

Why You Must Build A Customer List

By David Coyne

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Customer List To Prosper

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If you run (or plan to run) an online business, it's especially important that you maintain and add to a customer/prospect list. Unlike a store-front business, which can draw on pedestrian traffic, you're only location is cyberspace.

You must constantly let potential customers know you exist. And to remind current customers that you're still in business and have more products and services to help them.

There are a couple of powerful reasons for keeping an updated list of your customers' names and email addresses.

Obviously the first is that prospects can be turned into customers.

But here's another important reason: It costs five to ten times as much to acquire a new customer than selling more products to your existing customers.

Think about all advertising costs involved in trying to attract new buyers. It's much easier to sell to people whom already know you.

If you sell a quality product and deliver great customer service, you build customer loyalty and help prevent customers switching to your competitors.

Also take advantage of “cross selling.” If customer X bought Product A, make sure they know about Product B, C, etc.

If your customer doesn't purchase your other products, send an email and politely inquire.

When you find out their specific objection to buying, you can then address the problem.

Perhaps you can offer the customer a volume discount, two for one deal, or add an inexpensive gift if they order.

Be creative in ways to overcome customer resistance.

And check through your list often.

When was the last time you were in contact with each of these customers?

You should be keeping in touch with them at least monthly. Even if it's just an email asking how they are enjoying your product or service.

Ask them if they were pleased with the customer service they received from you or how can you serve them better.

One of the most effective ways to keep in contact with your customers is to send them a newsletter. With email, it's easy to create your own electronic newsletter or ezine. (For info on how to start an ezine, visit <http://www.epdigest.com>)

But make sure your ezine is more than just a sales pitch. People will tire of that quickly.

Instead, offer tips on how to best use your products, include new product information, offer discounts on upgrades, or create a frequently asked questions (FAQ) column.

Your goal is not to be just a company

that sells products, your goal is to be the solution provider to your customers' problems.

If you're stumped about what content to include in your newsletter, send out an email to your customers asking what they'd like to read.

TIP: You'll get a much better response if you offer an incentive for them to reply. Offer a free e-book or discount on your other products.

If you're just starting your business, you don't need to purchase an expensive database to store your customer list. Many email programs have versatile address book features where you can store and update your list.

Microsoft Works includes both a database and spreadsheet program that are easy to use and won't blow your budget.

Dave Coyne is a copywriter, marketing consultant and president of DC Infobiz. Get his FREE REPORT "Start A High Income, Low Risk Home Business And Never Create A Product, Write An Ad or Talk To Anyone."

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