

6 Tips to Keep Your Clients Happy



We can focus so much on getting new clients that we forget to keep our current clients happy. This is the quickest way to lose internal and external clients, and get a bad reputation for yourself.

Additionally, Forrester Research claims getting a new client costs five times more than retaining current customers. Don't forget to keep your clients happy if you want to have a profitable business.

Not sure how to keep your customers happy? Start learning with these six tips:

Own Your Mistakes

We all make mistakes. Admit yours. Clients will be happier with a meaningful apology and honesty rather than trying to cover up your mistake. Usually your client is able to see your fault. They might not mention it but they could lose trust in your abilities if you try to just cover it up as an external influence or another person's decision.

Go Above and Beyond

Everyone wants to feel special - including your clients! Do more than what your client asked for to make them feel appreciated. Offer specific tips, suggestions, and ideas. You will be seen as what the company genuinely needs in order to succeed.

Return Calls Promptly

Time is money. Your unanswered questions could be preventing your clients from completing an urgent task. Return emails and calls within 24 hours or one hour if possible.

Do Not Overpromise

Overpromising and underdelivering can kill your business. Don't do it! Be realistic when you make contracts with customers. That way, you know you can meet their expectations with the opportunity to go above and beyond.

Add a Personal Touch

Allow your clients to get to know you. This does not mean that you have to invite them to your wedding or child's piano recital. Instead, send them a handwritten Christmas card to show that you care.

Create a Valuable Product

If you produce a poor product then eventually you will lose all of your clients. Invest in creating a reliable, high-quality product.

Retain your clients and you will not always have to be searching for new business! Eventually, your reputation will speak for itself.

5 Tips for More Productive Work Days



Staying focused in a world of distractions can be very difficult. However, every successful business leader will tell you that building their business required more than stamina and willpower. You must develop skills to beat everyday distractions. For some people, that means putting on headphones. Others arrive before anyone at the office. If you find yourself taking hours to complete a task that should take half the time then try a few of these tricks to get your work done more efficiently.

Set Up Your Day in a Planner

Set up your day in a planner before your day starts. Make a note of the most important tasks that have to get done that day. Start with those tasks. Cross tasks off as you complete your work.

Some people use a written planner and others use Google Calendar. Use whichever tool allows you to visualize your day.

Do the Most Difficult Things First

It's natural to postpone our most difficult tasks. After all, who wants to get the tedious work done that we dread?

There are benefits to finishing your most difficult tasks first. Completing the work you dread immediately will put a more positive spin on your day. Therefore, you will feel more motivated throughout your work day.

Take Breaks Throughout the Day

When we have a full plate of work, it can be difficult to take breaks. We may feel

like we should work non-stop throughout the day. However, breaks can help renew our energy to continue work more efficiently. It can also help to get away from a problem you are trying to solve for a few minutes and possibly come back to it with a new perspective or energy.

Work Out First Thing in the Morning

Do you rely on coffee every morning? How would you feel if you did not need morning coffee to get you through the work day? Exercising in the morning can build natural energy to leave you more alert, focused, and fight fatigue. Start working out in the morning to feel more energized as you work through the day.

Other Benefits of Working Out in the Morning

- Increased Metabolism
- Improved Mood
- Leaves Time for Other Priorities

Avoid Multitasking

Multitasking can be our work's worst enemy. We think we are getting more done but typically our work is getting done less efficiently while taking longer. Focus on one task at a time for higher quality work.

Try incorporating one of these efficiency tips into your day. You may find yourself working fewer hours.

How-To Improve Your Health at Work in 2018



With 2018 approaching, many people are inspired to create health related New Year's resolutions. If you are an office worker, you may sit at a computer for hours at a time. Eventually this can take a toll on your body.

According to Microsoft, the current amount of jobs today that require a computer is over 50% with an estimated growth of 77% by 2020.

If you are among that statistic, you could be facing serious joint and back pain, weight gain, or fatigue. Make your 2018 New Year's resolution to improve your health at work to improve your quality of life.

Use a Stand-Up Desk

Sitting too much can be detrimental for your health. Stand up desks allow you to mount your computer to a standing platform so you work in adjustable settings. Standing while you work has various physical and mental health benefits. I've recently started using a stand up desk and do tend to get more done when I'm standing vs sitting. Plus I do feel like I have more energy.

Benefits of Stand-Up Desks

- Lowers your risk of weight gain and obesity
- Improves mood and energy levels
- Reduces back pain

Drink More Water

Increasing your H₂O intake seems simple but has many health benefits. Roughly 60 percent of your body is made of water. It helps with the transportation of nutrients, digestion of food, and regulation of body temperature.

Water can also be very beneficial for weight loss. When you consume water, you

can feel fuller therefore consume fewer calories. Try keeping a water bottle next to you everyday at work. You may also want to flavor your water with lime or lemon.

Take Periodic Walks

Your body was made to move. Consistent walks fight fatigue, chronic diseases, and weight gain. Dr. Mercola recommends to avoid sitting for more than 50 minute increments.

Specialized cardio equipment has also been created for office workers. Cyclers might enjoy the Stamina Mini Exercise Bike which allows you to workout your lower body from your desk chair.

Bring Healthy Lunches

You are what you eat. I am sure that you have heard it before. However, it can be easy to resort to unhealthy snacks while working. Your coworkers might also bring snacks to the office and the company parties rarely have healthy options. Eventually, you have gained 10, 15, or even 30 pounds.

Bring your own lunches and snacks to work so you do not feel pressured by the sugar in the break room. See these healthy lunch ideas from Eating Well Magazine.

Bike or Walk to Work

We live in a rushed society. Slow down and take the extra time to walk or bike to work for your health. That might not be an option if you have a long commute, but try to carve out some time for a walk during your day or a bike ride when you get home.

Benefits of Walking or Biking to Work

- It's efficient. Not only are you commuting to work but also exercising.
- It's cheap. You don't pay any gas or parking when you commute on foot.
- It's healthy. If you are heading to an office job then you will most likely be sitting for hours. Start your day with exercise by commuting to work.

- It's environmentally friendly. Biking and walking does not pollute the atmosphere like an automobile.

Make your health a priority in 2018! Your body deserves it.

6 Tips to Becoming a Great Presenter



At some point, business leaders are required to give a presentation. For many of us, public speaking can be terrifying. According to Statistic Brain, 74% of people suffer from anxiety during public speaking. As a business leader it is critical that you improve your public speaking abilities if you introduce or improve business processes.

The following are a few methods that can create more engaging presentations:

Do Not Read from Your Power Point

If you plan to only read the Power Point then just email your employees a copy. The Power Point should only be an outline of your presentation. And try to limit the resources you refer to during your presentation to the PowerPoint outline. More sources will only distract and confuse you during the presentation. The more you practice and know the material you are presenting, the more relaxed you will be.

Use Engaging Body Language

Make your employees feel like you are speaking to each of them individually with eye contact, smiling, and not turning your back away. Doing so, could make the presentation feel more like a conversation. Your employees will be more likely to ask questions at the end.

Tell Stories

Your employees want to be able to relate to you. Rather than make them feel lectured, give them an example of when you went through a similar situation. Bonus points if you can make them laugh! Provide your employees with information that is not listed to increase employee engagement.

Start Strong

The beginning of the presentation sets the tone. Do you want your presentation to be light hearted? Make a joke! Is the presentation serious? Start with a statistic or story.

Focus on Your Audience's Needs

Build your presentation for what you would like your audience to receive. If what you are saying does not contribute to the core message then do not say it.

Use Your Voice Effectively

None of the other tips matter if you cannot master your presentation voice. Your audience must be able to hear you. This does not only require speaking louder. Annunciate your words and slow down your speech. Don't rush to get the information out. Try for a comfortable conversational pace.

Practicing your presentation techniques can have many benefits for your career. You can improve training methods, sales, and the efficiency of your company.

Relax... presentations do not have to be that bad!

How-To Develop Great Customer Service Skills



The quality of a company's customer service can determine the fate of a business. After all, loyal customers can be your most reliable form of revenue. You often receive more return business and improved relationships with your customers. Your customers can be both internal to your company, or external. Some positions within the company serve other departments so they would be your customers as well and anyone who buys what your company sells.

There are some universal qualities that create great customer service. Make sure your employees are equipped to perform these duties.

Patience:

It is easy to get frustrated with customers. After all, at some point, you might feel like you are answering the same question 100 times per day. However, patience is fundamental to providing high quality customer service. Stay patient. The experience is new to your customer.

Attentiveness:

When you are attentive, you could gather valuable customer feedback. For example, if you receive repetitive complaints about not being able to configure the settings on your device or program, that could lead to a product improvements that makes that process much easier and intuitive. That would solve your customer's complaints and hopefully lead to a better product.

Knowledge of the Product:

Your customer service representatives must have a deep knowledge of how the product works. That way, they will be prepared to answer your customers questions.

Your customer service representatives do not need to know how to build the product from scratch but they do need to have a functional perspective of the products. Consider providing your employees with free samples and company discounts so they have experience with the products.

Ability to Handle Surprises:

Sometimes the customer support career is going to throw you a curveball. You might not have come across the customer's problem before.

When this occurs, your employee may need to send the customer to someone with more knowledge in that area. Make sure they know who to send customers to in specific situations.

Time Management Skills:

Your customer was probably excited about their purchase and wants the product functioning as quickly as possible. Do not waste time on the phone and try to get directly to their issue.

Sometimes, your employee will not be able to solve their problem. Teach them to recognize when they cannot solve a problem and what to do in those situations. Great customer service is efficient.

Superior customer service should be a priority for your business. If you spend the time training your employees and gathering valuable customer feedback than you could see an increase in revenue and the reputation of your company.

How-To Say "No" at Work



Time is a precious commodity. You use it or lose it. Most of us do not have all the time to participate in the activities that we enjoy. Often, we are short on time because of saying “yes” when we should say “no”.

As a business professional, saying “yes” can become habitual. You may be taking advantage of every opportunity to improve your career. However, always saying “yes” can end up making us miss deadlines and decreasing our quality of work.

Before you say “yes” to your next project, gain a perspective on your daily tasks and the amount of time that it takes to complete a project. Then learn to say “no”.

STEP ONE: Learn Your Priorities

Everyone has daily tasks. What are yours? Write them down and figure out how much time they take to complete every day. After you figure out what you **HAVE** to do, you can figure out what else you **CAN** do.

STEP TWO: Check Your Calendar

We often respond to requests with a quick “yes”. Stop! Check your calendar before you agree to your projects. This will give you the opportunity to evaluate whether the project is realistic in your schedule.

STEP THREE: Trust Your Gut

Your intuition can be the best indicator of whether you should accept a new project. If deliberating the task makes you feel stressed then re-consider accepting the new responsibility.

Fear of telling a person “no” leads many professionals to undertake new projects. This type of person is commonly referred to as a people pleaser. Eventually, being a people pleaser leads to exhaustion and burn-out.

Learn to tell people “no” before you become overwhelmed.

Tricks to Tell Client, Boss, or Co-Worker “No”

1. Be Honest. It’s worse to give them false hope of you helping.
2. Suggest an Alternative Service Provider
3. Ask For a Raincheck, or tell them when you CAN help them.
4. Clearly State Your “No” Without Being Defensive. Simply tell them you can’t take on their project with your current workload.

Sometimes, the best things to do in life is minimize. Saying “no” minimizes your clutter of projects.

How-To Build Strong Leadership Skills



Strong leadership is a learned skill. Depending on the type and size of business, there are always methods to improve. Whether you are a business owner, executive, or manager, it is important that you are always analyzing your team’s response to your management.

The following methods could help you improve your leadership. Doing so can lead to happier and more productive employees.

Be a Positive Role Model

Do not expect your employees to work any harder than yourself. Employees often use management as criteria for their own work ethic. When you are working, think about how you would like your employees to act. If you are on Facebook every hour then you cannot get frustrated with employees who are constantly checking their social media notifications.

Find a Mentor

Nobody knows it all. Find a mentor who has also served as a business leader. You can seek tips and guidance from their experience.

Encourage Creativity

If employees are given the flexibility to use creative thinking, you may be surprised by the insight that they can bring to the table. Creative thinking can be intimidating for many employees. However, new ideas could be what makes your company unique among competition.

How to Influence Creative Thinking in the Workplace

- Use an “idea first, measurement second” mindset. Eventually your company must be data-driven but allow flexibility for new ideas.
- Use innovation teams to come up with new ideas.
- Reward employee with bonuses if their idea is used.
- Create a positive work environment so employees feel comfortable expressing their ideas without criticism.

Study Past Leaders

Most business leaders spend their time looking forward. Unfortunately, some of

your most valuable lessons can be learned from the past. Study past leader's successes and failures. After all, history repeats itself.

Great Modern Entrepreneurs to Learn From

1. Elon Musk
2. Steve Jobs
3. Oprah Winfrey
4. Walt Disney
5. Bill Gates

Be Humble

Great leaders admit their mistakes and share credit for successes. If you play the blame game, eventually your employees will look for employment elsewhere. People want to feel respected.

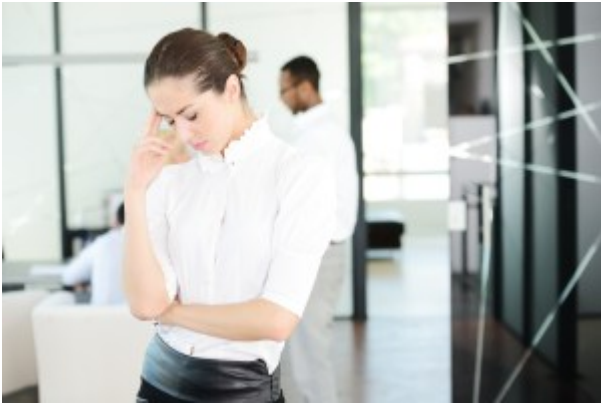
Communicate Effectively

As a leader, you probably get very busy. Nevertheless, you cannot build a great team without maintaining time to communicate with your team.

Occasionally, ask your employees how they are doing. Your employees should feel comfortable confronting you with questions and concerns.

Strong leaders can build great companies. If you are in a leadership position, focus on improving your skills to help lead your company to success.

How-To Manage Stress at Work



If you have had a job, you probably experienced work-related stress. According to the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, 40% of workers report their job at “very or extremely stressful.” In these severe situations, a person’s lifestyle can become compromised. The following are a few common reasons why Americans experience stress at work:

- Low Salaries
- Excessive Workloads
- Few Opportunities for Growth or Advancement
- Lack of Social Support
- Work that is Not Engaging
- Conflicting Demands or Unclear Expectations

Do not let stress overwhelm you. Learn to manage your stress before it takes a toll on your life.

Take a Deep Breath

When stress chemicals overwhelm our body, we experience the “fight or flight” response. Breathing deeply relaxes your muscles and allows fresh air into your lungs that helps relax your body. Next time you feel stressed over a surprising email or overwhelming amount of projects, practice the deep breathing relaxation technique. You can practice deep breathing without even leaving your desk.

1. Sit comfortably with your back straight. Put one hand on your chest and the other on your stomach.
2. Breathe in through your nose. The hand on your stomach should rise. The hand on your chest should move very little.
3. Exhale through your mouth, pushing out as much air as you can while contracting your abdominal muscles. The hand on your stomach should

move in as you exhale, but your other hand should move very little.

4. Continue to breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth. Try to inhale enough so that your lower abdomen rises and falls. Count slowly as you exhale.

Eliminate Interruptions

Interruptions can add hours to your work day. You may have blocked out time for an important task. However, if phone calls, emails, or co-workers interrupt your schedule, your task could take hours longer than planned. It's important to find ways to prevent interruptions from disrupting your focus.

The first step is to plan for expected interruptions. Notify coworkers that you do not want to be disturbed within a certain time period. Turn off email notifications and send all phone calls to voicemail. Eliminating interruptions can help you get your work done faster and more thoroughly.

Eat Right and Sleep Well

I am sure you have heard of the phrase "stress eating" before. When we are stressed, we seek high fat, sugary, "comfort" foods. Often, these foods stress out our body chemistry leading to fatigue, trouble sleeping, weight gain, and other diseases.

While a sugar rush might be appealing after reading a nasty email, long-term rejuvenation derives from an early bedtime and tall glass of water.

Identify Self Imposed Stress

Many stresses can be alleviated from simple lifestyle changes. For example, focus on your level of self-confidence rather than seeking approval of others. Procrastination can also lead to high amounts of work stress. Make sure your perception of work is not tainting what your work actually is.

Prioritize Your Work

Most jobs encounter deadlines. Prioritizing your work can help you complete difficult projects. The Liquid Planner Blog explains how to efficiently prioritize your work. Follow these steps to start meeting your goals every day. Find more information within their article.

1. Collect a list of all your tasks
 2. Identify urgent vs. important
 3. Order tasks by estimated effort
 4. Be flexible and adaptable
 5. Know when to cut
 6. You do not have to live with chronic work stress. Managing your stress can help you enjoy daily life.
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The Difference Between a Bad Manager, Good Manager, and Great Manager



As a recruiter, I have seen many different types of management practices and the effects on the teams they lead. The type of manager can often determine the company's retention rate as management practices have a direct correlation with employee satisfaction. There are three types of management: a bad manager,

good manager, and great manager.

“Bad managers tell employees what to do, good managers explain why they need to do it, but great managers involve people in decision making and improvement.”
- Mark Graban

If you are building your management skills, it is important to become aware of your management habits and work towards becoming a great manager.

Traits of a Bad Manager

A bad manager tells employees what to do without explaining why. A plan has already been created and the employee simply follows the steps to complete the project. The employee is ultimately a pawn.

When a company is operated by a bad manager, employees rarely have passion behind their work. Why would they? Their entire job is following orders. There is no room for creativity.

For example, a Document Control Manager might be told that they have to transfer documents into a new system. The system has a learning curve and to the Document Control Manager, it seems like the old system did exactly the same task. A bad manager does not tell the employee why the office is switching programs, just to do it.

Traits of a Good Leader

A good manager gives orders but also explains why they are asking the employees to perform the task.

In terms of the Document Control Manager, the Quality Director would explain why the company is switching to a new program. While the program has a steep learning curve, the Document Control Manager understands that the new system will be helping the company.

Traits of a Great Manager

A great manager is hard to come by. Often, people avoid becoming a great manager because they feel like they are giving up control. In reality, the more you involve your employees with the decisions, the more they will feel dedicated to the company's mission and want to stay with the company long-term. It also greatly improves the employee's engagement in their job and the projects and greatly increases the likelihood of them going the extra mile when needed.

A great manager engages employees with decision making. They seek feedback, new ideas, and involve employees in brainstorming sessions and allow them to have some ownership in their part of the project.

The Quality Director would explain to the Document Control Manager why the company needs to switch systems, such as cost or accessibility for the people involved in creation the documents. The Quality Director would then ask the Document Control Manager to attempt the trial period and provide feedback. If the program does not seem efficient, the Document Control Manager and Quality Director will try to find a new program together.

If you are a manager, take the time to reflect on your work habit. Becoming a great manager can lead to employee happiness, retention, and company growth, not to mention that more engaged and happy employees are more productive and easier to manage.

5 Methods to Building Long-Term Relationships with Clients



If you are a business owner then you probably have experienced the value of return customers. A return customer does not require massive amounts of marketing resources and can also serve as a referral source for more customers. The question is, how do you earn repeat sales with competition?

The following are a few tips to develop ongoing customer relationships:

Be A Useful Resource

Do not hesitate to share information that your client may find useful. The more value you offer, the more likely they will request your services.

Keep in mind why customers are working with you and what services you can provide to help them reach their goals. You can serve as an expert resource of information with a weekly blog on your company's website.

Always Meet Your Deadline

Do you have a friend that is always late? It gets annoying. Eventually, you may even stop inviting them to events.

If you do not meet deadlines, your clients will be just as annoyed with you as the late friend. You are showing that you do not appreciate their time. Commit to your deadline.

Make Them Feel Special

Business growth can occur quickly. One day, you are posting fliers on bulletin boards wondering if this is all a waste of time.

Ten years later, you realize that every hour in your day is booked. At this point, your clients are probably not getting individual attention UNLESS you have planned for this growth. Your customers will probably switch to the provider who is more attentive to their needs. Make your customer feel special to avoid this problem.

Valuable Methods to Make Your Clients Feel Special

- Make time to meet with your clients in person rather than only over the phone.
- Send your customer a note or discount on their birthday.
- Thank them for their purchase and show appreciation.
- Remember them.
- Make adjustments based on their feedback.

Provide Value

If you provide value to your company then customers are likely to be loyal to your brand. To build brand loyalty, you need to consider what makes your company different.

Why should a customer be loyal to your product or service?

What are you providing that is unique to your niche?

Inc magazine provides a five-step system on providing value to customers.

Inc Magazine's Method to Providing Value for Customers

Step One: Understand What Drives Your Customers

Step Two: Understand Your Value Proposition

Step Three: Identify the Customers and Segments Where You Can Create More Value Relative to Competitors

Step Four: Create a Win-Win Price

Step Five: Focus Investments on Your Most Valuable Customers

Respond to Every Concern

Communication is key for healthy relationships. A business relationship is not different. Do not ignore your customer's concerns, complaints, or questions. In fact, all customer complaints should be responded to within 24 hours.

There are many review sites that allow you to collect reviews and respond to customer's complaints, such as Yelp, Facebook, and Google+. Each provide a discussion board for positive and negative experiences. Make sure you are replying to comments.

Return customers can create reliable income for your company. Invest in your relationships to build brand loyalty that ensures that you stay in business.