

PROFITABLE PRINT RELATIONSHIPS

The Successful Print Sales Circle

Video 5: Thank you notes

Hello, and welcome to month three of The Successful Print Sales Circle. Now this video is going to be a little different. Up until now, you've had four videos and each one has concentrated on making sure that you win some more business. This one isn't going to do that. This one is going to focus on making sure that you retain clients, and that's just as important as winning more business. We all know that it's a lot more costly to try and win a new client than it is to retain a current customer. And according to most of the research I've read, that's between seven and 12 times more expensive. It really is important that we do all that we can to make sure that the customers that we do have stay with us. According to Google, the biggest reason for customers leaving suppliers is perceived indifference.

In other words, they don't think that you care about them enough. And in today's world where perfect service and fulfillment is standard, doing good quality print and delivering it on time, and giving people good customer service is no longer enough. You have to show people that they are appreciated and you have to make them feel special. There's another reason why customers may leave as well. Often they come across a problem. There's some points in your service which either doesn't suit their needs, or is something that they would complain about, except that they don't, and instead they move to the competition. For this reason, this month, you're going to send out some thank you cards. And the thank you cards should solve both these problems because a good thank you card will acknowledge a customer and say that you really appreciate them. It will make that customer feel special, and it will give them the opportunity to raise any potential issues that they may have with your company or the service that they're receiving.

Companies that send out thank you cards like this, have a real opportunity to build a much deeper relationship with all their customers. And if they keep those customers and retain them because that relationship is so much better, then they're in much more control of their sales pipeline, because they won't have to be going out and searching for new business as much. And of course that means it's much easier to achieve the sales and the profits that you want. Let's dive into how you create a successful thank you card because it's not always quite as simple as you might think.

Step one is to source the right card. And we should remember that the right card is all about the customer, it's not all about you. Cards that promote your company, or even have pictures of your team are not really appropriate for this particular strategy. It's far better that you design a nice card

that a client would like to put up in their office or even in their home, because it's got such a great design. In your team you might have some keen photographers or some keen artists or crafters who could create a fantastic card design for you. If that's not possible, then consider going out to a local shop or a charity and purchasing some nice cards from them. But make sure that you're moving away from making this a branding piece.

Step two, you're going to write the card. There's two things for us to consider here. There's the message in the card and this how we present that message. First of all, the message, I've, in your worksheets, given you a script that you can adapt and use for each of your cards. The important thing is that you make this script as personal as possible, and that you adapt the message to reflect what you know about the customer.

Maybe you can touch on one of their hobbies or something you've talked with them about recently, but really make it a personal card. And as you write that, the other vital thing is to say in the card that you'd love them to answer the question, "What one thing could we do better?" And that's a really important question because it encourages your client to give you feedback at this point, you're giving them the okay, tell them what it is that might be bugging them. And because you're not asking them to complain, you're simply asking them to help you on what you can do to make things better, it's much easier for them to give you that feedback. Now, how do you present that message? I would strongly recommend that you hand write that card. A handwritten message is so much more personal, it means so much more to the recipient.

Now, if you're like me, your handwriting may not be that great. One alternative is to ask one of your colleagues, if they've got good handwriting, to write the card on your behalf, as long as the customer doesn't realize that someone else has written it for you. I would avoid doing typewritten cards and I'd avoid those horrible handwritten fonts that so many people use to try and make things look personal, because everyone sees through those these days. Finally, do consider including a small gift with the card. And again, don't make it a company branded item, make it something the customer would like. All it has to be is a small bar of chocolate or something like that, that's low cost. We're not asking you to spend lots of money on the customer at this point, but just something they'll appreciate. They'll appreciate receiving the gift. And also because it will make the envelope bulkier, they're more likely to open it.

Once you've done all this, it's time to send the cards and that's step three. Now, putting a card in the post should be fairly simple, but even here, there's a couple of things to consider to make your card even more effective. And those two things are, one, if you can, put a postage stamp on it, rather than franking the cards, it makes it seem personal, not a business communication. And secondly, keep handwriting, handwrite that address. Once your clients receive these cards, I'm sure that many of them would acknowledge them and say thank you, and some will give you feedback. However, not everyone will. Step four is to chase up for that feedback. You don't have to make a special call or a special email for this.

Simply mentioned it in passing next time you're communicating with the customer. And again, I've given you a little script on the worksheet that you can use, and you can just use it at the end of the conversation, "By the way, I hope you've got the card. I'd love to hear what one thing we could do better." Or you can do that as a PS on an email when you're emailing your clients about something else. Then we come on to step five and step five is possibly the most important step in this exercise.

Because by now you will have received some feedback from your clients, and maybe there's some things that you could change or do better, whether it's for that one client, or whether it's across your business. Unless you take action, you're missing an opportunity. Remember that if one thing is bugging one of your clients, it may well be bugging a lot of your clients. If you don't fix it, you don't just risk losing one customer, you might risk losing a number of customers. That's why it's vitally important that you take that feedback on board and you action it.

Next, you should tell your client that you have understood their feedback and you have put it into action because how would you feel if you gave someone some feedback and you never heard anything, or you just heard an, "Oh, thanks for the feedback." I'd be much less likely to give you more feedback in the future, and in addition, I might even be slightly offended that I had gone to this trouble and you hadn't really acknowledged it. For that reason, I would always write back to the client, whether it's in a card or an email and say, "Thank you for the feedback, we've taken it on board. And this is what we've done to address this issue. And I'd love to hear any more feedback from you in the future." And once more, there's a script for that in the worksheets, if you need some help creating that message. Your goal for this task is to make sure you send at least 10 cards like this out to clients.

And I would expect you to get at least two pieces of feedback on things you can improve as a result of sending out those cards. Now, if you can do two things, which make it less likely for you to lose customers, or even potentially have leads into additional business with those customers, then I think you'll agree that's time well spent. As always, step six, share your success. There's a spreadsheet to fill in at the end of the worksheet. And if you're a gold member, I'll be chasing you to make sure that you've carried out this task, and hear the results you've had, and help you with any issues. And of course, if you have any questions, please raise them on the call at the end of this month.

I wish you success with this task. And I look forward to hearing from you, how you've got on with it. Next week, you're going to get the next podcast in the Print Product Inspiration Series. We're going to be focusing on leaflets. And again, it's not just about leaflets, about the whole sales process, and I hope it will change your thinking on how we go about selling commodity products basically. And then in two weeks from now, you get your next task and we're going to be focusing on how you can launch a successful special offer. Maybe you've got some quiet time that you need to get some more work in for, that video and that task will help you with that. I'll look forward to seeing you on the next video.