

Business Bullet ~
Business Today is All About Relationships—Both Ways

I saw this article by Shep Hyken and related to it, and so here it is for you.

It's common knowledge—and common sense—that customers want to do business with people they know, like and trust. Business is all about relationships. Your customer relationships may fall on various levels, but at a minimum, customers should be able to count on you. They have chosen to spend money on your products or services, so to keep happy customers happy, they should have the feeling that they “know, like, and trust” you.

But what if we look at the relationship from the other direction? Do you know, like, and trust your customers? If you want to have those positive feelings *from* the customer, it would be beneficial to the relationship if you also had those same feelings *for* the customer. As you strive to build loyal customers, do you act in a way that the customer can feel a sense of loyalty from you?

I am the customer. I want you to *know* me. I want you to recognize me when I walk through your door or up to your counter. If I am a regular customer with a ‘regular’ order, I want you to remember. I want you to *like* me. I don't just want to be liked for the money that I spend for whatever it is that you sell. I want to feel like you are genuinely happy to see me and appreciate my business.

I want you to *trust* me. There may have been a few people in the past that have taken advantage of you. But please don't make rules, policies and procedures that make it difficult for me to do business with you because of them. When you are formulating your business policies, keep in mind that most customers are good, honest people.

When I walk into my favorite restaurant, the owner recognizes me. It's apparent because he takes interest in me. He may even remember where I sat and what I ordered the last time I was there. This type of engagement is possible in telephone and online interactions as well. I filled out my profile on the American Airlines website, so now when I call, I am greeted by “Welcome back, Shep.” Right from the start, the transaction begins at a higher level.

Amazon.com remembers my previous purchases, and when I visit the website it offers suggestions for related items. The system was built to recognize and ‘know’ the customer.

There are many ways to make customers feel as if you know, like and trust them. It may be with the help of CRM software, technology or just good, old-fashioned memory and attention to detail. When *both* parties know, like, and trust each other, that is the mutual respect that is needed to build the all-important and coveted loyal relationship.



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