

SHOW LOYAL CUSTOMERS THE LOVE

> It's easy to focus marketing efforts on new customers, but don't forget that loyal customers will give you the best return on your investment. How much better? It can cost five times more to market to gain a new customer than it does to keep existing customers, according to a study by Invesp Consulting, a firm that specializes in online conversion rates. The study also found that the probability of selling to new customers is between 5 and 20 percent, compared to a 60 to 70 percent probability of selling to your existing customers. That is quite a difference in conversion rates!

What can you do to increase customer retention and use your marketing money wisely? Here are five ways to keep your customers coming back for more.

A Personal Touch. Create a unique shopping experience in both your digital and physical spaces. Consider all the touchpoints where your customers interact with your shop. What are you doing to make sure they leave with a smile? Value-added perks and interactive store displays create engagement. You should also find ways to celebrate your customers. For instance, feature a customer of the week in-store, share a story on Instagram of a "win" they've had using a product you sell, or give them a shoutout during a Facebook Live.

A Loyalty Program. Everyone likes positive reinforcement. Use a customer loyalty program to track sales data and reward your best customers with kickbacks or additional discounts. If your sales system doesn't track this, an old-fashioned punch card will still make your customers feel appreciated. Speaking of old fashioned, a thank-you note to a new or longtime customer goes a long way. If you're short on time, record a short voice message and send it via text or email. Spend five minutes at the end of the day, or schedule one day a week for you and your staff to each choose a customer with whom to make a personal connection. These are the little things that humanize your brand and build loyal fans.

Clear Communication. When it comes to customer service, overcommunication is the best policy. Remove



doubts or questions that are barriers to purchasing by displaying your return policy, substitution policy, and product care instructions. This applies to your website and your brick-and-mortar store. The key here is to clearly define the expectations — and then exceed them.

Delivery Confirmation. It's an instant gratification and information world out there, and customers expect to know when their order has been delivered. If your staffing and workflow allows, offer to send a photo as well. Yes, it takes some extra time, but I can guarantee your photos are better than the upside-down photo the recipient will send your customer, and it's a sure-fire way to gain repeat business.

Referral Rewards. This one is a win-win-win! It's similar to the original influencer marketing model and it's still applicable. Appropriate any time, this is especially helpful for new florists or existing florists launching a new product line,

service or promotion. Use physical cards or track referrals in your sales system.

Be intentional and proactive about your customer retention strategy. It's time well spent. According to Harvard Business School, just a 5 percent increase in retention can boost profits between 25 and 95 percent. How? Repeat customers are loyal brand fans who are more likely to shop more often, spend more often, and spend more. In fact, Forbes reported that returning customers spend an average of 31 percent more compared to new customers. Shifting your marketing strategy to focus on building a loyal customer base can save you time and money. 🌿

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