation. When U.S. businesses were asked to name the origin of the best innovation ideas, they named customers (37%) and in house R&D teams (37%).

Companies that figure out how to finesse customer relationships will surely have a competitive advantage.

==========

# Re:How to Court and Keep Customers in Uncertain Times

Posted by SherylNash01 - 2009/11/24 15:24

---

The Corporate Executive Board offers this advice for marketing in this tough climate.

In a fast-changing media environment where new ways of reaching consumers seem to pop up daily, focus on three priorities: build a more agile, customer-centric approach; think strategy first, tactics second; and focus on your message for resonance. One client in our network, when facing a lack of differentiation within its product category and among its own brands, undertook a brand positioning strategy that matches each of its brands to a target consumer. They develop "Truth Points," or short articulations of product benefits using language and imagery, that target consumers can relate to and understand. Truth Points are utilized in all marketing communications, including cosponsored retailer television and print ads.

==========

# Re:How to Court and Keep Customers in Uncertain Times

Posted by SherylNash01 - 2009/12/07 17:24

---

A recent management tip from the Harvard Business Review has this to say about handling customer complaints.

1. Understand the full context. Try to understand as much as you can about the complaint. The more information you have, the easier it is to determine the root of the dissatisfaction.

2. Propose a resolution. Know what would make the situation better for your customer and propose ways you can solve

the problem.

3. Show respect. Complaining customers are often upset. Train employees receiving complaints to be empathetic and to reframe the harsh criticism they may receive into constructive feedback.

==========

## Re:How to Court and Keep Customers in Uncertain Times

Posted by SherylNash01 - 2010/03/11 19:18

---

The Conference Board Council on Corporate Brand Management issued a report this week, Corporate Brands -- Meeting the Challenges of Changing Times that urges companies to tend to their brands more diligently and painstakingly than ever.

When the world emerges from the depths of the worst recession in two generations, it will be a different and more difficult place to effectively manage a corporate brand. Companies simply won't be able to do things the way they always have. But they can succeed by adapting their brand strategy to reflect what changes the recession has brought to their business and what it might mean for customers. This will poise them for growth.

The global recession, coupled with cases of unethical corporate behavior worldwide have eroded trust in business, and consequently in corporate brands, according to the report. Moving forward, the operating landscape or "the new normal", will be characterized by consumers who are much more educated buyers and have less brand loyalty or trust than they used to.

However, building an internal brnad culture is as critical as building a strong, external one. The corporate brand is not only used to improve competitive positioning and express company aspirations, it can be a powerful tool to motivate employees, who act as the brand embodiment when dealing with customers.

The report's takeaway: Smart companies will act now to reposition brands and mindsets.

==========

## Re:How to Court and Keep Customers in Uncertain Times

Posted by annearf - 2010/03/24 18:56

---

The issue of brand loyalty is a big one. Even without the downturn, younger people's loyalty to brands has become famously fickle. And they're so deluged with media, they're also famously cynical about marketing messages. Now, thanks to corporate misbehavior and stupidity, there's even more mistrust of all institutions. I'm not a brand expert. I don't know what the answer is. But I do know that no company can take for granted the loyalty of any customer now, particularly younger ones.

==========

## Re:How to Court and Keep Customers in Uncertain Ti

Posted by SherylNash01 - 2010/04/08 19:41

---

The latest Herman Trend Report from consulting firm The Herman Group asks:

Money is King in 2010 and Beyond?

The recent prolonged economic downturn has shifted consumer values -- for both external and internal customers. In a drastic change from its 2008 findings,, Colloquy's 2010 Retail Loyalty Index found that low prices have replaced customer service as the top driver of customer loyalty.

Not surprisingly, lowest-priced Walmart emerged as the dominant retailer in many categories. Costco, known for great service and the dominant 2008-index retailer, had the highest customer loyalty ratings in three out of five of the Mass Merchant  regional categories.

Low prices are great, but over time, can they really beat good old-fashioned customer service?

==========

## Re:How to Court and Keep Customers in Uncertain Ti

Posted by SherylNash01 - 2010/04/29 16:56

---

Today's Tip of the Day from Harvard Business Review offers advice about how to better understand your customers.

Use the 3 Minute Rule to Better Understand Your Customer

Surveys and focus groups can tell you a lot about your customers. But there are indirect analyses that can be equally revealing. Try using the three-minute rule to better understand the broader context in which your customers use and interact with your products and services.

Ask what your customer is doing in the three minutes immediately before and after using your product.

By doing this, you may discover an unnecessary complexity they have to overcome. Or you may identify a cross-selling opportunity if they interact with another product or service right before interacting with yours.

This rule is a great way to see the big picture and identify adjacent opportunities.

==========

## Re:How to Court and Keep Customers in Uncertain Ti

Posted by SherylNash01 - 2010/05/18 23:06

---

Micah Solomon, co-author, Exceptional Service, Exceptional Profit offers seven tips for driving customer loyalty:

1. Did you shine that doorknob? Research shows that customers remember the first and last minutes of a service encounter much more vividly -- and for much longer -- than all the rest of it.

2. Set your clocks forward: Modern customers expect speedier service than did any generation before them. A perfect product delivered late equals a defective product.

3. Customers want to connect with a real person-online or off. For example, instead of a web-based chat window that blandly announces "you are now chatting with Jane," try "you are now chatting with Jane Yang-Katzenberg."

4. Remember each returning customer. Whatever your business-and no matter how large, work to achieve the computer-assisted effectiveness of a beloved bartender, doorman or hairstylist, the kind who would know Bob's preferences, the name of Bob's pet, when Bob was there last, for example. Superb client tracking systems can create the same "at home" feeling in your customers.

5. Anticipate a customer's wishes. When a customer's wish is met before the wish has been expressed, it send the message that you care about the customer as an individual.

6. Don't leave the language your team uses up to chance. Develop and rehearse a list of vocabulary words and expressions that fit your business brand perfectly.

7. Be patient when filling positions. In a superb service organization, a single disagreeable or unresponsive team member can erode customer loyalty.

==========

## Re:How to Court and Keep Customers in Uncertain Ti

Posted by SherylNash01 - 2010/06/11 17:54

---

Use Words, Not Numbers to Understand Your Customers...that's the tip of the day from Harvard Business Publishing today.

When it comes to customer data, many believe that multiple-choice surveys across large samples that can be statistically analyzed yield the most rigorous research. This type of analysis, however, only gives you a shallow understanding of your customers. To get more nuance, use qualitative methods to discover what your customers think about your products and services. Qualitative techniques, such as focus groups or open-ended questionnaires, let you delve deeper into the

relationship between your firm and those who buy or use your products. They also allow customers to express their opinions using their own words, not yours.

==========

## Re:How to Court and Keep Customers in Uncertain Ti

Posted by SherylNash01 - 2010/06/29 20:57

_____

The Corporate Executive Board revealed recent research that challenges conventional customer service wisdom. According to CEB, it doesn't pay to delight a customer.

After years of focus on the "above and beyond" service mentality, research from the Customer Contact Council, a division of CEB, indicates that most customers only seek a satisfactory solution to an issue, and that companies themselves are actually artificially raising expectations in their efforts to over-satisfy them. The research also suggests, and CEB advises, that reducing the level of effort a customer exerts in the service channel is a more effective and lucrative path to customer loyalty.

In fact, 96 percent of customers who put forth high effort to resolve their issues are more disloyal -- an eye-opening number when companies consider that 59 percent of customers report moderate-to-high perceived additional effort in a service interaction.

CEB's research found that in aggregate, customer service interactions are nearly four times more likely to lead to disloyalty than loyalty. For companies seeking to mitigate disloyalty, reducing customer effort -- not delighting the customer is the greatest lever the contact center can pull.

==========

## Re:How to Court and Keep Customers in Uncertain Ti

Posted by annearf - 2010/07/01 23:25

_____

I'm not quite sure what "customer effort" means.In any case, customer service interactions are nearly four times more likely to lead to disloyalty than loyalty: Couldn't that be because customer service is so lousy at most places?

==========

## Re:How to Court and Keep Customers in Uncertain Ti

Posted by SherylNash01 - 2010/08/03 16:25

_____

Harvard Business Review says you can win the sale by winning your customer's heart...

Customers are far more likely to purchase a product or service if they feel valued by the person selling it. Underappreciated customers will look elsewhere to make their purchase.

Reach out to your customers and make sure they know how important they are to you.

Give them the opportunity to meet as many of your staff as possible, all the way up to the CEO.

Thank them for their business and ask them to tell you about their company.

When you create an emotional connection with them, they are more open to hearing what you have to offer, and much more inclined to purchase. This needs to be a genuine connection, however; your overtures shouldn't be phony or insincere.

==========

## Re:How to Court and Keep Customers in Uncertain Ti

Posted by annearf - 2010/10/13 20:34

_____

So, we all know you're supposed to create an emotional connection with customers and it can't be phony. If you do that they'll be more inclined to buy from you. But how do you create a bond that's sincere if what you're after is their business,

ie, their money? Never understood that. I'm sure that's what separates the born salesperson from a clod like me. But I'd like to know.

==========

## Re:How to Court and Keep Customers in Uncertain Times

Posted by jacking - 2011/09/28 12:21

---

As everyone knows in rift gold, every day a large number of rift gold. If you have a lot of good rift plat, you have to become a master of the potential.

==========