

Keep Customers Coming Back

It was freezing cold the other day in Montreal; the coldest day of the year so far I am sure. I didn't really mind, though, because I was on my way to Florida to attend a conference for 5 days.

I decided to wear my winter boots to Florida even though the weather was going to be warm. I remembered when I bought these boots. It was an early wet winter snowfall and I was downtown wearing shoes that I soon discovered had a hole, and thus my foot was soaked. So I went to the closest shopping mall and located a small shoe store. I was served by the owner, and I told him I wanted a pair of small boots that I could wear outdoors and indoors in winter without freezing or sweating.

He quickly produced a small pair of boots that felt like they were made for my feet. He said he had the same ones, and had worn them to shovel snow in sub-zero weather, and also in the summer very comfortably. Although they were quite a bit more than what I wanted to spend, I purchased them after he told me they would last at least 5 years.

So the other day on my way to the airport I felt happy that I had such a versatile pair of boots, and I was thinking that I would soon need a new pair of shoes. Even though the store is quite a distance from where I live, I was seeing myself returning there to purchase another pair of comfortable shoes. I realized that I was unconsciously making an automatic decision to go out of my way and return to that store.

On the contrary, this weekend I went cross-country skiing to a formerly great resort hotel in the Laurentians, north of Montreal. I enjoyed the outdoors, but my experience was not as positively memorable. For one, the trails were in terrible condition, and were so poorly marked that we got lost. Furthermore, the staff were unfriendly and their attitude was one of indifference.

Looking back at these two experiences, I felt there was a lesson to learn and share. To keep customers coming back we need to:

1. Make their experience of dealing with us pleasant and enjoyable.
2. Give them what they want, and if anything, more not less.
3. Tell the truth about our products or services. Leave them feeling satisfied, not dissatisfied, with each interaction.
4. Be reliable and dependable, and clients will spread the word about us.
5. Be friendly with customers. At the least, you will end up knowing more people you can call friends.

Keeping customers satisfied and coming back for more is not rocket science, just common sense. However, common sense is not always common practice.

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