

CREATE A FREEBIE FRENZY: HOW GIVING AWAY FREE STUFF CAN MAKE YOU STAND OUT

By Meredith Pond

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In order to increase sales and help your business succeed, you need to put your name in the minds of customers. You need to create a relationship with them so that the next time they need products or services like yours, you're the first one they think of. These ideas sound simple, of course, but they may be easier to talk about than to implement.

So how do you create the customer relations that everyone talks so much about? Well, there are a number of ways, including giving great customer service, offering customers a good value, and building a fun, down-to-earth, or warm and fuzzy image.

There is another way, however, to solidify your image as a customer-friendly business that you may not be thinking of. Like the other methods, it's not very difficult, but it does involve one four-letter "F" word: FREE.

Giving away free stuff, even if it's just your advice, shows people that you're willing to help them out-- that you're more of a friend than someone vying for their business. Free information your customers can use, free samples of your product, or vouchers for food or travel can make great incentives that help your customers remember you.

For example, a New York Burrito near my office recently started giving away "Burrito Bucks." These green, almost dollar-sized coupons are good for one dollar off any purchase. Right now, one of these is sitting on my desk, right in front of me where I can see it. It serves as a reminder that New York Burrito is willing to give ME a freebie, and as a result, the next time I forget to pack a lunch that's exactly where I'm going to go. If NYB can get me to spend five dollars in there, giving me a buck off will have been worth it. This is especially true since I'll probably

go back more than once, even without the discount.

Giving away free stuff is a great way to drum up immediate business, plus make a lasting impression that will bring results for a long time to come.

Meredith Pond is a professional and freelance writer with extensive experience working on the web. Meredith provides writing and editing services to individuals and businesses alike at great prices. See <http://www.geocities.com/wordsmith25/MeredithPond.html> for details. Contact Meredith directly at <mailto:wordsmith25@hotmail.com>.

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