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ACTSmart, American Computer Technologies Presents:

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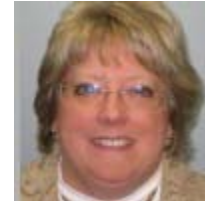
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Dear Pam,

As you may remember, we closed our offices on Friday to hold an all day team meeting at our home; it was good to get everyone out of the office and looking at things from a new perspective. We were prepared to take care of any emergency that might have come up. Happily, we had none (Good planning helped - most Fridays in the summer are very slow!) and we were able to spend the whole day discussing problems and solutions.



I'll go into more detail of how the day went in our printed newsletter Tech Tip News. Although we are still tweaking it, you're the first to know our new Mission Statement:

At ActSmart, American Computer Technologies, we work to help people and businesses throughout New England eliminate their technology challenges and attain their business goals. This is our mission. Everything we do reflects this mission and the values that make it possible.

Our values:

As a company, and as individuals, we value:

- Integrity and honesty
- Passion for our customers, for our partners and for technology
- Openness and respectfulness
- Taking on challenges and seeing them through
- Constructive self criticism, self improvement and personal excellence
- Accountability and commitment to customers, team members and technology partners for exceptional results and quality

Another outcome from our meeting; we resurrected our slogan from many years ago. Joe Costantino calls it your "Talking Logo." What you say to people when they ask "What do you do?" Our answer: "***We help people benefit from today's technology.***"

With these statements in place, the heart of our marketing is in place.

It only takes a minute to find a new marketing idea ~ Let's Get

Business

Customer Service!

A very important part of marketing is absolutely free and can make or break your business! No matter for great your product, poor customer service can destroy a business. The opposite is true as well. A mediocre product can greatly benefit from good customer service.

Restaurants are perfect examples of this and we experienced an example on Friday during our meeting. We ordered lunch from a well known Plymouth restaurant. We each ordered a different meal, we got what we ordered and the food was excellent. Our feelings for the meal changed as David told his story about picking up the meal.

David arrived at noon to find a bag of food waiting at the Hostess Station but no one was there. After several minutes, a woman appeared and looked at him. (No greeting) Smiling, David said "I'm here to pick up a take out order under either David or Snell." She said "What did you order?"

Since David hadn't called in the order, he wasn't sure but told her that there were a few pizzas and told her what he had ordered so he at least knew part of the order. The woman then told him the amount, ran his credit card and pushed the slip to him and said "Sign it."

David had to ask for a pen that she retrieved from behind the register and pushed across the counter. Once signed, she said "There it is." and stepped aside so David could walk behind the counter to retrieve our food without her having to hand them to him.

There was never a "Thank you," a "Come Again" or an "Enjoy your meals." She did not speak to him again.

Was this a horrendous situation? Not at all. But with all the new reports of how restaurants are hurting, and all the competition for patrons, this woman did nothing to encourage us to come back.

On the other hand, we know 2 waitresses that help their respective employers businesses greatly. The first is our friend Jennine who waitresses at Bugaboo Creek. We've mentioned before that we followed her from a breakfast restaurant where we met her and had her help at our Open House last year. We probably wouldn't go to the Creek if she didn't work there. She has made it a point to get to know us and our likes and dislikes. She makes eating there a very good customer service experience.

My sister Judy is our other great waitress example. Even in this economy, her regular customers still show up weekly to the Lafayette House in Foxboro. Sure, the food is good but in this economy more people are choosing less expensive fare. Her special customers come for more than a meal; they are coming to see Judy and to help support her and her family. And the Lafayette benefits from this as well.

What brings customers back to your business? Are you and your employees offering the kind of customer service that can make a difference?

10 Customer Service Tips

Consider the following customer service statistics:

- It costs 4 to 5 times more to get a new customer than to retain an existing one.
- A happy customer tells about his positive experience to 5 other people whereas a disgruntled customer will talk about it to 12 other individuals.
- A 2% customer retention is equivalent to profits made by 10% of cost cutting.

These facts just go on to reinforce the importance of customers for a business. The customer is the life blood of any business. It is the source of profits as well as effective advertisement. Here are some good customer service tips for a business to help it retain its customers.

10 Customer Service Tips

Customer Service Etiquette: Besides a good product or service, it is the way a customer feels when he makes business with you is what brings him back to you again and again. Greet your customers with a smile when they walk in. Make them feel important. Be at their call any time they want help. Listen to what they have to say. Try to accommodate their needs. If you can't, then politely explain the reason behind why you can't fulfill their requirements.

Listen and Deal with Complaints: There is nothing worse than a disgruntled customer. It doesn't feel good to listen to complaints. But when it is the customer, give him a patient ear. His complaint may just help you to improve your services. Take prompt action if the complaint is logical. Even if it is not, give him the benefit of doubt. Getting into an argument proving he is wrong and you are right is not worth losing a client.

Get Feedback: The best way to know whether customers are happy with your services is to collect feedback. Feedback helps an organization know the needs of the customers that are not being met and areas where they could improve on their services. In turn, customers would be glad to know that their needs are being valued.

Go That Extra Mile: Create goodwill with your customer by including a thank-you note within a customer's package. Send a birthday card or a congratulatory note on appropriate occasions. Go the extra mile to know your customer well. This is an effective technique of customer retention.

The Personal Touch: Do your customers recognize you when they meet you anywhere other than in a business environment? Communicate with customers when they least expect you to. Try to address them by their names every time you see them. Just enquire how they are doing. Maintain the personal touch beyond business hours. This is the key to good customer service. Let your customers know that you appreciate doing business with them.

Anticipate and Meet Needs: Customers appreciate if their needs are met promptly. If you are able to anticipate their requirements and make arrangements even before they are sought, a customer would have strong faith in your business abilities.

The Power of Yes: One of the useful customer service training tips is to never say no to a customer on the face. Listen to his requirement. His demand may be way out of line of the public policies of your business, but make an effort and see if you could accommodate the customer's need. Remember you are not changing the rules of business and exceptions can be made once in a while. Even if you know for sure that the customer's need can't be met, at least let the customer know that you tried.

Have People-loving Employees: People who love to interact with people make very good customer relations personnel. They are empathetic towards the needs of others and make patient listeners. They have good inter personal and problem solving skills that are assets in customer relationship management.

Offer Customer Service Training Programs: Holding customer service training programs improves customer-oriented practices. These programs reinforce the importance of client service and make the employees better equipped to handle customer related problems. Organizing these training sessions periodically enables one to keep the employees informed about the latest techniques to improve customer service.

Empower the Employees: It is not possible for the boss or the team leader to be present through each and every customer interaction. Some times an employee may have to take some decision without the approval of the boss. It is important to give the employees the power and confidence to act on behalf of the superior. For this, an organization needs to have clear

guidelines about customer service.



Take the "12 Week" Marketing Challenge with us. Set aside a few hours to work on your marketing uninterrupted.

Week 10: It's FREE and can be so easy - talk about the importance of customer service with your team. It's the declared base of our business now, after our meeting.

Have a Happy, Healthy, PROSPEROUS week!

12 Week Marketing Challenge Recap

Just in case you missed a week or you are new to our newsletter, here is a recap of our 12 Week Marketing Challenge and a link to the newsletter that covered that subject:

1. [Turn Your Website Into a Lead Generating Machine](#)
2. [Write An Article, Get Valuable Results](#)
3. [Write a Blog](#)
4. [Offer a "White Paper" or Free Report](#)
5. [Send a Newsletter - printed or email](#)
6. [Networking and Your "Talking Logo"](#)
7. [Yellow Pages.com](#)
8. [Linked In](#)
- 8 1/2. [Take Time Out to access your plan](#)
9. Issue a Press Release
10. Good Customer Service

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Success Coaching U Marketing Programs



Attend a **FREE** Marketing Workshop

How to Build a Foundation (Strategy) For Your Business

Tuesday, September 15th in Braintree

9:00 - 11:00 am

You will learn:

- Difference between strategic and tactical marketing
- How to identify your ideal customer or client
- How to work with people that inspire and energize you.
- Why people choose you, buy from you, expect from your type of business.
- How to develop a differentiation strategy that makes you memorable and unique
- How to clearly communicate what you do without sounding confusing or boring
- How you can become a member in the next Success Coaching U Group Marketing Program

Space is limited to the first 20 business owners that reserve a seat in order to allow

for the proper interaction.

FREE but seats are limited, Please e-mail joe@businessmarketingsuccess.com and state "reserve my seat" and more information will follow

Visit

www.successcoachingu.com www.successcoachingu.com to download your free audio program
- The 7 Marketing Mistakes Most Business Owners Make and How to Avoid Them

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