

Delight your customers and the money will follow

By Cathy Goodwin

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Customer service is the unglamorous but surprisingly fun side of marketing. Promotion gets you customers. Service lets you keep their loyalty and their money. These tips come from my new ebook, *Delight Your Customers and the Money Will Follow*, <http://www.movinglady.com/custsvc.html>

1. Be on time for appointments. If you're late, offer compensatory time.

Seems basic, doesn't it? You'd be surprised.

2. Review your client's files before each appointment.

"You're the one who needs marketing plan. Oops! I thought you were the resume client. What's this stuff about Mountains of Joy...oh, your slogan! Maybe I can help you write a new one. You say I wrote that slogan? Uh, please don't hang up. Please! I can explain!"

3. Manage expectations.

Your client's sales are down. You say, "You've got a me-too product in a saturated market." Or you say, "Your negative thoughts are driving away customers."

Both statements may be accurate. Before you process that credit card, make sure your client knows which one is likely to come from you.

4. Clarify your fee structure.

Does "monthly retainer" mean you'll send one-line answers to two emails between sessions? Will you read the resume ahead of time?

If you resent spending time between sessions, don't be coy. Charge in six-minute segments and pretend you're a lawyer.

5. No surprises on the bill.

You decide the client needs an extra ebook from your catalog or an extra section on his resume. "I

knew you'd want me to do this," you say. "That'll be an extra twenty dollars."
Huh? That'll be the end of our relationship.

6. Delight your clients with gifts, surprises, and extras.

You think your loyal client could benefit from reading a section of your ebook or attending your next teleclass? Make it a gift. Sure, you could say, "For only twenty bucks, it's a deal," or even, "I'll give you a fifty percent discount."

Forego the ten bucks. Give your client a reason to stick around and spend a thousand.
Upscale clients expect gifts. Their hotels give three chocolates on the pillow.

7. Forget about converting the client. .

You may respect your client's choice to worship at the deli on Sunday mornings, but what if your client is devoutly skeptical about the Law of Attraction? If you want clients who share your values, share yours upfront.

8. If Tony Soprano becomes your client, don't be surprised if he borrows your car.

Be wary of clients who seem very different from your other clients: they move a lot faster or slower, they raise issues you've never dealt with, they argue, they astonish you. Understand how these differences might affect your ability to deliver. Their anger might surprise you even more.

9. Metaphors can be poison. Use plain English to make your promises.

You promised to help your client "take her business to the next level." Will you get her there with a marketing plan, a set of confidence-building exercises, a recommendation for clutter-clearing or a non-stop cheering section of one? Promise you'll "run alongside while she's learning to ride a bike" and she'll wish she'd taken a taxi.

10. When you make a mistake, offer compensation.

Airlines can offer you a piece of the airport floor when they strand you at midnight between Boise and Billings. They have frequent flyer plans.

Brilliant recovery strategies can actually deepen loyalty. Offer refunds, extra sessions, products, and gifts. If you've created a disaster, offer to pay for a few sessions with a colleague who can offer the client a new creation or a new lease on life. Don't wait for the client to ask. He might have his lawyer make the call.

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