

DOWNTOWN BUSINESS TIPS

JUNE, 2011

BARBARA WOLD'S RETAIL & CONSUMER TIPS

Whatever you do, make sure you do whatever you can to keep your current customers. Customer retention is absolutely critical. This economy makes customer retention strategies even more important because customer loyalty has weakened. You just need a few simple steps and always make it a priority:

1. Contact your top customers or clients regularly. Make a list of your top customers, at least 10-25. Call them each at least quarterly. Call, send notes, send articles and information that may be of interest.
2. Keep your name in front of all your customers. Advertise regularly. Network regularly. Send e-mail newsletters regularly. The key is doing this regularly.
3. Give your current customers good deals. We're all used to come-on deals to attract new customers, but we then fail to offer similar discounts to current customers. Remember, your competitors are targeting your customers with deals.

4. Surprise them! Do something special and unexpected for some of your best customers. Send them a small gift. Add something extra to their order.

5. Keep track. Start a database, update your database, contact manager, digital address book. I'm always surprised by the number of businesses — especially small businesses — that do not have a good database of their past customers. Find a way to keep track of all your clients — past and present — so that you can easily and quickly contact them. Your database is GOLD.

6. Communicate, communicate, communicate. All of us, myself included, take our customers for granted. As a result, we get so focused on doing our work, that we don't take enough time out to meet with, talk to, and more importantly, listen to, our customers. Stay in touch. Ask them what they need and want. Be part of their lives and business.

More Information : Connect on LinkedIn: <http://www.linkedin.com/in/barbarawold>

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

July 1 First Friday Night Concert Series

Barefoot Creek, Buzzard Mountain Boys, & Homegrown Revival
6:30 PM Hancock Park
Every First Friday May through October

July 4 Celebration & Fireworks!

For details of the day's activities visit the Dahlonega-Lumpkin County Chamber of Commerce/CVB [Website](#)

Dahlonega Farmers & Artists Market!

Every Tuesday & Saturday May 7 through October 29, 7 am-3pm, Hancock Park

Dahlonega Appalachian Jam

Every Saturday April 23– October 8, 2-5 PM, Gold Museum Lawn

RICK SEGEL 'S RETAIL TIP OF THE WEEK

Does the best salesperson really make all the sales? Does the most qualified politician win the election? Does the best store attract all the business? Does the best person get the job?

The answer to all of these questions is a resounding NO. In most cases the winners are the ones we like. We prefer to do business with people we like and avoid doing business with people we dislike. It is important to understand that there are two parts to every transaction. The business part consists of showing the merchandise, making recommendations, asking for the sale and doing all the paperwork.

The second part is the human part. Those are the warm and fuzzy feelings we have about a person or a business. Just as an army prepares for battle by sending in air strikes or artillery to soften the enemy, we use the tools of likeability to gain rapport and build relationships that will generate trust and even confidence. Likeability is often overlooked in the sales process, yet it is the foundation that makes all of the other stages that much easier. We address likeability by answering the question "what are we really selling?" The first thing we are selling is ourselves because if the customer doesn't like us, the sale will never

occur.

The four things we are selling every time we encounter a customer are:

- Ourselves
- The business
- The experience
- Finally, the merchandise

If the first thing that we are selling is ourselves, how do we position ourselves to be saleable? That's just another way of saying "how do we get people to like and respect us?" The respect comes from product knowledge. The like comes from emotional stimuli. It's only human nature to have favorites. Our goal is to be the favorite or preferred choice to our customers. If you have all the bests, the best merchandise, the best location, the best price, and the customer doesn't like you, it is an uphill battle to make the sale. It is so much easier to sell a customer, service a customer, and take care of any problems when they like us.

The Tools to Likeability

1. Commonality – We like to be with people with common interests. Golfers like to be with golfers, poker players like to be with poker play-

ers, people with children like to be with people who have children.

2. Rule of reciprocity – We tend to like people who give us things.
3. Rule of relevance – We like people who talk about current events, not the way things used to be done years ago.
4. Communicate in their style – An example is when some people dislike certain accents.
5. The power of the compliment – The three areas to compliment are material possessions, physical appearance, and the decisions people make.
6. Listening – We need to look at the person and utilize reaffirming statements.
7. Fun – The use of fun, humor, and playful behavior makes us more likeable.
8. Knowing the hot words to avoid saying that turn people off when we are selling.
9. Knowing how to handle the hot words used by customers to us.

Using these tools to increase your likeability quotient will also increase your sales. Try them—they work! Have a great week!

More Information:
<http://www.ricksegel.com/>

5 WAYS TO CREATE MORE ENGAGEMENT ON FACEBOOK, JOHN JANTSCH

As businesses rush onto Facebook many struggle with the right way to make this new platform pay. On Facebook, simply posting your weekly newsletter may make it convenient to read, but that alone won't turn your Facebook page into a place people want to visit and share. One of the great things about Facebook is that there are hundreds of millions of users, some percentage of whom you may want to attract as customers. Yet the way people use Facebook is much more like a giant cocktail party or networking event and requires a more engaging touch. Your success on Facebook as a business will depend, as it often is in any networking situation, upon your ability to involve those you encounter and offer interesting and valuable interaction, entertainment, and insights.

With that in mind, here are five of the best ways to crank up your engagement engine on Facebook.

1. Be Regular - As you begin to promote your Facebook page and gain fans, you'll find that the more content you add the more feedback you'll get. Now, you can go overboard here, so I'm not really talking about quantity for quantity's sake alone. I am suggesting that you'll get much more from your Facebook presence as you start to post content several times a day. The good news is that on Facebook, shorter is often better. Don't worry about spending lots of time crafting lengthy updates. Share snack-sized pieces of content, update your status with useful tidbits, and point to relevant content that you find in other places.

2. Mix It Up - This tip goes hand in hand with my first one, but adds the dynamic of variety. If you want to promote your daily blog post or weekly newsletter, that's great, but you should also consider adding lots of images, using polling, and creating short videos. I've found that different people seem to react to and comment on different kinds of content -- and I am certain that relevant content, produced in a variety of formats, is one of

the best ways to keep your Facebook presence interesting. You may find that your Facebook engagement increases when you look at it as an extension of your website or blog, but with a more personal and playful personality. Short, sweet variety -- with a human touch.

3. Ask Stimulating Questions - One of the easiest ways to create great interaction is to pose questions that are easy for people to react to and answer. This tactic plays well with my "mix it up" pointer, although again you don't want to overdo it. Ask your visitors questions related to the solutions they seek; ask them about things they aren't getting, things they like, and things they don't like. These kinds of questions can draw fans into a discussion with each other, and that's when you know you're building community with your Facebook page.

4. Talk Back - This may seem pretty elementary, but it's a make-it-or-break-it kind of thing on Facebook. People in networking environments are looking for conversations, and the tools on Facebook make it very easy to have lots of them. The key is to be an active participant. Once fans start making comments on your updates, links, videos, and images, start acknowledging their contributions and offering additional comments and insights. This might require you to employ a tool like TweetDeck or HootSuite to monitor and talk back in real time, or you might just carve out a couple of set times each day to do a little Facebook monitoring.

5. Reward Good Behavior - If you want more "likes" and comments, one of the best things you can do is thank people for doing just those things. The funny thing is that once you start to do this, particularly if you do it publicly on your page, you'll find that your most engaged folks will become even more loyal. Others, in turn, will take note of your shower of appreciation with like-minded behavior.

More Information:

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HOW TO MINIMIZE EMPLOYEE ABSENCES, CHARLOTTE JENSEN

Employee absences are more detrimental to your business than you might realize. They can cost businesses nearly 9 percent of payroll, according to a recent study. And when workers call in sick, the impact on your business isn't just financial. While some absences are legitimate and even unavoidable (beware the yearly flu season), plenty of others fall into the "faux coughing on voice mail" category. The following best practices will help you minimize not only employee absenteeism but its effects, ultimately boosting your business's productivity and, ideally, profitability:

1. Create an official policy: It

seems obvious, but setting expectations clearly ensures employees understand you expect them to be professional, show up, and work hard. Include the policy in your employee handbook.

2. Motivate your team: Chronic absenteeism and tardiness are signs of a much larger problem: a dissatisfied, disengaged workforce. Of course, simply forcing employees to clock in isn't enough; if they lack passion and drive, they're less productive and apt to merely sleepwalk through the workday, negatively affecting your business. An easy way to impact em-

ployee happiness? Offer flex time and time off for family activities.

3. Track absences: Managing absenteeism means understanding who is missing work, and when. Software solutions from Advance Systems, Kronos, and various other providers can help you create a detailed picture of each employee and identify trouble spots.

4. Use discipline when necessary: If you suspect an employee is abusing the system (calling in sick too often or leaving early all the time without a legitimate excuse), be prepared to impose real consequences.

Document everything and create a paper trail. Make sure you understand your obligations under the Family and Medical Leave Act or the Americans with Disabilities Act; if in doubt, obtain legal counsel.

5. Work with a temp agency: When long-term absences can't be avoided, a temporary agency can provide you with a qualified replacement, fast. While training someone new isn't ideal, the right fit should be up to speed in no time.

More Information:

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The "Downtown Business Tips" newsletter is intended to provide merchants with monthly information about improving their business's position in the market!

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