

Random Acts Of Business Kindness

Believe it or not, many business owners are not using any personal follow-up mechanism with their existing customers or worse, they use Facebook, LinkedIn and Instagram to just sell, sell, sell themselves, their services and their activities.

However, the fact is they would be miles ahead if they stopped all the selling and concentrated on building relationships. That is why our first Random Act of Business Kindness tip is entitled:

Get Personal with Your Customers

Share stuff your customers or prospects would be interested in receiving. Share stuff they would love to know. Share stuff that would make their businesses or their personal lives better. No strings attached. Nothing about you and your stuff. **Everything about them.**

One of the best ways to do this is what we call a 'love letter'. Write them a note, a communique or a newsletter. It does not have to be a daily or a weekly thing. You can do it every other week or even once a month.

The purposes of your 'love letter' are two-fold: **It is personal**, written to them in your voice. **And it is consistent.** In other words, you devise the schedule and a menu of ideas, and then you stick to releasing them when you promised to.

One of the key reasons why businesses don't pursue this type of communication is that, for many, writing is a real chore. But an excellent way to lift the pressure of writing off your shoulders is simply keeping in mind that your customers are just your friends. (And we all know our friends very well, right?) So keep a picture of a favourite friend/customer in your mind's eye when you are writing.

Here are some writing suggestions to get you started:

1. Set yourself 30 minutes only. If you give yourself a deadline, you force yourself to be more productive. Plus, there is way less pressure than there is when you say “I can’t” or “this is too hard”. It becomes an exercise of, ‘I WILL produce something. I only have 30 minutes.’ You already know you can produce something in 30 minutes because, you do THAT every day!

2. You are not attempting perfection. You are only telling a story. Start exactly like you talk when you come charging in the door at the end of your day. “Guess what happened! You are not going to believe what” and begin your story. If you can fill your communication with gusto and enthusiasm, your readers will be extremely engaged with you.

3. Focus on the story or lesson you want to share. YOU are not the primary or even the secondary event. It’s all about sharing insights.

4. If you add yourself to the story, use yourself ONLY for flavouring. YOU are not the event. Never forget that the whole point of all of this is **your customer**, who is on the RECEIVING end.

So for example, say that day, you were in a nasty car accident because some idiot was texting and driving. You see how this could be all about you. However, your readers don’t want to relive your experience; they want to learn something from your experience. **Your stories should never be about you; they are about how or what you can inspire or teach others.** (Remember you are writing for business not for personal creativity or journal purposes.)

5. After you have ‘drafted’ everything, look at what you have written and figure out the theme.

6. Then, go back to the beginning of the piece and write out exactly what you are going to tell them. Then edit your story so that you tell them what you said you would tell them. Then finish off your piece by summarising precisely what you said you were going to tell them.

7. Keep the length of your piece to between 400 and 800 words.
8. Set it all aside for a day. Then review it and edit.
9. Give the final piece to someone you trust with the instructions, “please make better.”
10. Take the criticism in the spirit it was intended.
12. Develop a standard template in Mail Chimp. (You want to start small first, then go big.) Use your logos and pictures and allow a block for text. Insert text and fix.
13. Establish your timetable and **STICK TO IT**.
14. Finally, you always want to err on the side of less. Fewer long paragraphs. More white space. Do not worry about questionable grammar. It won't matter, as long as you are telling an interesting or helpful story.

The Most Important Thing About Getting Personal

It is NOT about the newsletter or the emailer or whatever you ultimately decide to send them. **It is about you building a personal relationship with your customers.** Because those customers have already bought from you at least once. Now you are rewarding them for being in your tribe. Rewarding people personally makes them feel good and feel special. When people feel special and appreciated:

- They know you better and like and trust you more. This means the bonds that you have built around them as special friends are very hard to break. In other words, price NEVER enters the equation because you provide VALUE.

- By the time you send the fourth, eighth and twelfth newsletters with product offers, they won't even think about being sold to because their good friends are simply presenting excellent offers.
- They refer you, either by word of mouth or by forwarding your newsletter, because you remain so close to top of mind.
- You spend less time canvassing for new customers and more time thinking of new ways of servicing your existing customers.
- You set yourself entirely apart from your competition. Which means you hold the upper hand and the competition has a tough time stealing your customers/your friends.
- Your business base is incredibly firm.

May we make a suggestion? Join with us and strengthen the Random Acts of Business Kindness chain. Create your own Random Act and pass along to your favourite people. OR, forward this one (and the next eleven) and claim them as your own. Either way, everyone wins.

IMAGINE the positive impact you can have on your community in 2019!

Let's do it together!

Charlene & Jim

Our Personal Postscript:

Many people compliment Jim and I on our ability to write. Let me share with you how we got this way.

I fell in love with language when I was four and wrote my first (very bad) poem at five. I had no interest in writing for a living but did develop a solid reputation as the go-to person who could add sparkle to pretty much any boring corporate thing – on the side, unpaid and in addition to my day job. When I wrote my first book, I learned a professional editor is necessary – even for those of us with super-sized egos. Two years ago, I got a significant dose of humility when I realised I had lost a chunk of my writing talent forever after suffering two strokes. Oh well.

Jim is a professional writer. He has been writing for most of his life and professionally for more than 40 years. No one in the business world who either leads or owns a business will ever reach his level of competence with words. NO ONE. Please believe me when I say, I have worked with way too many business people and entrepreneurs who wrongly think writing is either super easy or just plain dumb. (Unfortunately, they were never as successful as they thought they should be.)

Writing is communicating. Writing and communicating are dying arts these days. Exactly like Latin and clear handwriting were once fashionable and now are almost extinct. Unfortunately, writing and communicating are also headed along the same path.

It doesn't have to be. Most of us rely on experts to do our bookkeeping and income taxes. Today, some, including me, rely on Jim, the professional writer to be our editor. I don't have to tell you that the value of a reliable professional is priceless.

Here is the truth behind all Bullet Proof writing. There is absolutely nothing that goes out without having four eyes, two brains, and two red pens taken to it. That is how we write. Two professionals who have been writing for way more than one hundred years combined. We rely on each other to proofread, edit and make our own stuff better. Because we are both human beings who still make mistakes!