



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

**Book Excerpt**  
**Chapter 12**

**Keeping Customers Loyal**

Keeping customers loyal is an art form, not a science.

As is true of all good marketing practices. Marketing is, after all, an art, not a scientific discipline.

The most important ways to keep customers loyal are five simple....simple to understand I should say....but not always simple to execute.....actions:

1. Always deliver upon the promises that anyone in the organisation makes. Walk your talk. Have everyone in the organisation understand that your word is your bond with customers.
2. Ensure that you have product and service delivery consistently at all times.
3. Be able to anticipate future customer needs – and create flexible and adaptable organisational structures so that you are better prepared to meet these changing customer needs before they occur.
4. Solve future customer needs – either through changing product features, benefits, or through upgraded service delivery.
5. Cultivate long-term customer relationships by being engaged in two-way, interactive dialogues with your customers that help you anticipate their changing and future needs.

Naturally, you cannot....and probably do not want....to cultivate deep-seated relationships with all your customers. The cost of doing so is probably prohibitive.

On the other hand, you certainly will want to apply these practices to the 20% of your customers who give you 80% of your revenues.....or, better yet, the 80% of your profits....if you are able to calculate profitability on a customer-by-customer basis.

Customer loyalty needs to be thought of as a two-way street. Many senior managers I speak with these days complain that “customers are not as loyal as they used to be.”

Then, when I start to investigate their own policy changes, pricing methodologies, and marketing activities, it becomes very obvious to me that many of these same organisations are no longer as loyal to their customers as they used to be.

No wonder they feel they have lost customer loyalty. They’ve stopped earning and deserving it through their own practices.

By following the five practices mentioned above, you’ll be in a better position to ensure that you do not suffer from deteriorating customer loyalty.

*Key Point: keeping customers loyal is an art, not a science. But there are five proven steps you can take to practice this art.*

*Discussion Topics: does your organisation always, constantly, live up to its word? Do you always deliver upon your promises?*

*Is there any pattern to inconsistency in your product or service delivery?*

*How do you anticipate future customer needs? How are these communicated and internalised within the organisation?*

*Are your dialogues with customers truly two-way and interactive? How would you rate the listening skills of the organisation? How would your customers rate these skills? Is this something worth researching and verifying?*

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

### **The Author**

*Steven Howard is a Melbourne-based marketing consultant, author, conference speaker, and Non-Executive Director in both the profit and non-profit fields.*

*Visit his web site, [www.howard-marketing.com](http://www.howard-marketing.com) for valuable information and links on marketing, customer retention, branding, and corporate image management or to sign up for his free weekly newsletter The Monday Morning Marketing Memo and his marketing blog.*

*He is a positioning specialist, whose 30-year marketing and sales career in Asia and Australia has covered a wide variety of fields, ranging from consumer electronics to publishing and from a national airline to personal financial products.*

*He is President of Howard Marketing Services, which provides consultancy and project management services in the areas of Marketing Management, Product Development, Positioning Strategies, Customer Retention Strategies, New Product Launches, Event Management and Brand Management.*

*He consults on a regular basis to companies in the financial services, industrial products, consumer products, restaurants, petroleum, publishing and hospitality fields.*

**Contact details**

**Phone:** (61-3) 5428-1388

**Fax:** (61-3) 5428-1399

**E-mail:** [steven@howard-marketing.com](mailto:steven@howard-marketing.com)

**Website:** <http://www.howard-marketing.com>

**Blog:** <http://www.howard-marketing.com/marketingblog>

**Free Newsletter:** Receive Steven Howard's free weekly marketing newsletter, the **Monday Morning Marking Memo**, by subscribing at [www.howard-marketing.com](http://www.howard-marketing.com).