

Getting and Keeping Your Ideal Customers

INCLUDES:

- TIPS TO GET NEW CUSTOMERS
- TIPS FOR SHOWING YOUR CUSTOMERS YOU LOVE THEM
- HOW TO CHOOSE THE RIGHT NICHE AND FIND “YOUR PEOPLE”
- TIPS FOR KEEPING CUSTOMERS
- TIPS TO WIN BACK LOST CUSTOMERS
- TIPS TO KEEP CUSTOMERS COMING BACK

The DIYMarketers Guide to
Getting Chosen Every Time
Regardless of Price

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About the Author

Ivana Taylor is the publisher of DIYMarketers.com, a popular online magazine where overwhelmed business owners & entrepreneurs, like you, save time & money by simplifying their marketing.

She's listed as one of the most influential people in small business by D&B, Fast Company and a variety of small business publications.

After 15 years of helping manufacturers differentiate themselves with creative offers their customers love and another 15 years of working with brands on small business marketing campaigns, she has her finger on the pulse of what it takes to become the obvious choice for your ideal customer.

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Getting and Keeping Your Ideal Customers

As a small business owner, you get to have one luxury few people talk about; to work with people you love who love you back. Think of it as finding “your people”.

Find your people

“Your people” value you more highly because you offer strength where they are weak. They are committed to you because you are committed to them. And, they connect with you because you understand who they are and what matters to them.

“Some people sell things so they can have customers -- YOU have customers so you can sell them things.” -- Adapted from Dan Kennedy.

The cheapest and fastest way to get and keep customers is to find your people.

The best way to find your people is to focus on a very specific market and a very specific customer with a very specific problem.

You are looking for people who desperately NEED what you offer, who are TERRIBLE at what you do well and who VALUE your ability to eliminate this challenge from their lives.

Choose your marketing strategy first


Do not skip this step. If you jump into DOING without choosing your marketing strategy, you will find yourself on an endless merry-go-round of trial and error. This is the equivalent of playing the slots with your time and money -- you put money into some idea and it gives you nothing.

Don't do this.

There are [three basic marketing strategies](#) to choose from:

1. Content Marketing - This is an inbound strategy that involves creating articles, videos, webinars and emails that are intended to educate prospects and guide them through the buyer's journey.
2. Direct Marketing- This is another word for “selling”. Direct marketing can include face-to-face selling, referrals and networking, webinars that contain an offer, emails that contain an offer, speaking and selling from the stage.

3. Paid Advertising - Yes! Advertising is marketing too. Advertising is an element of content marketing. After all, you have to write or record the ad. Done well, paid advertising can deliver a constant flow of new customers.



Advertising Strategy


- **Definition:** Paid Placement
- **Use when:** You have more money than time
- **Ideal for:** Niche businesses with specific, unique offers.

Online Tactics

- PPC
- Social Advertising
- Contests

Offline Tactics

- Print
- Signage
- TV



Content Strategy


- **Definition:** Using information and education as marketing.
- **Use when:** You have more time than money
- **Ideal for:** Freelancers, industry experts, consultants, technically complicated products and services

Online Tactics

- Blogging
- Podcasting
- Video
- Webinar
- Social Posts
- Infographics
- SEO

Offline Tactics

- Speaking
- Printed Materials
- Seminars
- Demos



Direct Marketing Strategy

- **Definition:** Speaking directly to your ideal customer
- **Use when:** You have a finite list of customers, you know who your customers are and where they live.
- **Ideal for:** B2B, technical, manufacturing, local

Online Tactics

- Email
- Social Selling
- SMS

Offline Tactics

- Speaking
- Printed Materials
- Seminars
- Demos
- Direct Sales
- Direct Mail
- Coupons

Tips to Get New Customers

Look at “getting new customers” like “making new friends”. That’s really what we’re talking about here.

You’re freaking out over selling because -- and this makes no logical sense -- you think people have to be heavily persuaded to buy what you’re selling.

This is not logical. In fact, it’s nuts. I mean why would you go into business for yourself if you didn’t think that what you were selling would benefit someone and help them transform their life in some way?

Yes -- transform their life! This is what you do - you transform lives.

Even if you’re selling cleaning services - you are transforming the life of someone who would rather stick a fork in their eye than clean a toilet or a floor;

If you’re a bookkeeper, you are transforming the life of someone who literally gets nauseous at the mere mention of balancing a checkbook.

So, when it comes to getting new customers, the first place to start is to “get yourself!”

Get clear about how your product or service takes customers from where they are to where they want to be.

Now that you know what you’re offering and how your offer transforms people’s lives, you’re ready to start reaching out.

Here are our tips for attracting and [getting customers](#).



Photo by [Jessie McCall](#) on [Unsplash](#)

Ask your ideal customers what they want

This tip is listed first because it's a "super-two-fer". It's the best way to do actionable market research and make money fast,,

Take the time to create an offer you *think* your ideal customer will appreciate and then start engaging with your ideal customer to tweak it and customize it into an irresistible offer. Here are a few ways to do that.

1. Pose provocative questions on social media,
2. Launch mini-polls, or
3. Do a full-fledged customer survey to test a new product idea or find out where your company's strengths and weaknesses lie. QuestionPro is an easy, powerful way to connect with your audience and gather their thoughts.
4. You can also ask for a review on Yelp, Google, Amazon, or other online pages where your business or goods might have a presence.
5. Offer something valuable. In exchange for information that will help you connect with customers (like name and contact information),
6. Offer something in return.
7. Depending on your product or service, you might consider an informational eBook for download, a discount, or even a little gift in the mail.
8. Send influential customers a gift box full of goodies is a sure way to get social media shares and reviews.

Engage organically and sell with ads on social media

If you require people to buy your products or services, start figuring out how to [engage on social media](#).

Profitable customers come from building the know-like-and-trust-factor. (I simply hate having to write and repeat this).

Social media is how you build the know-like-and-trust-factor.

The best way to combine organic engagement with paid advertising is to start with Facebook.

With 2.8 BILLION monthly users, there's a good chance that your audience is on Facebook.

With the right audience, offer and marketing message, you can literally BUY as many customers as you like.

A Cheat Sheet to High-Converting Facebook Ad Creative

Optimized for Placement

Takes advantage of larger image and longer copy on Desktop News Feed.

Short & Sweet Headline

Direct and to-the-point in under five words or less.

Evidence of Social Proof

If your peers like it, so will you.

Strong Value Prop Angle

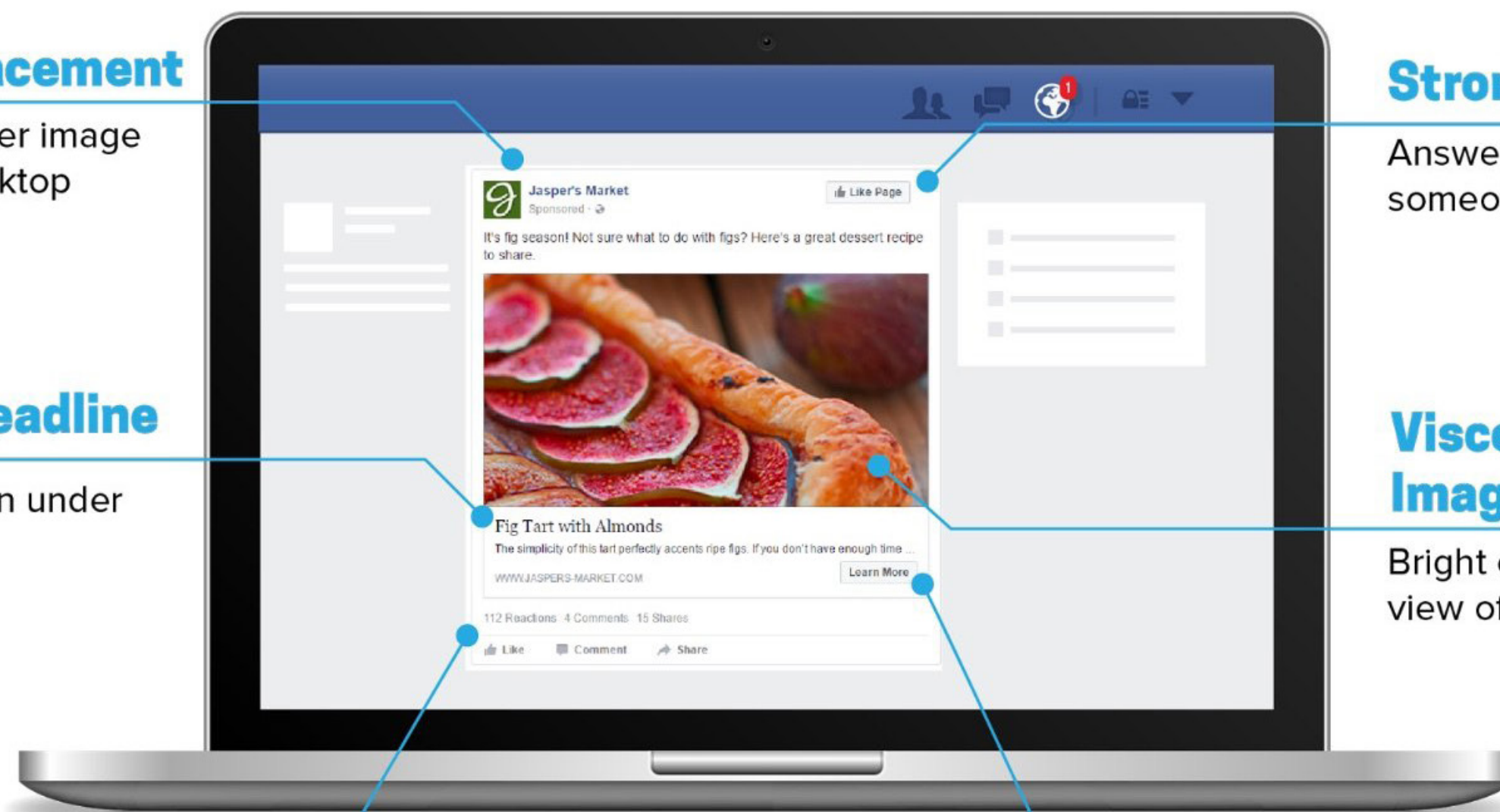
Answers the nagging reason 'why' someone should click.

Visceral, Communicative Image

Bright colors jump out, with realistic view of what this ad is selling.

Action-Oriented CTA

Uses a verb to hint at what you're going to get when you click.



[Source: Neil Patel](#)

One piece of advice, before you invest in learning HOW to do Facebook ads yourself, before you hire a coach, before you hire some marketing expert to do ads for you -- Figure your \$#!+ OUT.

Spend time engaging and building your organic audience.

Experiment with posting different types of video --

- Do some Facebook Lives
- Post some pre-recorded videos
- Ask your audience questions -- Maybe do a video that asks a question, then have your audience submit videos that share their experiences.
- Post meme's
- Be vulnerable

As my friend and marketing expert, [Steve MacDonald](#) likes to say “Be an insider. Show your audience that you are one of them, that you “get” them, and that you understand them.”

By the time you’re done with that, you’ll have a really good idea of where to invest your Facebook dollars.

I also recommend that you check out Ryan Deiss’ [Digital Marketer Lab](#). They offer some of the best DIY courses on Facebook Advertising as well as all types of digital marketing for a reasonable monthly price.

Create a simple, but valuable giveaway to build your email list

You don’t need a GIANT email list to get new customers. You do need an engaged email list. And the best way to [create an email list](#) of potential customers is to provide a super-valuable giveaway that helps them overcome a painful challenge.

This value-added giveaway is called a [lead magnet](#).

Lot of experts tell you to write an ebook. That’s a great idea - but it can be overwhelming and take forever.

Instead, create a simple checklist. For example, if you’re in the real estate industry, create a checklist for buyers and a checklist for sellers.

Here’s a list of ideas you can use to build your email list:

- **Calculators** – Calculators take user information and combine it with a set formula to generate numerical results. Common examples of a calculator measure ROI, cost, revenue and time savings.
- **Polls and Surveys** – These opinion-based pieces are ideal for simple engagement and collecting feedback. There’s no right or wrong answer, so they’re meant for gathering audience insight. These include opinion polls, product surveys and voting polls.
- **Infographics** – Infographs are a smart way of taking boring graphs and compelling data and turning them into a dialogue. It allows you to make the most out of both text and images, making the processing of content easier for your audience to gather valuable data.
- **Contests and Sweepstakes** – Contests and sweepstakes are simple in nature. This type of interactive content brings out the competitive side of audiences, spurring them to participate in a chance to win something. Examples include video or photo contests

closely tied to social media, sweepstakes entries, and audience-generated caption/texts contents.

Create and run a referral system

Referrals are still the most effective marketing strategy for most small businesses. Unfortunately, too many business owners treat referrals as if they were a happy accident.

Instead, [create a referral system](#).

Your referral system starts with a master list of people who can either refer you or introduce you to people who can refer you.

The key to success is with running a referral system is -- *running* a referral system.

Think of your referral system as a customer generating machine. Like prospecting and selling, it's a numbers game. The more qualified connections you make, the more qualified conversations you'll have. The more qualified conversations you have, the more qualified leads you'll get. And, the more qualified leads you get, the more customers you'll convert.

In fact, consistently running a referral system will increase your closing rate to 80% and more.

Start your email list with friends, followers and contacts

Every large empire started with a small group of people. So, even if you don't have customers, you still have friends on Facebook, a network on LinkedIn, and an address book on your email.

In fact, just take a moment and add up your friends, followers and contacts and ask them to sign up for your email list.

Make an offer in every email

For emails, segment your lists by keyword and send emails designed to appeal to a narrow audience. A quality CRM like Insightly makes targeted customer communication easy.

Build a community on social media

In a nutshell: 80% of your social media should not be self-serving, one-way advertising. That's ok about 20% of the time. The rest of your social content should just be social. If it's all advertising all the time, you're going to annoy your followers.

Invest your “organic” time in building a social media audience. Start with your personal profiles and post interesting and fun content consistently. If you don’t like to write, post daily or weekly videos. If you have more of a sense of humor - post meme’s and other engaging content that gets people involved with your posts.

Build, Update or Optimize Your Website

Your [website](#) is NOT a brochure -- it’s a 24/7 sales machine. If you have a website, then take a fresh look at your site and ask yourself - is this attracting my ideal customer?

- Make sure that you have a headline that is 5-7 words and connects with an outcome your ideal customer is looking for.
- For your blog posts or articles, make a list of your ideal customer’s frequently asked questions and answer each one as an article or video.

For more help with getting your website together: [The Complete Guide to Designing Your Website](#)

Respond quickly

You don’t even want to know how many opportunities are lost when companies ignore requests for help or information. The faster you respond, the more likely you are to earn the business.

Take control of your online reviews

Whether you created a profile or not, your business is listed on Yelp, Google Places, and other [online review](#) sites.

While you can’t control the reviews, you can make sure each listing is correct and up-to-date, provide flattering photos, respond to comments, and upload a flyer or a menu.

- Make sure to respond to every review. Thank those folks who left a positive review
- Look for ways to reward positive reviews - contact them and give them a coupon or freebie.
- Don’t get into a back and forth conversation on Google or Yelp - if it’s a negative review - be sure to take it offline and fix it.

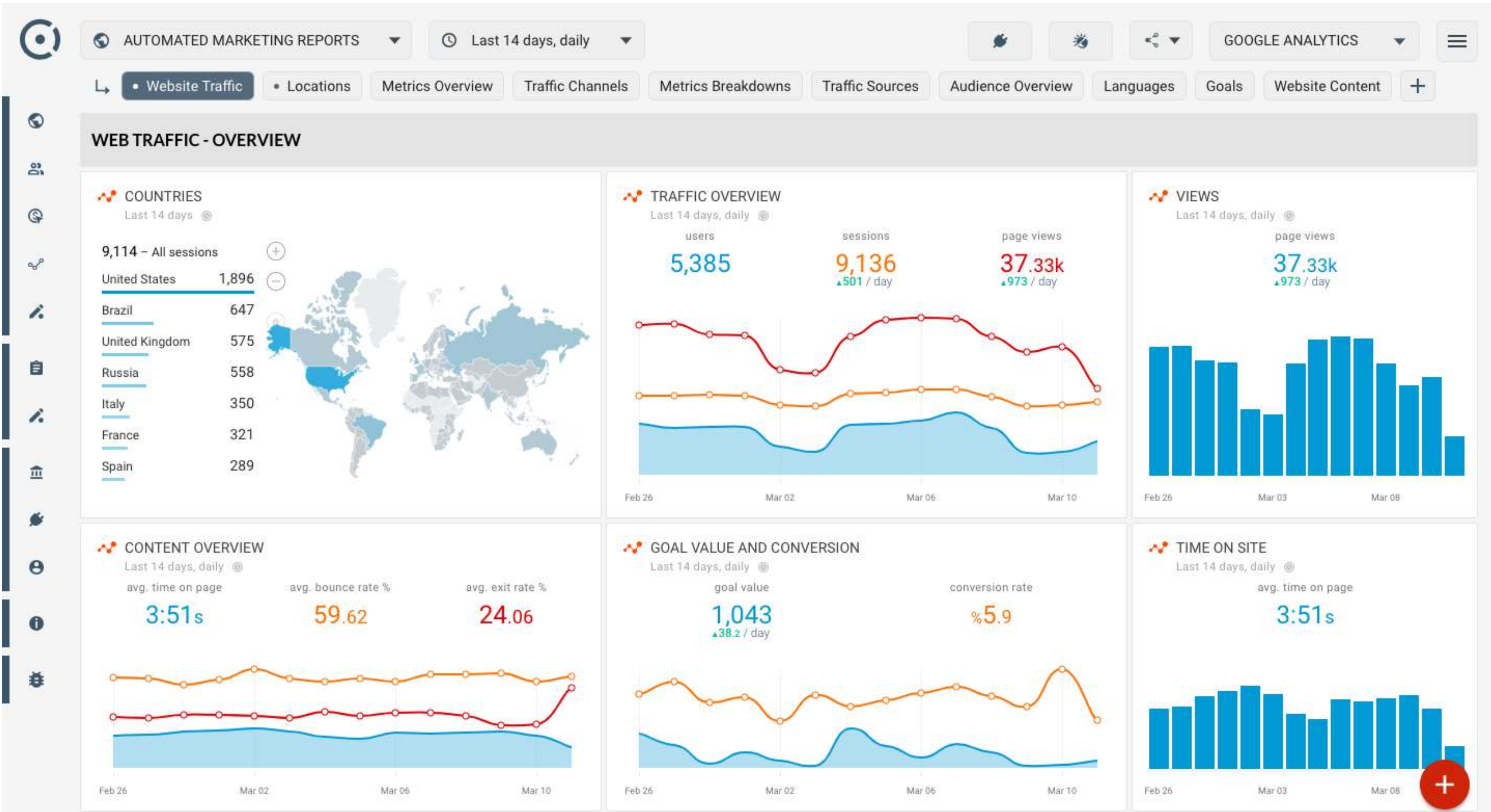
Analyze your customer data

Do you freeze up when you see the word “analyze” because you think it’s hard or complicated? I get it!

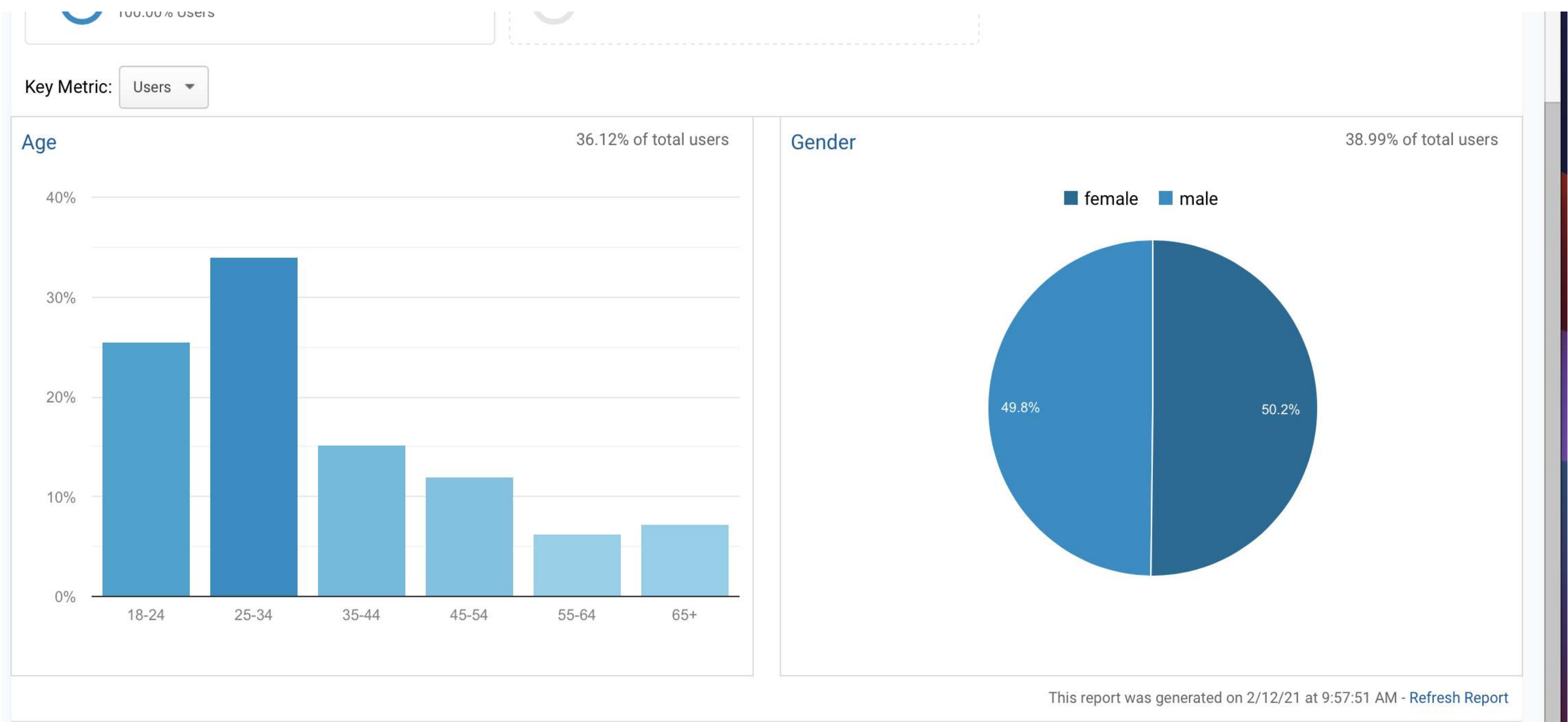
Think of it as following a bread-crumb train. Your customer’s interactions with you leave a trail of crumbs. What do they buy? When did they buy it? How did they use or apply your product or service. This all counts as analyzing.

Asking your customers simple questions in your social media like “What are you struggling with today?” can yield gold!

And then there are other types of data; such as your Google Analytics that can tell you more than just traffic and what pages customers visit most and how much time they spend there.

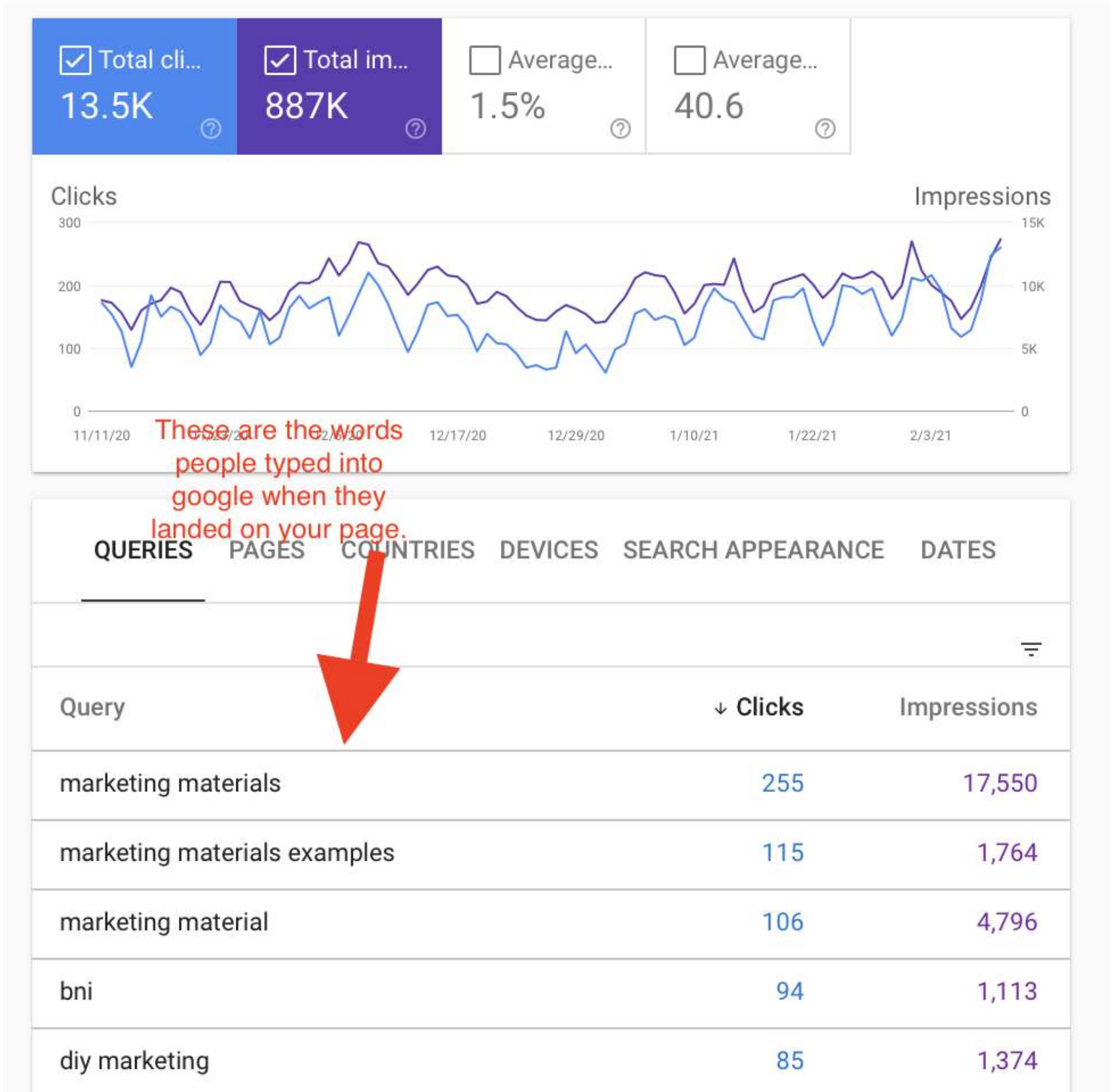


You can see how old your visitors are and what gender they are.



Another wonderful source of information is [Google Search Console](#).

Like Google Analytics, Google Search Console is free. And, it contains a tremendous amount of information that you can use to understand what your customers are most interested in.



You can also connect your existing data to [DataHero](#) to really understand it, without having to become a data analyst. Data is complicated, but DataHero shows you what you need to know with suggested charts. Or it allows you to create your own customized chart in drag-and-drop motions. Once you’ve got a handle on your customer data, you know who they are, what they want, and where to find them. All the better to impress them with offers they can’t resist.

Fill your website with great content

Provide a steady stream of great content and people will keep coming back for more. What’s more, you’ll earn a higher spot on the search pages with helpful, well-crafted content.

What kind of content should you put on your website?

Here’s what I always recommend.

1. Create a list of frequently asked questions that your ideal customers are most likely to have and group them into categories.
2. Create another list of at least 10 reasons your customers should buy from you and group them into categories.

3. Write 5,000 word guides that provide a simple, summary answer for your frequently asked questions AND for your reasons to buy.
4. Take each individual customer question and write about 1500 words that answer that question in detail.
5. Take each individual selling point - from the reasons to buy from us list you created and write up 1500 words that detail out those reasons. You can feature individual customers or clients, you can write up how-to guides that help customers use your product or service to get the best benefits.

Let's count these out.

1. Summary of Frequently Asked Questions article
2. Summary of reasons to buy from you article
3. 10 articles answering the top 10 frequently asked questions
4. 10 articles that outline reasons customers buy from you

That's at least 22 articles! And you didn't even have to work that hard.

Make your content easy to share.

Forget the "like" Facebook button on your blog posts, web pages, and articles. Go right for the share button. When your customers share, their friends see it. They become your advertising agency, your advocates, and your evangelists. Their friends are your future customers.

Brand your photos and graphics

You can't always publish photos complete with a link back to your site, but you can overlay your company web address so people can find your site. If you don't, it's a complete waste of a great share. If you're not a graphics whiz, Canva.com can make creating graphics a whole lot easier.

Avoid overpromising

One of the easiest ways to lose a customer is to promise more than you can deliver in order to close a deal. On the other hand, delivering more than you promised is a sure way to earn repeat business.

Tips for Showing Your Customers You Love Them

Just like a marriage, you have to work to maintain your relationship with your customers. Here are some ways to show you really care.

There I was, sitting by the phone, checking my email. Wait! Maybe he sent a text and I missed it. GOD! Is he going to call? When is he going to call? Why hasn't he called? Maybe he's not interested. Did I miss something?

No, this isn't some teenage crush. It's what I realized I was saying to myself a couple days after a meeting with a potential customer, in which we outlined a killer project that was going to be a win-win for both of us.

Let's face it—I was IN LOVE with the prospect of working together. And I suddenly realized that my thoughts and emotions were exactly the same as the ones I had when I first met my husband: the rapidly beating heart, the painted-on smile and the constant replaying of the last conversation. It was exactly the same except I wasn't romantically interested at all—I was opportunistically interested.

This got me wondering and reflecting on the idea of “loving your customer.” The last time I uttered the phrase “we should love our customer” I got laughed out of the boardroom of the manufacturing company I worked for. Now I'm wondering if it isn't time to revive this idea for small business.

1. Decide to love your customers

Consider that falling in love is really a choice. It might seem like some emotional circus, but when you think about it, you actually decide to throw yourself into the relationship. You can do the same thing with your customers.

Customers buy on emotion and authenticity. You don't have to be some fancy marketing copywriter. In fact, that doesn't work at all!

What your customers want is YOU! Your customers want to see that you “get” them -- that you understand them -- that you've been where they are and that you can help them overcome their challenges.

To love your customer, you only have to see the world through their eyes.

Think about other people in your life whom you love.

Whether it's a friend, family member or child, you put yourself in their shoes, you

2. Get the picture

Pretend you're being videotaped, then imagine what would end up on the video if you were acting like you loved your customers. The camera might see a lot of smiling, heads nodding, hands gesturing and direct eye contact.

3. Learn from the past

Yes, that one customer was most certainly a jerk. You were right and they were wrong. And if you've had more than one jerk of a customer, you need to take a moment and think about whether that type of customer is a good choice for you. Not every customer is right for you, and the ones who are always complaining and who upset you are costing you money and causing you stress. Refer them to someone else and move on.

4. Show them and tell them you care

It's not enough to utter the words "We appreciate your business." Is that what you'd say to your best friend? Of course not! You might say something like, "You always help me see things from a more positive perspective." That was specific. When you're interacting with customers, look for specific opportunities where you can acknowledge them and act on it. Don't be afraid to say what you appreciate or write it in an email.

5. Smile, laugh and have fun

Turn any circumstance into a pleasant transaction. Human beings mimic each other, and if a customer comes to you all stressed about something, you can drastically improve his or her experience of you by taking on the attitude that nothing is wrong and everything can be fixed.

6. Separate what happens from your judgments about it

When they cancel a meeting, when they return a product, when they choose someone else—these are all things that happen in business. Don't make it mean anything. It's human nature to think if a customer does something we don't like, they're wrong or they think poorly of us. The truth is usually something boring like their dog didn't like it. It's not about you. Put your focus on the customer and what happened and how it impacted them—not you.

7. Give them something to look forward to

One of the things that keeps most romantic relationships alive is planning for the future and looking forward to having fun together. Why not create that same experience for

your customers? I know a company that sends the most creative Christmas gifts to their customers and vendors—it’s something I look forward to.

8. Don’t give up

Years ago I read a study that tracked people who had been married for more than 50 years. One of their success strategies was to recognize what they called the “U.” Each relationship has ups and downs. When you’re down, then you’re in the bottom of the “U.” But if you’ve been in a relationship long enough, you come to realize the downside is often temporary. So don’t give up. Work through the difficulty and you’ll come out stronger for the experience.

Each business is absolutely unique. Even if many companies in your industry or town do the same thing you do, there will be customers who choose to do business with you. They do this because you have the unique mix of people, product and service that’s attractive to them. Don’t take that for granted.

Now it’s your turn: How will you show your customers you love them?

I’ve given you ideas -- now it’s your turn. Brainstorm a list of 8 ways you’re going to show your customers you love them.

How to Choose The Right Niche and Find “Your People”

Focus on specific people with specific challenges.

It’s counterintuitive to think that by focusing on a smaller market you may actually make more money, but it’s true. Real money is found in targeting and identifying a market niche found inside the intersection of wants, trends and frustrations. The biggest mistake most business owners make is stopping their search for a niche too soon.

The secret to finding a niche market is to finish this sentence: My product or service helps (what kind of person) when they (specific situation or challenge). Here are a few examples:

- I love cleaning up QuickBooks messes for online business owners.
- My product helps new moms when they are trying to lose weight after having a baby.
- My service helps working couples who don’t have time to make nutritious meals at home.
- My product helps high school students when they want to apply to multiple colleges.

Now sit down and generate at least seven of these kinds of bullet points for your product or service. What you’ll get when you’re done is a series of demographics and emotional desires or challenges. Your goal is to select the best one.

Select a popular market, industry or conversation

It's standard marketing practice to look for an empty space and fill it. But this isn't always appropriate for every product or service. Notice car dealerships, retailers and even food trucks are most successful when they go to a place where there are lots of people already spending money. At that point, they don't have to find an audience; they only have to stand out and attract those people who are most attracted to their offer.

The easiest and quickest way to do this is to visit Amazon.com and search the best-sellers in your topic area. If there are thousands and thousands of books on that topic, you are on to something. Another way to find out quickly if there is a thriving conversation around your product or service idea is to simply search on Google for your topic. If you don't see pages and pages of blogs, retailers and forums, then this is not a good niche.

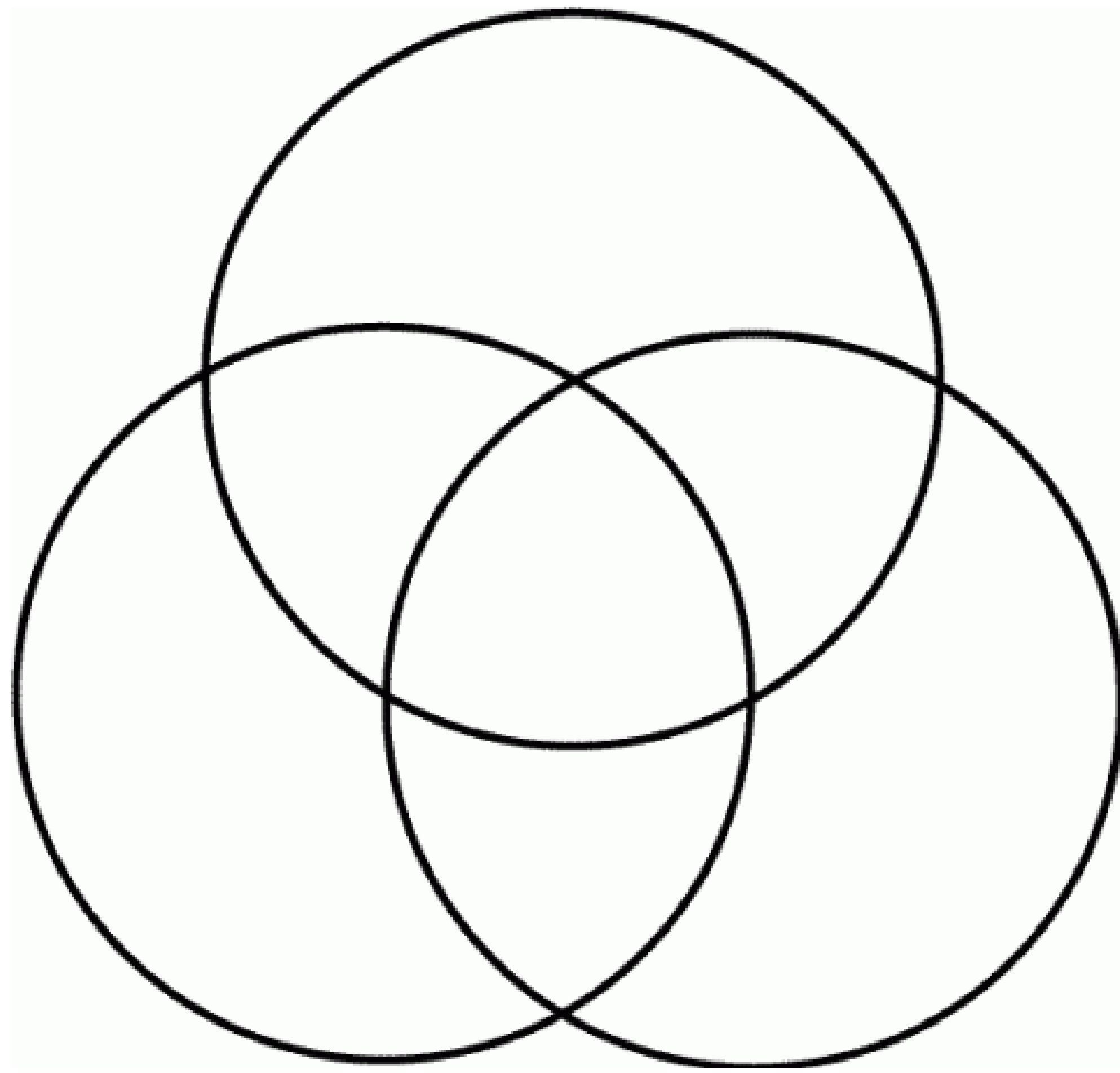
Finally, check out Facebook's advertising manager. By simply going through the process of creating an ad, Facebook will ask you to select an audience. You won't believe the hundreds of ways that Facebook groups people; those celebrating an anniversary in the next 30 days, Gen X, Millennials, and so on.

Research trends, frustrations and wants

Trends are another important aspect of finding a niche. You're looking for ideas, behaviors and products that are trending up and growing in popularity. Mobile devices are a trend. Social media is a trend. Reality TV is a trend. If you're at a loss, just head out to a neighborhood sporting event and watch kids and families interact. What are they talking about, what products are they using? Again, don't differentiate between B2B and consumer because these lines are fairly blurred these days.

Finally, the most powerful buying trigger: frustration. Frustration is a function of the frequency, intensity and duration of a circumstance or event that just irritates your customer to the point of distraction.

To put these into perspective take out a piece of paper. On the top put a picture of a person that represents your target market. Draw three intersecting circles and label them wants, trends and frustrations. Then inside each circle draw icons that represent each of those elements for your audience. This will activate your brain to think differently and connect with that audience.



Use a marketer's mindset

The first thing you will have to do is stop looking at your product or service like a consumer, and start looking at it as a marketer. Consumers get snared and engrossed by the message and don't see beyond the purchase. Marketers are focused on understanding customers' needs, wants and deeper desires and then delivering on those in the form of an offer. Focus on your ideal client and explore how your product or service will help them achieve those deep desires and wants. Don't snicker. If your product is technical or industrial, remember that B2B customers are people too. Explore what your project means to them, will it help them get a promotion, be a hero, invent or develop something new? Think bigger and beyond the tangible.

Follow the money

Another terrific way to help succeed at finding a niche that makes money is to find everyone in that space and do an analysis of how successful they are, who they are attracting and how they are succeeding at attracting people who spend money. Notice the advertising, the headlines and the offers. Critically examine their marketing messages and the customers that are attracted to them. What is it about those messages that pull customers in?

Explore and implement a money-making model

Running your business in reactive mode eats into your profit margins. Simply making, selling and delivering a product or service isn't enough to keep your head above water. You need to create a money-making model that attracts and moves the most profitable customers through your pipeline.

Sometimes your money-making model can actually become a profitable market niche. Online marketers have perfected money-making models. They've carefully crafted landing pages that attract specific markets, they give tons of free educational information and they've turned the upsell into an art.

Make the time to explore and evaluate online marketing offers and then adapt those practices to your business.

Pretend you're an alien

How many times have you had that “whack-on-the-side-of-the-head” moment of “Why didn't I think of that?!” While some entrepreneurs are naturally wired to notice what's missing, the rest of us can do it too, we just need a little practice stepping outside of what we already know.

One simple and fun way to find a market niche is to observe the world around you from the perspective of ... an alien—a space alien who has just landed right where you are standing. I got this idea from a short art film that featured an alien landing on Earth in the middle of a large highway system. This alien assumed that CARS were the primary inhabitants of Earth and that humans were merely parasites. This is a great example of how you can see the world differently by stepping outside of what you already know.

Ask, “What's missing?”

If pretending you're a space alien is too far a stretch for you, try asking yourself “What's missing?” This is a game you can play with yourself no matter where you are and it will give you practice in observing where specific people are having challenges. Those “As Seen on TV” products are a perfect example of “What's Missing” thinking. The only skill you need to have is the ability to step out of your preconceived notions and become a third-party observer.

There are many, many businesses out there that are outrageously successful. If they are successful and making money, you have that opportunity as well. Take a critical marketer's look at your business and use these tips to further define your niche and develop a model that gives this audience exactly what they want and desire. By finding a niche that works for your business, you may not only build profitable sales, but you may also bring joy and satisfaction to your customers.

Put your advertising dollars in the hands of customers

With this strategy, you're taking money you would have spent on advertising and literally giving it to your customer. So your advertising money walks back to your business in the hands of a new customer.

The best way to implement this strategy is to send a friendly letter to your local community. For cost-effective ways to do that, check out the USPS “Every Door” program. In your letter, tell them that what you are sending them is not a coupon, is not a discount—it’s an actual gift certificate that they can spend in your store. Then share all the great things you offer and encourage them to stop by.

This is a ridiculously profitable and successful strategy—yet few retailers have the guts to do it. I encourage you to give it a try.

Do random acts of business

This strategy is ideal for service businesses and professional service firms. First, take a hard look at who your customers are: What’s missing that you can provide? To get to that answer, start paying attention to the things your customers do and say. Then, find something you can provide that they need, and do it.

For example, I recently had a landscaper put a fire pit in my backyard. I had mentioned to him that I was going out of town during the weekend and wouldn’t be able to water the patch of grass they planted around the new fire pit. When I came back from my trip, I found the patch of grass watered with a little card tucked inside the door that read “Compliments from your friendly neighborhood landscaper.”

This was such a simple act of kindness (and part of the services he offers) that I was left really touched. This guy heard me and took the time to do something to maintain the quality of his work. When I asked him about it, he told me he had these printed up and gave them to all his employees so that when they heard a customer say something, or saw something that obviously needed some care, they could step in and lend a hand.

This isn’t just for landscapers—it’s a great strategy for professional services firms as well. One of my clients is an elder law attorney who’s very committed and connected to his local community, especially the nursing homes who often refer clients to him. A member of his staff used to work at a nursing home and knew that during the Christmas holidays there were residents who didn’t have family and wouldn’t get presents. This year she went out and purchased blankets and personal care products, and delivered them to all the local nursing homes as a gift from the law firm.

Offer 30-days of your product or service

You’d be surprised at how few of your customers are aware of all the wonderful things your business does. This is why my “30-Days” strategy is an ideal way to have fun during the holidays while featuring products and services your customers may not have been familiar with.

Simply identify 30 products or services that you offer regularly and combine them into an offer with a special discounted price. Another option is to choose 30 days and feature a free sample or experience of a new product every day. So if you're a bakery owner, you might feature brownies on Monday and cupcakes on Tuesday.

Treat this program like an event. Promote it, tell your newspaper about it and get the word out any way you can. Give new customers a reason to come and try something new. If you run a local business, treat the 30 days like a party so that anytime anyone comes into the store, want to come back. (This isn't just for the holiday season, either; you can apply it to any holiday throughout the year.)

Run a product swap

Instead of ordering generic gifts for my clients, I purchase products from those clients and community members who actually sell physical products, then I give those products to other clients.

For example, I have a client who runs a special gourmet bread bakery and a friend who creates "conversation stones" that you can use as a game at a party or family gathering. I would give the conversation stones to the bakery and the bread to the conversation stone client. Each would receive a card and a note describing the other's business. I was blown away by how much my clients loved this! Another year, I created a set of baskets with all these gifts carefully combined—so that no client received their own product as a gift. This not only brought my clients joy for receiving a creative gift, they got to know and understand my business better as well as that of my other clients. Often, they became fans of each others' products.

Take the time to come up with some creative ways to tell your existing customers how much you care and use the opportunity to [attract new customers](#) to become part of your customer community. The tips I've shared here don't cost any more to implement than taking some time to brainstorm what works for you.

Tips for Keeping Customers

You spend a lot of time looking for creative ways to find and attract new customers, but often ignore [keeping customers](#) we already have. You often get so busy servicing these customers, that we forget to treat them like opportunities. And yet, this might actually be the easiest sales job EVER because they've already made the most difficult decision of all — to work with us in the first place.

Where are you spending more time; getting new customers or growing and expanding your relationship with the customers you already have? If you're like most companies, you're probably spending more time and money looking for and wooing new customers than finding new opportunities within the customers you already have.

When the economy gets tough, everyone tends to go into survival mode and think that they don't have enough customers, or that they need new customers to replace the business that they lost. But the truth is that focusing on the customers you already have is your highest value strategy when times are tough.

If you're afraid of losing a customer or just want to keep the customers you have loyal, here are some easy, low-cost strategies that will help you keep a customer today.

Calculate your customer net worth

The best way to increase sales to existing customers is to see how much these customers have already contributed to your bottom line. The formula is actually simple: Take the total profit of your ideal customer over the lifetime of your relationship. Subtract all the costs associated with acquiring that customer. That's all there is to it. If you'd like more detail, here's a wonderful tool that you can use to see how much each of your ideal customers is worth.

Identify what's most important to your customers

Focus on specific benefits that your customers are looking for such as 24/7 access to technical support instead of just service. The best way to find out is to literally get on the phone or schedule a meeting with a handful of your best customers and simply ask them What's Important to you when you're buying what we're selling? Then be quiet and let them just talk. Listen for golden nuggets that may not have anything to do with WHAT you provide, but HOW you provide it. That's where real value lies.

Review the next customer letter you see and remove all elements of corporate-speak

You can spot fake, empty and inauthentic language (corporate B.S.) from a mile away so can your customer. And they don't like it. Customers are drawn to real people who use plain and simple language. Here's how to test your document's readability in Microsoft Word 2010: Click the File tab, and then click Options. Click Proofing. Under When correcting spelling and grammar in Word, make sure Check grammar with spelling is selected. Select Show readability statistics.

Get employees involved in building your brand and communicating with customers

Some companies shy away from having employees on Facebook while they are working. But creating a social media presence and then actually encouraging employees to connect with customers and communicate with them via Blog, Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn is a terrific way to put a personal face and connection to your company. Before you jump into this strategy, be sure to create a's and clearly outline what's acceptable and not acceptable.

Create a Key Account Plan for a Critical Customer

The most profitable customers are the ones who purchase across your product and service offering. Yet, many of us have customers who purchase one or two products or services when they might actually have a need for (but not know about) the other products we have available. A key account plan puts your focus on your customer and all the different ways that you can serve them not just with products, but with other value added services. Think of it as a marketing plan for that one target customer.

Offer an insane guarantee

BEFORE your customer starts threatening to go to a competitor, create and offer an insane guarantee. Business owners are often afraid of offering guarantees because they think that they will lose money. But if you've done the customer net worth calculation (tip #1) you will see that offering a risk-free guarantee costs NOTHING compared to what that customer has already contributed to your bottom line.

Give them the star treatment

Identify your key customers and create a concierge team to service their every need.

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freedom to get things done. If this proves successful for you, think about making this an added service that other customer can subscribe to. I know one company that added \$2 million straight to their bottom line by using this strategy.

Create an advisory board

Instead of wondering what new products or services would most interest your customer, get them involved in the development process by inviting them to participate on an advisory board. The investment in time and money in creating this engaged customer community will pay off in spades. Create events where you educate your customer advisory board on industry trends and then ask them the questions that keep you wondering if there's actually demand for your idea. You can even keep these virtual with tools like GoToMeeting that have chat screens, polls and the ability to create recorded sessions.

Monthly surprise Gift

We've all heard of a book of the month club, how about a surprise of the month gift? for your key customers. I'm not necessarily talking about the kinds of gifts that get you in trouble. Maybe it's something like "This month's order of widget x? was on us!? Enjoy?" Again, if you look at your key customer's net worth to your business, isn't it better to spend your money on keeping them loyal than throwing your money away in hopes of gaining a new customer? Reciprocity (along with quality and service) is a powerful loyalty tool.

LOVE them. When you love a hobby or another person you take an interest in what's happening around them. Do the same with your customers. If you know that your customer contact is a fan of pink flamingos and you see a postcard or figurine in a gift shop pick it up and send it to them. It says that you know who they are and you listen and care. Do at least one nice, selfless thing for a customer because you love them.

This is a short list of 10 ways to keep customers. But YOU'RE somebody's customer too. Why not take this opportunity to share what you'd want to see from the companies you do business with that would keep you loyal and get you singing their praises.

Tips to Win Back Lost Customers

Losing customers hurts. Figuring out how to [get your old customers back](#) hurts even more. Because it takes so much effort, many business owners don't even see the point of building bridges. That logic may be a bit flawed because old customers can play a direct (or indirect) role on your company's profits and reputation.

The key is learning when to rebuild a bridge with a lost customer and when to leave that bridge uncrossed.

Why Should You Care About Lost Customers?

65% of your business comes from existing customers, not fancy marketing campaigns. In a world where 92% of consumers trust recommendations over advertising, this is something that a business cannot ignore. Advertising and marketing can raise awareness, but it is often word of mouth or online reviews that motivate a customer to purchase.

If we take the cost to acquire a new customer, engaging with old customers may not look so daunting. Jonathan Herrick dropped another statistic in the Bizapalooza chat about that:

It costs 5 times more money to attract a new customer than it is to retain an existing customer.

Using your business' resources (people, money, marketing, advertising, etc.) can be a huge drain of time and money that has been repeated over and over again for each new customer. Compare that to former customers.

A recent Harvard Business Review study found that former customers who came back to a business stayed longer with the business and paid much more during the second time.

To put it simply, it costs less to rebuild a bridge with a customer than to build an entirely new one.

The Bad Bite of Angry Customers

Lost customers aren't just lost revenue. They can also represent more of a potential liability than you might expect. Angry customers are most likely to leave a bad review, tell others about their experiences, and voice their opinions on social media and other channels. These activities are more than an angry customer letting out some steam. They represent a potential deal breaker for a prospective customer looking for reviews of your company.

If a customer finds these negative reviews convincing (and most consumers do), an angry customer's reviews can drive away customers before they even interact with you.

How Do I Get My Old Customers Back?

Rebuilding a connection with your former customers comes with financial and marketing incentives. It costs fewer resources to reconnect with older customers and it decreases the spread of negative word-of-mouth marketing.

Know why customers leave

Customers may not always tell you why they leave but the reasons are usually predictable: price, bad customer service, product or service failure, etc.

When customers leave your business, do your best to find out why. Ask customers in surveys. Review comments or mentions of your business on social media. Check your business profiles on Yelp, social media, and other review sites. (Google Alerts can help with this.)

Look for Red Flags

Customers won't always "leave" a business the same way. Some may stop using your service cold turkey after a bad customer service experience or product breakdown. Others might decrease use of your product or service slowly because of changes in income or circumstances. Dig deep into the reasons why people leave. In some cases, you just won't know. In more cases than you'd like to admit, customers will tell you why they are leaving your business. Customers can be very vocal about why they are leaving a company.

Use their reasons for leaving to craft a better offer

Identify the top 3-5 reasons your customers leave your company.

- Has your pricing changed?
- Have conditions in the economy changed?
- Is there a new competitor in town?

Once you have those reasons, prepare a defense.

- Try a special pricing campaign or coupon for former customers.
- Consider adding more customer service staff to decrease wait times or

- Open up a new channel to engage with customers.

A single customer leaving your business can be out of your control. Sometimes a customer just needs to leave. A group of customers who follow the same typical pattern of leaving your business is something you need to address.

Look over the top reasons customers leave your business and see if there is anything you can do to fix it.

Know their worth

Not every customer is worth going after. Some customer relationships have crossed the line or a customer doesn't show any interest in returning to your company. Going after these customers might end up a large waste of time and resources. Instead, focus on previous customers who left for specific reasons.

Try to identify the stage in the customer journey that you are losing customers

Are you losing customers right before customers? It might be a pricing or usability issue. Are you losing customers after reaching customer service on the phones? Check the average number of calls and wait times. Are you customers expressing outrage about a policy on their social media sites? Review that policy and make a determination about to do.

Make it better than ever

A key ingredient in rebuilding a bridge with a customer is “the promise”. Once you have lured a customer back, you have to work harder to maintain the relationship. Second (or third)-time customers are much more sensitive than new customers. Focus on demonstrating your gratitude in having a customer back. Invest in that relationship. Tell customers how you've changed or what you've changed in your business. Demonstrate that on a daily basis and ensure that everyone in your team knows the reasons and methodology for investing in this new relationship as well.

Tips to Keep Customers Coming Back

[Customer loyalty programs](#) began in the 1700s to help create repeat business, but today's loyalty programs have morphed into something that often strays from this mission.

But, many loyalty rewards programs seem to be more focused on gathering your personal information than generating loyalty.

You want a customer loyalty program that does what it's supposed to do -- [keep customers coming back](#) to your company over and over again.

Let's get straight to the tips:

Focus all your efforts on what matters to your customers

You don't have to be a master marketer to connect with your customers and keep them coming back. You DO have to show your customers that you are one of them.

It's easy to focus on your product or service -- don't do that. Instead, focus on highlighting the biggest challenges your customers face and keep showing how your product or service delivers a solution.

Make it easy for customers to buy, use, maintain and refer you

Because "customer service" is an obvious way to keep customers coming back, I've decided to be more specific about the role customer service plays in driving customer loyalty.

If you've done the work of connecting with your ideal customer, you should have a clear idea of what customer service means to them. So, make sure that you craft your customer service guidelines based on what is going to inspire them to keep coming back.

- Make sure your contact information is on every page of your website.
- Install a chat on your website. Customers who get their questions answered are more likely to make an immediate purchase.
- Whenever possible, post pricing on your website and outline what's included in each product offer.
- Provide easy to find and understand return and exchange information.

Remember, loyalty doesn't just come from having everything be perfect all the time, perhaps the biggest driver of loyalty and referrals is how you handle customer problems.

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Tips for Attracting and Getting New Customers

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