

Transform Clients into Business Partners for Increased Profits

By Jessica Albon

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Ideally, a business partner promotes your business; they're always on the lookout for new markets, and they work to find ways to improve your product or service.

Wouldn't it be amazing if you could get your clients to do the same thing? Well, you can, of course, if you simply do five things.

Find and broadcast your target. Who's your ideal client? Can you describe him/her in such a way that anyone can identify this person? This ideal client shouldn't just be people between the ages of 25 and 32. Rather, narrow your focus-perhaps your ideal market is single women buying their first home. You want to make sure your clients can repeat your target market and really understand it.

Start a newsletter. But this shouldn't be just any newsletter. Instead this newsletter must be: interactive (run promotions, ask provocative questions, give great advice), valuable (with real information, not just hype), and memorable (brand it, send it regularly, and hire only the best writers).

When you're turning clients into partners, it's crucial that your newsletter be a consistent reflection of your brand (you want your clients to have as clear an image of you as possible). You might do this with your tone-is your website all about parties? Then your tone should be light and friendly. You might do this with your columns. And you should definitely brand your newsletter with its design. You want your readers to have no doubt that the newsletter is from you.

Make personal contact with each client. This contact can be in the form of a phone call, letter or in-person visit (email's not recommended unless it's necessary). Let each client know that you've decided to dedicate yourself to serving your target group and solicit their feedback. Do they know anyone who fits the bill? Do they have any suggestions on how you can narrow your focus or widen your appeal? Approach each client with sincerity, and you'll not only learn a lot; you'll be halfway to your goal. Also, while you're contacting all your clients, make sure to ask if they're interested in receiving your newsletter.

Throw a party. Host an event. Invite all your clients and ask that each bring along an ideal prospect.

At the party, offer samples of your product or demos of your service, but don't make it a hard sell. Instead, focus on getting to know each guest. Also, keep in mind as you're meeting people that each of the people at your party likely knows at least one person who needs your service. Now make the kind of impression that encourages people to say, "I met the nicest person this weekend who does exactly what you need!"

Follow-up on every referral in two ways. First, make sure you follow-up immediately with the prospect. This will show both the prospect and the referrer that you're trustworthy and that business is as important to you as you say it is. Second, make sure you send a hand-written thank you note to the person who sent a referral your way (even if the prospect doesn't become a client). Always let your clients know how grateful you are for their referrals. And one more thing, when you write that note, focus on the generosity of your client, not how happy you are or how referrals are the lifeblood of your business.

When you finish the cycle, you'll need to keep sending your newsletter, soliciting feedback and following up on referrals. Pretty soon, you'll find your clients are not just your best source of new business, but also your best source for new business ideas. In short, your clients will be magically transformed into partners.

Is it your job to increase company profits? The Write Exposure offers the resources you need to do just that at <http://www.designdoodles.com>

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