

Where Can I Get More Sales?

I suspect every business owner asks this same question of themselves and perhaps employees almost every day. Where can we find that next elusive customer? What advertising should I use, or what group should I join to network with the right prospective customers? Can you relate?

Another thing we hear frequently is word of mouth. This is the most common answer when we ask, "Where do most of your customers come from"? Think about this for a minute... Most of your customers come from word of mouth, yet you spend most all your promotional budget on trying to get new customers from the general public. Please allow me to plant a seed here that we will water, fertilize and nurture over the next few months in future articles – how about spending at least 50% of your budget in supporting your existing customers? In most companies we find 80% of their annual revenue comes from their current customer base, but most of the promotional budget does not.

Give some serious thought about what you can do to help your customers more. How can you help them be more successful in their life or their business, depending upon what you are selling.

The first thing you need though is a list of your customers. Asking a business owner for a list of their customers seems like such a simple, logical question. Unfortunately, in the retail business this is usually easier said than done. If all you have is credit card and cash register receipts then you may not have a list of your customers. Your customers are worth 80% of your annual business so you need to develop that list and this is a perfect time of year to do so. This is a great time of year for retail because of the high traffic so leverage the opportunity. There are some very simple and inexpensive means to obtain your customer contact information (this will be needed as we work through the process next year).

- ❖ Have them sign up for a newsletter by filling out a simple form with their first name, last name, address, city, state, zip code, phone number and email address
- ❖ You can have them enter a drawing that once a month you provide a dinner for two at a local, nice restaurant. You can usually make a deal with the restaurant for sending them business.
- ❖ Develop a simple customer referral coupon that your customers can hand out to prospective customers which offers the new person a modest discount on their first purchase or visit.
- ❖ You can also have a similar customer referral coupon that your customers can hand out to prospective customers which offers the customer a modest discount on their first purchase or visit.
- ❖ You can have a firm like BRS develop a simple customer survey that you hand out in your establishment and any who fill it out are entered into a drawing. Of course you would want the contact information described earlier in this as well.

The point is this: you need the contact information if you want to market to your customers and since customers are the least expensive group to market to, and they usually represent 80% of your annual business, why would you not want to market to them? It all starts with getting their contact information...