



GETTING STARTED WITH RELATIONSHIP MARKETING

How to get more repeat and referral business
by focusing on clients instead of transactions.



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INTRODUCTION

Since the goal of marketing is to drive sales, it's little surprise that so many brands focus all their efforts on individual transactions. This is a bad idea.

By focusing all your efforts on closing the deal, you're failing to make a real connection with the person you're selling to. You're also sacrificing long-term relationships for quick wins.

At the end of the day, this approach means you'll need to spend a lot more time and money chasing new leads—driving you toward what we call the “hamster wheel of business.”

Relationship marketing is the solution to a life spent chasing leads and seeing little return on a lot of investment. In this book, you'll learn how to build meaningful relationships with your customers that will last far beyond the initial transaction—garnering you repeat business and referrals for years to come.

WHY RELATIONSHIP MARKETING WORKS

Here's an obvious truth that many businesses struggle to deal with: people want to know that you see them as more than a sale.

Consider your own experiences. Have you ever thought to yourself, "This person doesn't care about me—they just want my money"? Have you ever been reluctant to give out your email address or phone number because you assume you'll be hounded with sales pitches?

Then there are the other situations where you already know someone who's selling what you need. You like and trust that person. Aren't you more likely to give that person your business, or to refer your friends to them?

That's the philosophy behind relationship marketing. It's an effective, long-term approach with cumulative benefits. Each outreach strengthens connections, deepens trust, and increases the potential for referrals and repeat transactions.

OFFERING VALUE TO YOUR CLIENTS

When you're looking to build a long-term business relationship, it's important to lead with value. While there is no single, magic formula that will work for every business, these best practices will put you on the path to success. **Remember: focus on the relationship first, and the sale second.**

The 80/20 Rule

Since no one likes to be sold to, we suggest using the 80/20 rule:

Devote at least 80% of your marketing to topics your clients consider important.

No more than 20% of your marketing should be about your products or services.

You're probably thinking, "If I'm only promoting what I sell 20% of the time, what should the other 80% of my marketing be?"

According to research from CoSchedule and Buffer, food, home, and lifestyle topics account for 85% of the world's most shared content. If you haven't created any of this content yourself, you can share it from other sources (for example, American Lifestyle or Start Healthy magazines, which we will mention more about later).

Personalize Your Messaging

Of course, you can't just share any content and expect your audience to appreciate it. You need to offer something that speaks to the things they care about. One tool we offer our clients is a professionally produced **home and lifestyle magazine** that is customized with their branding and allows them to give something of value.

This is where knowing your clients is so important. For example, if you know your client is a vegetarian, you can offer value by sharing a delicious vegetarian recipe, like one that could be featured in your customized magazine.

Once you've sent your client a relevant, valuable resource, be sure to follow up and ask them how they enjoyed it. This will increase the odds that your kind gesture will be remembered, and help your business stay top-of-mind.

Make an Emotional Impact

You can also increase top-of-mind awareness by appealing to your clients' emotions. Try these strategies to strengthen connections with your clients, past and present:

Story-selling. When clients feel invested in your brand, they're more likely to buy from you. You can get them to this level by telling them your story—sharing where you came from, what you've done to get here, and where you hope to end up.

Reflect your clients' values. People want to know they are working with someone who shares their values. You can increase good feelings around your business by being an active member of your community. For example, you can volunteer for a charity your clients are involved with, or referee for a local soccer league.

CONNECTING CONSISTENTLY

Client relationships are like any other relationship—they need to be nurtured. **Think about it: you wouldn't call your best friend once a year and expect to remain close. The same logic applies to interactions with your clients—if you don't maintain the relationship, you won't be remembered.**

If you hope to maintain these valuable connections, there are some tools and strategies you'll want to have in place.

A CRM or Contact Database

Because relationship marketing is client-focused, you need a way to track and record information that will strengthen connections.

CRM Best Practices:

- **Keep it up to date with information you learn about clients' preferences, personal information, and pain points.**
- **Add any new clients to your CRM immediately.**
- **Every time you interact with a client, update the notes with what you've learned.**

Ultimately, your goal is to know your clients better than they know themselves. Otherwise, the impact of all your efforts will be limited.

A Multi-Tiered Communications Plan

Once you know who your clients are, you'll need a plan for staying in touch. Ideally, your communications plan will consist of several different types of outreach. Here are a few to consider:



Email. This is the perfect vehicle for sending a quick note or directing people to online resources. Just make sure that you don't send *too* many messages, or you'll risk irritating your customers.



Social Media. Facebook, Instagram, and other social networks are great ways to keep in touch with clients. Use them to share information and useful content, learn more about what your clients are up to, or even to send them direct messages.



Custom Publications. Sending a resource like a branded, customized magazine from ReminderMedia can help you stand apart from your competition. These publications have a long shelf-life, which keeps your brand in front of your clients.



Phone Outreach. When it comes to building rapport with clients, nothing can replace actually speaking with them. You can pick up quite a bit of information from these conversations, and adapt your tone and approach based on the situation.

This is by no means a complete list. You should explore all the ways you can think of to have meaningful interactions with your clients.

The Importance of Following Up

Too often, salespeople are great at building rapport until the sale has been completed, at which point they fall out of touch with their clients completely.

You can be the exception by making follow-up a cornerstone of your marketing efforts. Here are some suggestions for doing just that:

Create a touchpoint schedule. Schedule regular outreach to all of your clients throughout the year. These touchpoints could include birthdays, holidays, or anniversaries of a purchase (such as closing on a home). The key is to plan your outreach so you don't forget.

Use your CRM to keep track of dates. Every time you follow up with a client, record the date in your CRM. Then you can sort your list by the date you last contacted each client—giving you a visual reminder to reach out to those you haven't spoken to in a while.

Personalize your outreach. When you know more about your clients, you'll have additional, organic reasons for contacting them. Record information about clients who are interested in certain topics (e.g., music, pets, or certain sports teams) so you can strike up a conversation or send along a relevant article when the opportunity arises.

Ultimately, you're going to get as much out of your client relationships as you are willing to put into them. Be proactive, and you'll be rewarded handsomely for your efforts.



CONCLUSION

Relationship marketing doesn't need to be overly complicated, difficult, or expensive.

Use the lessons in this book to guide your marketing outreach, and keep track of which practices work best for your business.

When you offer value, use emotion to build rapport, and stay consistently connected, you'll find that you're rewarded with relationships that yield plenty of repeat business and referrals.



Interested in learning more about how a customized magazine can help you improve your relationship marketing?

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