

Drive the Greatest Revenue Results Using the Rules In Loyalty Sales Calling

The trick to keeping current customers and creating new ones is to always over deliver – give them more than they expect. Satisfaction is not enough; loyalty is the key. **By Don Farrell**

Loyalty, more than any other word you can come up with, is the best way to approach selling your potential clients for immediate and long-term results. Here is the first example of loyalty in a known commodity, selling gas at a gas station. Can you use this example in all selling situations?

You own a gas station, and you know that the net profit margin is very slim, so you can't afford to lower prices or offer freebies as an incentive to picking up and retaining new customers. So how can you create a more loyal customer? Most gas station customers are probably looking at price and location as the two greatest features. If your price is comparable to the next guy, and you are on their way to and from work, then people will more than likely call your gas station theirs. However, this is not much of a loyalty-driving proposition. What if the lighting at your gas station is weak, the window cleaning solution habitually dry, the pumps dirty or the receipt doesn't come out like it should? Are these enough reasons to chase customers to the next station? Probably.



What if you, as the owner or manager, not only had these lighting and other operational fundamentals in place, but you also made it a habit of walking the pump area, picking up trash and talking to your customers. What would happen if you said, “Hi, my name is _____ and I own/manage this station. If you need anything, I will be out here or just inside. Thanks for choosing us for your gas needs.” When is the last time you received this kind of a free benefit at a gas station? Never or very rarely. Customers would probably be blown away by this unexpected attention. Exceeding expectations is the first step in driving loyalty.

Make Emotional Connections

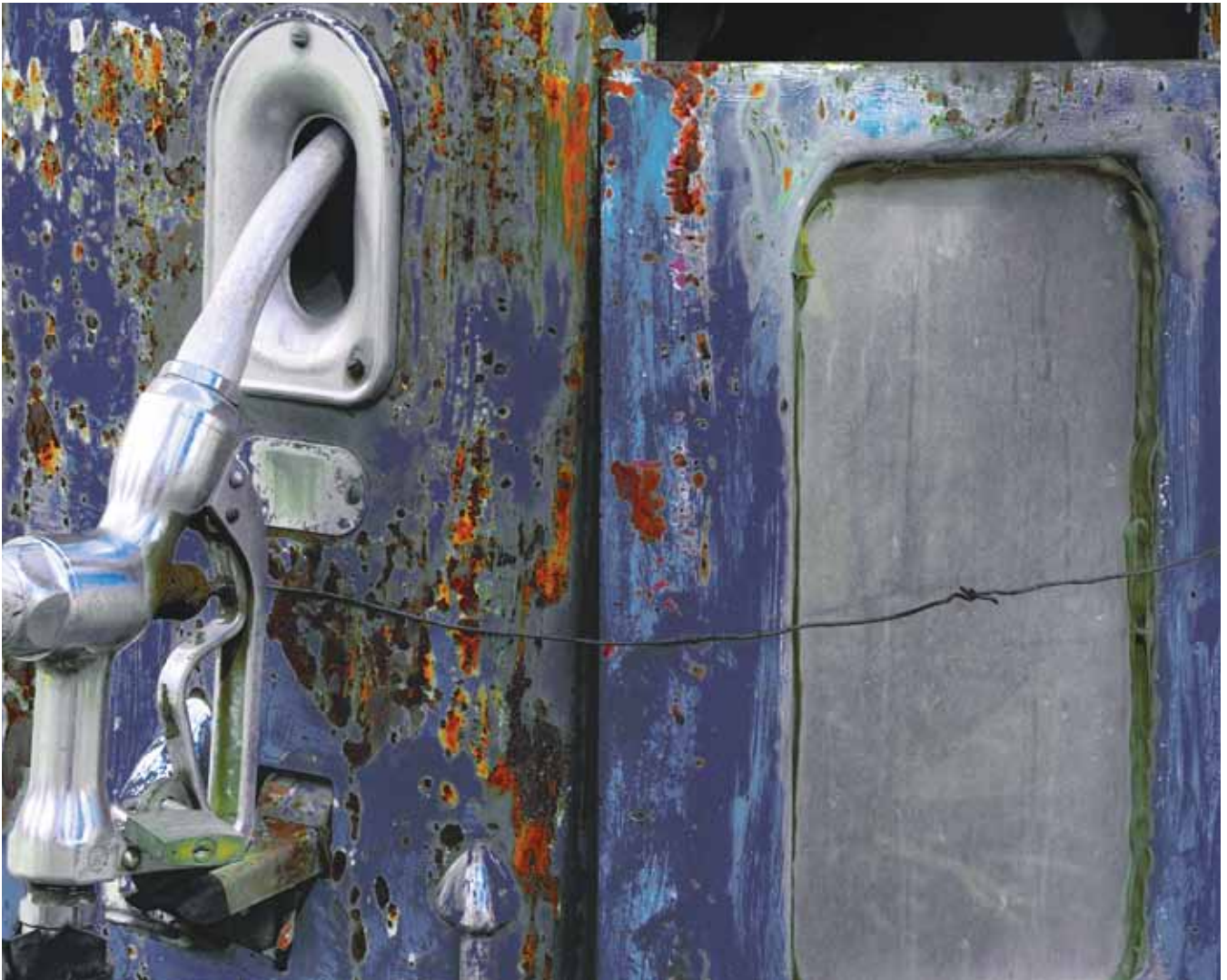
Let’s try another example, one that has repeated hundreds of times. You are a 25-year-old woman who

is planning her wedding – something you’ve probably been thinking about for the past 20 years. Like all women and men, you want this day to be perfect, one of the very best of your entire life. You are getting ready to make the

most important phone calls that will determine how your special day will go, the situation in which most things can go wrong. That’s right, we are talking about the reception facility. How many places will the bride-to-be call, setting up appointments to meet with the catering staff to determine which facility wins her trust? Three, four, five?

Regardless of how many, she will more than likely have a conversation with an experienced wedding planner who focuses on three things most important to their business: rates, dates and space. Those will be the three things the catering veteran will want to know in

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determining whether they even want this bride's business. This catering professional fields many calls in a day asking the same kinds of things, so she has learned to streamline the calls to save herself time. She may be a veteran wedding planner, but she has learned how not to have a customer-centric approach to selling or driving loyalty with that soon-to-be bride.

Rule #2 in driving loyalty with your potential and existing customers/clients is to make an emotional con-

nection. Why should you be concerned with loyalty? If you go into your wallet you will see that you have a fair amount of frequency or loyalty program cards, some from competing brands. The truth is, consumers are looking for more than satisfaction. They want personal perks, surprises and value-adding goods and services. It sometimes makes up for the bad service they might receive. But how much more loyalty would you foster if the fundamentals are in place, and on top delivering



what they paid for, you give them a surprise bonus. For instance, how about emotional connections with managers who go out of their way to show care and concern? Surprises that exceed my expectations?

As business owners and operators, you already know that it is expensive to find new customers and even more expensive to fix customer dissatisfaction. Your mission should not be to just satisfy customers, but to go beyond satisfaction and straight to fostering loyalty from the first experience.

Consider the catering director who fielded the wedding reception request. Instead of focusing on the catering hall's selfish rates, dates and space needs, she instead made the bride feel incredibly special by beginning the conversation with genuine enthusiasm, "Well, Charlotte, let me just say congratulations to you and David. First for your upcoming wedding, and secondly, for considering us for your reception needs. My staff and I are absolutely committed in every way possible to making this wedding day one of the very best days of your life ..."

Put the Customer First

Caring more, doing more and *communicating* that

you care better than any one of your competitors is what business leaders need to be doing. Making the emotional connection and focusing on the customer/client before our own selfish gains also solidifies and earns that loyalty. So rule #3 is putting customer needs before your own needs.

Delivering the basics creates satisfaction, but does not drive loyalty. Satisfaction is what consumers are supposed to get. Loyalty comes from the added bonuses. Delivering more than what customers expect is the name of the game, each and every day. You can't wow them just once. Each and every time you come in contact, loyalty needs to be driven home. When you do this, incredible things happen. People buy stuff from you, and they come back for more! ☺

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