Do you appreciate your customers?

I am sure you appreciate your customers (or supporters), especially when they pay you (or donate) for the goods/services you offer. But do your customers know you appreciate them? How are you communicating appreciation?

If you are trying to establish or maintain a long term relationship with your customers or supporters, you must demonstrate AND COMMUNICATE that you appreciate their business/donations, and that you are not taking the relationship for granted.



How can you do this? There are several ways.

Reward their loyalty

Big box stores, airlines, credit cards and any number of other service/good purveyors provide discounts/points/bonuses for frequent customers. Giving customers a discount or something else of value gives them a reason to continue to work with you, and lets you reward their support.

Thank them

It depends on the size of your business, but thanking customers can be done with a simple hand written card, an email, a pre-printed postcard, or even through a personalized email marketing campaign.

Accommodate them

My kitchen sink was leaking, so I contacted my go-to plumber. I sent him an email explaining the situation and asking when he could come to deal with it. He could only fit me in the following week. I wrote him back and said that I would be looking for someone who could come sooner. His response was this:

> *Wow, that sucks but ok*

Really? It sucks that I have to look for someone else? You know what sucks? Having your kitchen sink leak. Imagine if instead he wrote this:

“Totally understand. You need to get the sink fixed ASAP. If you can’t find anyone, let me know.”

As it turns out, I found someone to come that day! And fix the leak for a lot less than my soon to be ex plumber, who clearly is taking my business for granted.

Notice them

I’ve been going to a yoga studio for the better part of the last year but around Thanksgiving, I went out of town and had

a couple other obligations. Since I had not been in the studio for several weeks, the studio manager sent me an email with the subject line “Just checking in.” It said this:

> *Has it been a few weeks since you’ve been to yoga? Just remember you carry your yoga practice with you wherever you go. In the meantime, here is a 7 minute practice you can do right now in your chair. Don’t stay away too long.*

This included the instructions for the seven minute practice referenced.

It all requires keeping track

All these require you tracking your customers/donors. For the yoga studio, this is probably part of the Mindbody software they use. For smaller organizations it may be as simple as a Excel spreadsheet. For bigger businesses, there are many types of customer management (CRM) software available. For nonprofits, their are specific donor databases.

Make them feel that you appreciate them

We all like to feel appreciated. And organizations of all types need to be sure to communicate their appreciation.