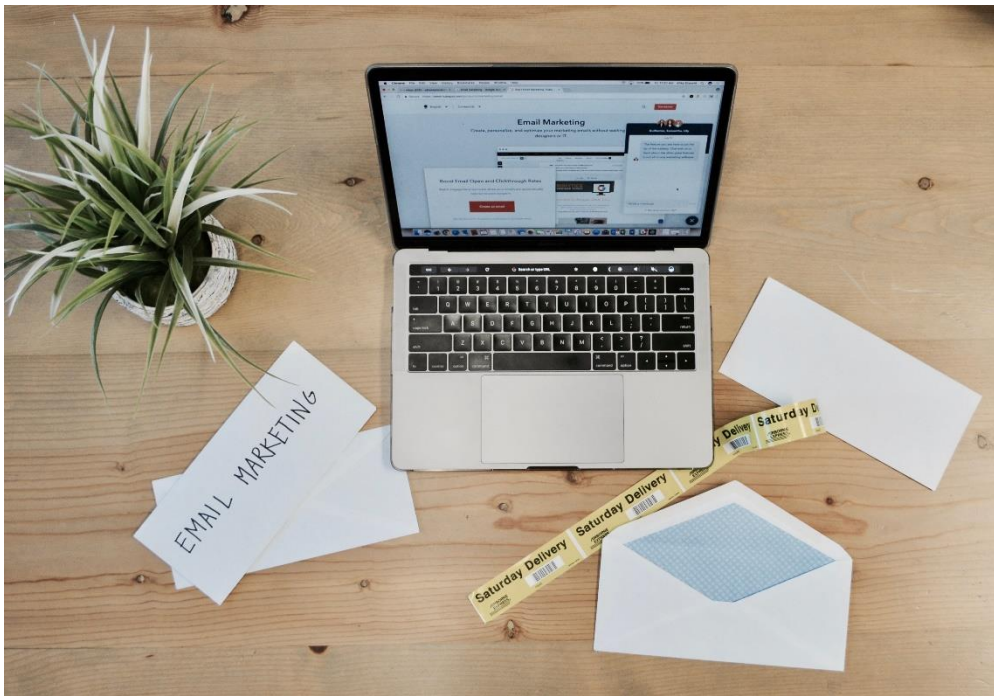


Keeping Customers Loyal

How do you keep your customers loyal? This is something that many companies struggle to do for many different reasons. Creating a strategy that works requires a lot of trial and error, plus an enormous amount of time as each company is different. [One strategy that works for one market](#) may not work for the next and if you're a business operating in several markets – it can be very frustrating to discover the best answer.



What can help?

Luckily, in this growing age of technology, there are many useful tools and methods that can help save you time. As most of you already know, email campaigns are one of the top ways to encourage repeat purchases and when combined with a discount or tailored offer -this can really encourage customers to purchase from you again. This is effective for retailers and business to consumer (B2C) companies. However, when offering a service, the process is even more challenging, especially if you're a business to business (B2B) company.

Most of the time when you're a B2B company offering services, its likely that your clients and customers are investing in your team for the long term. It's not a quick buy or something you can take home and analyse the quality of. B2B services have to really impress their clients in order to get someone to sign up and there is a lot of prep work in the beginning in order to satisfy the customer's expectations. One frustrating observation – a customer may only need your services a few times in their company's lifecycle. So how can you encourage repeat purchases?

I'm afraid the answer isn't as simple as "here is a piece of software that will solve all your problems." It is something that you will have to work on for your particular offering and market. The most useful piece of advice would be, to always remain in direct contact with your customer. It doesn't have to be terribly frequent. I would suggest around one call every eight weeks should be enough. The way I see it – is that you and your team would have offered a service for an agreed period and should have developed good relations during that time. Just because the work has ended, it does not mean the relationship you have built has to end as well. With these forms of contact, you should not be selling. It should just be a friendly chat each month on how their business is doing, what did they think of your service? How you could have done better? Plus a few more personal-related conversations.

Conclusion

This method of loyalty retention may not result in a repeat sale, and as I mentioned before – your customers may have no need for your services or product. What it does do, is become a constant friendly reminder that you care about their business and are willing to spend a bit of time each month for them and NOT be selling. Please note; I would not recommend doing this if you had not already developed good relations with your client, as your call will just seem disingenuous. All companies should offer great friendly customer service, before and after the comings and goings of clients and not just for the time contracted. Always.

I would suggest B2C companies be more frequent on indirect promotion as your markets are to the masses and are normally shorter exposure. Use Social Media and email campaigns to do this and offer special deals and tailored experiences to outperform competitors. A word of caution; many companies think sending masses of emails works. It does not. Sending the right amount works and this is usually half the number most companies select. In a survey by Technology Advice, 48.5% of subscribers flag emails as spam because they are emailed too often. For B2B, a campaign is more likely to result in referrals rather than repeat purchases. Be familiar and not only will you be seen well by your past clients but any other company they are associated with – and depending on how well you stay connected, this may lead to great referral purchases.