

# Keeping your customers happy

By Candice Humbley

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The importance of 'keeping the customer satisfied' in the Web Hosting industry

The web hosting industry is one of the most competitive industries on the Internet today. Web hosts are constantly thinking of new advertising campaigns in the hope of attracting more interest to their company; and, hence to attract more customers. While this is an important goal for any web host it is just as important to recognize and value the customers you already have.

Put your customer needs first - Acknowledge your customers' feedback and then do something about it; make sure there is a place on your web site or in your control panel for customers to make remarks or offer suggestions about your services or products. Use these suggestions to improve your company. Even if you receive negative feedback, use this feedback positively; it's better to fix customer concerns as soon as possible to benefit your company's success in the long run.

Provide staff management training - Web hosts can say they have reliable staff and offer support around the clock. Though behind the scenes the story is very different; try to accomplish what you preach, it is no use to anyone having staff with bad organizational skills and poor communication skills? Having a clear vision of your company's goals, providing regular training and being involved with your staff, will contribute greatly to efficiently managing your business.

Offer fast and reliable support - If there is something going critically wrong with a web site, customers can't be sitting around for days waiting to get their problems solved. Any critical support requests should be answered in just a matter of an hour or two; and, any other requests should be responded to in no more than 24 hours. Hosts should be offering around the clock support, especially if their market is global.

Reliable support is also crucial. The most common complaint that people have with their web hosting companies is that, sure they get their support requests answered fast but, their host has either not fixed their problem properly or they have no idea what the support team are talking about, too technical. Many people don't understand all the terminology of website hosting, support staff need to be trained in good communication skills too.

When receiving a support request it is much better to make sure the client's problem has been fixed properly, make sure your support staff test everything they fix! Not only will you find that you will be receiving less support requests, but your clients will be a lot happier also. One advantage to happy clients is, more referrals!

Give your customers freedom - Many people tend to sign up with a web host who will offer a discount if you sign a yearly contract with them. However most people who do this get "stuck"; if they are unhappy with their web host they will lose a large proportion of their fee if they cancel their contract. One way to keep your clients happy is to give them the option of paying monthly, this way your customers will have the freedom to change their account packages at any time.

Your clients should be given freedom to administer their own accounts. A good way to provide this is to ensure your clients have their own customizable control panel. This is true freedom, where a client can administer every key aspect of their account from: viewing their account details and billing details; to, for example, interactively adding a new web site, ftp logins, mail accounts, and new users.

Keep your customers well informed - Let your customers know about any thing that could possibly affect their websites. Keep your customers informed on issues such as general maintenance, for example: when, and how often, backups are done on the servers; these are a crucial necessity to keeping servers running well, but clients have to be told this. If there is a customer issue that may take a while to fix, it is much better to inform them of the issue and let them know you will get back to them as soon as possible. Customers shouldn't feel like they are left out in the cold, wondering why it is taking so long to fix their problem.

A web host who doesn't recognize the importance of providing good service to their customers will quickly loose their customers and will fade out very quickly. Customers need to feel as though they can trust their web hosts. They need to know that the hard work they put into developing their web site will be complemented by having a great web host; one that is concerned with providing the best service for ALL their customers.

Remember the more happy customers you have the more successful your web hosting company will be, and the more growth you will see.

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