



RELATIONSHIP MARKETING

Connecting You with Your Customers

Lead nurturing is a process of building relationships with new customers that you acquire through your marketing campaign. More often than not, these leads are more cautious and may need time to buy into your brand. Lead nurturing is about providing insightful content at the right time, building confidence in the relationship, educating and providing value at every stage of the journey.

If you want your marketing to be effective, you need to treat marketing as a process – a series of actions to achieve your particular marketing goal. But unless you create a marketing system, your marketing process could be inefficient and inconsistent, producing results that are less than you had hoped.

Many small business owners feel marketing is complicated and get frustrated when things don't work as well as they had intended. You may try various activities, randomly choosing things you see your competitors do, hoping something works.

But when running a business, you can't rely on hope. Although we sometimes try something to see what happens, the majority of your efforts must be based on solid planning and consistent, efficient execution.

Relationship marketing is not a new concept but has increased in importance because of its effectiveness in attracting the attention of your target audience. The use of social media has put a spotlight on your business making it vital that you provide value to your clients while demonstrating integrity and trustworthiness. This ensures you have a loyal, happy customer base and a quality reputation.



What is Relationship Marketing?

Relationship marketing is a strategy that focuses on building brand loyalty through customer satisfaction rather than focusing on transactional sales. Implementing a relationship marketing strategy requires a plan that:

- Provides the right information to your audience at the right time
- Builds credibility, customer commitment and loyalty
- Makes prospects and customers feel comfortable and connected to you.

The goal of relationship marketing is to move the prospect through various stages of the sales process while building a rapport that becomes stronger and more valuable over time. These stages include:

Suspect > Prospect > Customer > Partner > Advocate

So how do you help people determine whether they want to do business with you?

Build Strong Relationships



As a small business, you can develop strong relationships with customers and prospects by focusing your marketing activities on:

- **Establishing credibility** – Position you and your business as an expert in your industry by supplying information that is useful and relevant to your audience. Content marketing is an ideal relationship marketing tactic because it educates your audience with useful information. Most content marketing is delivered through your blog, social media or email. When a **suspect** is researching a solution, it is important that you become the go to resource for the information that can help them decide on a solution. If you've answered their questions through your content, they are more likely to come to you when they have other questions. This sharing of information begins to build a relationship that is valuable to them.
- **Enabling connection** – Connect with your audience by offering something of value that will get them to take action. If action is taken, you now have moved a **suspect** to the next stage – **prospect** – where you can continue to develop the relationship. At this stage, you supply them with more useful and practical information for their business. As you continue to develop the relationship, some of these prospects will see the value you offer and become **customers**. Once they do, you continue to strengthen and nurture the relationship, but now based on trust and loyalty.
- **Building loyalty and trust** – Focus on the customer's needs rather than your own in order to build loyalty, gain trust and keep your brand top of mind. Your business will be judged by the perception of how you treat your customers. By providing superior customer service and helping them succeed, you turn a customer into a **partner**. When you have reached this type of relationship with your customer, you can then determine if you can turn them into a brand advocate – a resource that speaks highly about your company, shares your information with their peers and works with you to promote your products and services through reviews, success stories and referrals.

Once you have turned a prospect into a customer, you must continue to add value to the relationship so that their connection to you continues to grow. It is



far less expensive to cultivate your existing customer base than it is to seek new customers.

When you develop a strong and loyal relationship with your customers, they will speak highly of you and provide referrals to your business. How are you building relationships with your target audience?

None of the above is rocket science, but with **planning and discipline** you will be amazed by the change you will see in your

business, start with the end in mind and believe in yourself, you can do this!