

It's Not The Traffic You Get - It's The Customers You Keep!

By Paula Morrow

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There are a lot of offers online, hyping the ability to deliver thousands of hits to your web site. For a price.

True, the Internet is a numbers game. What these services are implying is that the more people you can expose to your message, the more sales you will get.

This is true, to a point, but it's not just about the traffic - it's about attracting, converting and KEEPING customers.

Right?

Now, how do you do that? You get them through advertising and keep them through customer service.

So, you carefully analyze a few ezines, determine that the ratio of ads to original content is ok, and start getting the word out through advertising. Soon your logs tell you that your traffic is picking up. Great!

Now, how do you make them stick around, and hopefully become customers?

Shower them with attention. Get their email address asap, and start wowing them with your knowledge and insight. Maybe record an interview with a guru or two, and post it for free on your site. Make them feel like you're the best source of information around.

If you do enough of this, hopefully a prospect will soon become a customer.

So, You've Converted Them...Now What?

Now that they're a paying customer, you have to keep them. There are a number of inexpensive, if not outright free, ways that you can show your customers your appreciation. Hopefully most of these will already be familiar:

*Say thank you. Tell them that you appreciate their business. Reinforce that positive behavior!

*Send individualized follow up. Want to really shock them? Send them a note IN THE MAIL. Do you think others out there in cyberspace do this? Do you think it'll separate you from your

competition?

Combine the offline with the online world, and you'll stand apart (if not stand alone!)

*Think of ways you can be extra thoughtful. Does your product require batteries? Tuck in a pack, so that your customer will be able to start using it immediately upon delivery. The financial outlay will be made back in goodwill - do you think they'll feel really great about the experience? Just think of the referral potential!

Modest Expectations + Overdelivery = A Happy Customer

Always promise less, and give more. Error on the side of caution concerning delivery times, repairs, exchanges...then call or email them with the good news that the process will actually take less time than expected. The faster you can deliver, the happier the customer.

Worst case scenario? That you deliver the product within the promised time frame.

A Word About Advertising...

As the hype continues to fly online, customers have developed a healthy case of skepticism. They're rapidly becoming immune to over-the-top claims. Don't fall victim to the temptation of hype or spin. Honesty in advertising will give you a fighting chance.

Also, with hype, you risk having a disappointed customer. And have you ever noticed how a person likes to share his or her bad experiences with others? This ripple in a pond effect is real. Online, where news travels fast, this could be devastating to your reputation and business.

So, to end, it's not about getting more traffic - it's about gaining a customer. Obviously, there's time and cost involved in converting a prospect. So, once they decide to come onboard, do everything you can to keep them!

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Paula Morrow heads Ideal Marketing Corporation, specializing in information products and training for newbie netpreneurs.

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