

7 Steps to Retaining Customers in a Down Economy

#1: Aim to impress. Whether it's order number one, or order number twenty-one, make sure the product or service you provide is top quality. Don't skimp.

#2: Never take your customers for granted. Customers are free to buy from another, and believe me, there are plenty of businesses that offer the same products and services that you do, and they're just waiting to move in on your customer. Let your customers know how much you value them. And tell them often!

#3: Treat them right. Make them feel special, valued and important. Every single day. Go above and beyond what they expect from you. Giving them what they expect is satisfying your customer. You want to do more than satisfy them, you want to WOW them.

#4 Listen to them. Oftentimes, we think we know what customers are going to say, so we listen with only one ear, assuming we know what's coming out of their mouth next. We have two ears and one mouth for a reason. Do twice as much listening as you do talking and your customers will tell you everything you want to know about them, and then some!

#5 If you make a mistake, own it. Acknowledge it, admit it, and then make it right. You'll gain more credibility with your customer, and they'll probably appreciate you for doing it.

#6 Ask them how you're doing. Feedback is the breakfast of champions. Ask your customers how you're doing and what you can do to improve. And then do it! When you give your customers what "they" want, instead of what you want to give them, they will love you for it.

#7 Show interest in them, both professionally and personally. Celebrate their successes with them, and show empathy for their problems. Be their biggest cheerleader, and they will be yours in return.

By following these steps, you will turn your customers from "simply satisfied" to "loyal". Loyal customers are your best source of advertising.