



**Powerful Marketing Minutes**  
50 Ways to Develop Market Leadership  
in the 21st Century

**Book Excerpt**  
**Chapter 9**

**Building Customer Loyalty**

How do you build customer loyalty?

To start with, your organisation has to be able to fully understand customer requirements and to appreciate customer needs...particularly individual customer needs.

And you need to have policy flexibility and organisational adaptability in order to meet individual customer needs. In other words, you need to be flexible in how your policies are applied. Not all customers are equal or alike...and therefore you cannot afford to treat all customers equally or in the same manner.

To fully understand customer requirements and needs, you need to engage in interactive, two-way, on-going dialogues with your customers. Now, of course, you probably cannot afford to do this with each and every one of your customers.

Particularly if you have a large customer base.

But your organisation should be engaging in two-way, interactive dialogues with your most important customers. And you should have a dedication to complete quality control throughout your organisation.

The best way to build customer loyalty is by completely satisfying the needs of your critical customers. A commitment to quality control is essential if you are to completely satisfy your customers.

Why do your repeat customers continue to transact with you? Is this because you are the most convenient option? Because you are the lowest price? Or because you completely satisfy their needs?

If the answer is anything except the latter, then your business is vulnerable to an astute competitor --- who can beat you by focusing on this one criterion.

However, if you are providing true customer satisfaction, then I wouldn't even attempt to compete with you!

Remember, customer satisfaction is both more anticipatory and pro-active than is mere customer service. First, it seeks to understand what their needs are and then to ensure that the customer is fully satisfied, not merely mollified with a quick-fix solution or an apologetic reward or gift aimed to pacify an unhappy customer.

Secondly, customer satisfaction is a mindset that seeks to anticipate future customer needs and therefore prevents the organisation from making future mistakes and errors.

Best of all...if you are anticipating future customer needs you are undoubtedly doing the one most important thing that will build customer loyalty.....taking care of the customer's needs before he or she even recognises those needs. That's how you truly build customer loyalty.

*Key Point: customer satisfaction is both more anticipatory and pro-active than is mere customer service.*

*Discussion Topics: what are your customer service goals and standards – are these reactive and customer service focused (i.e. time spent serving each customer, average customer wait time, etc.) or are they designed so that you deliver CUSTOMER SATISFACTION at each point of customer contact?*

*What can you do to make CUSTOMER SATISFACTION your key point of differentiation?*

*This Chapter is excerpted from Powerful Marketing Minutes by Steven Howard.*

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