Selling Through Service

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Whether you and your team employ cold calling, marketing (traditional or digital), social media engagement or other strategies, one of your top goals is to sell your product. But what if your goal shifted? Although all these aforementioned sales techniques can be effective if done right, there's another method that very few consider: selling through service.

Customer service is huge for our bottom line. Customers are willing to pay more to a company with good customer service and are likely to abandon one that gave them a bad experience. Selling through service is the idea that if we provide not good service, but unbelievable service, to our potential and current clients, that we can sell even more.

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What is Unbelievable Service?

The six levels of customer service were developed by Ron Kaufman in 2011. They are:

1. Criminal Service. The kind of service that makes you angry.

2. Basic Service. Service that's just disappointing, but you won't go back.

3. Expected Service. Service that's just average. If there's something better out there, you'll choose that instead.

4. Desired Service. The service you want.

And these next two levels are the real key to selling….

5. Surprising Service. Service that's more than what you expected and creates a loyal customer.

6. Unbelievable Service. This service seems impossible when you find it. It's so fantastic you'll never forget about it.

How to Get to "Unbelievable"

To sell through service, we must first evaluate what level of service we're currently offering. We may want to believe that we're at least a level 4, but remember to be brutally honest with yourself.

Even if you're a level 4, you're not ready to sell through service. So you need to push your service up to Surprising and Unbelievable. Analyze your customer reviews or ask your customers what they want. Look to your competitors. What are they doing differently? What are they doing right?

Next, you must put it into practice. Come up with a variety of ideas and ways to offer customer service that nobody would expect or even consider possible. There are stories of incredible customer service to use as inspiration. Make customer service your priority.

Finally, you must always innovate and improve your service. If your company offers employees an amazing bonus every year, this will quickly slide down from Unbelievable to Expected as years go on. The same applies to your customer service. You must continuously come up with new ways to provide Unbelievable service and stay ahead.

How Do You Sell Through Service?

Serve clients before they're even clients. The first way to

sell through service is to do it before a customer has even bought from you.

Tatiana Chamorro was “selling” years before she started Hyvemark, her digital marketing agency. “I focused on relationships and building value with people,” she recalls. “Sometimes this meant offering advice on an internal design, volunteering my services or brainstorming on ideas for a campaign.”

By the time her agency took off, she had created long-term relationships and onboarded two clients in the first 15 days.

Service isn’t just about helping paying customers. If you’re an outsourcing agency, help a potential partner get their first clients before they’re even signed on. If you’re a lawyer, get on a call with a potential client and talk them through the case for free. If you’re a retailer, offer to take care of their shopping bags when they walk in.

Helping a potential client before they’ve given you their money shows genuine care and demonstrates the quality of your work before they’ve even committed to you. By the time they decide to buy from you, they will be convinced of your level of quality, service, and dedication.

Add Value When They Become Clients

The perfect example of adding value is Peter Shankman’s story involving Morton’s Restaurant. Shankman experienced amazing customer service every time he ate there. One day as he was boarding a flight, he tweeted at Morton’s to “meet me at the airport with a porterhouse.” When he landed, there was a Morton’s employee (in a tuxedo, no less) waiting with a steak (and more).

The example is a bit silly, but it’s exactly what you should be thinking with your current clients: How can I do even more?

And even further, what’s going to add value to what they’re already getting from my company?

“Value” comes from solving problems for your client. Your product already solved one problem for them, ideally. What further problems can you help them with?

Adding value requires understanding them and what they need. Once you know what they need (and don’t think they can get) you can start to deliver it, surprising them and creating an unbelievable experience. Social media monitoring is a great way to accomplish this.

Good Service Leads to More Selling

Customer retention is one of the most important aspects of our business, and that’s because it’s profitable. Retaining a customer is 25 times cheaper than acquiring a new one, and loyal customers also spend more than new ones.

As an example, a digital marketing agency offers four services and sells one to a client. The client receives unbelievable service and great results. In a few months, based on that service, the agency can easily sell them a few more services.

If you want to be profitable, you should focus on keeping current customers. The good news is, great word of mouth (and great service before they become customers) will keep new customers coming already.

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Make providing unbelievable service to your customers a priority, and you will see how these efforts not only become a highly effective sales strategy but an incredible way to improve your product and your company.

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