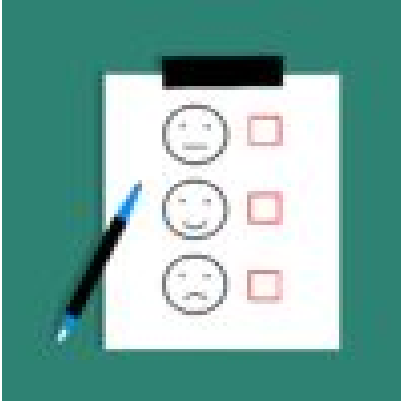




Lessons from a Sales Story: How to Maintain Existing Business

Description

It's so much easier to keep your existing clients or customers than to spend time and effort seeking out new business. How do we maintain our current business relationships to make sure our clients or customers stay satisfied with what we're providing them and to anticipate their needs if they should change?

BDU's CEO Lisa Peskin recently met with a woman who shared with her a story from her time selling new computer equipment early in her career. One day, one of her customers suddenly surprised her by letting her know that instead of purchasing her new equipment, they'd be buying used equipment. She was completely blindsided and had not seen this coming. She didn't even know they were considering purchasing used equipment since they had always wanted proposals for new equipment only.

Since she had a strong, trusted relationship with her contact there, she spoke with him and asked for at least an opportunity to present a proposal and to bid on this new work. While she knew she might not be able to present a cost as low as the used equipment he was considering, she at least wanted to see what she could offer them and promised she'd work out the best deal possible. She felt comfortable enough to ask her contact for this opportunity instead of just letting this new business go, and because of the great relationship they had built and the value she had always provided, he gave it to her.

She presented her options and ended up winning the business.

What can we learn from this story? It's important to create a strong relationship with your clients built on trust and continued value, and to regularly "take their temperature" to gauge their satisfaction and needs.

Here are a few ways to do so:

1. **Regularly check in with your clients or customers** • We need to constantly make sure we're checking in with current clients or customers. At the very least, schedule a quarterly, semi-annual and annual review to take their pulse and evaluate their needs.

2. **Keep them happy** • Always ask and make sure they are happy with your products or services. If they're not, determine the areas that make them unhappy and solutions you can put into place or different options you can offer.
3. **Anticipate if they're seeking alternatives** • If they have future projects or work coming up, see if they'll be looking for an alternative provider. Find out what criteria and process they'll be using to make a decision.

The above tips help you maintain a great working relationship with your clients or customers, and they ensure that the constant communication will keep you up-to-date with their wants and needs.

If you're consistently •taking their temperature,• you won't be blindsided if something comes up. However, if it does, leverage the strong relationship you've developed, just like Lisa's contact did, to get an opportunity for a shot at this new or continuing business. Simply ask for a chance to go up to bat, and hit it out of the park!

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