



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

Book Excerpt
Chapter 26

Taking Care of Customers

I was in Melbourne in mid August (1999) attending a major meeting of the Australian and New Zealand banks that issue MasterCard credit cards and Maestro debit cards.

Mr. Nicholas Utton, Chief Marketing Officer of MasterCard International, had one key message for this audience of senior bankers concerning customers: “if we don’t take care of our customers, someone else will.”

That’s worth repeating.....and reflecting on: “if we don’t take care of our customers, someone else will.”

And how true that is. Just think about all the choices and options available to customers today. Rare is the organisation that finds itself without competitors.

Even rarer is the customer that finds himself without options, choices, or substitute products for the solutions they seek.

To take care of your customers, you need to have a full understanding of their wants, needs, and desires. I would also suggest that you need to have a corporate attitude that understands a person or an organisation is not truly your customer until *the second time they buy*.

That’s right. I recommend you don’t consider anyone a customer until the second time they buy from you. The first time they buy they are merely a trial user.

Unless they achieve satisfaction from the purchase and the use of your product or service, they may be unlikely to repeat their business with you. Hence, taking care of the customer goes beyond the mere sales cycle and includes all post-purchase activities such as use, repair, servicing, customer service, warranties and trade-in or re-sale.

The best way to take care of your prospects and customers is to tailor or customise your products and service offering as much as you profitably can.

Treat your customers as individuals...with individual needs...at all customer touch points and you'll be well on your way to developing customer loyalty.

And remember, in the words of MasterCard's Chief Marketing Officer, if you don't take care of your customers, someone else will.

Key Point: *if you don't take care of your customers, someone else will.*

Discussion Topics: *are you fully aware of the experiences customers have with your products? How satisfying are these experiences? Any way to find out?*

Where can your product or service offer be customised? How can you create tailored solutions for your very, very important customers?

How can you find out if a first-time customer is likely to buy from you again?

What kinds of communications can you put in place for first-time customers?

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

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