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Are you making all the sales you want?

Are you keeping your customers?

Are you making enough profit?

How to Gain and Retain *More* Customers

A Plain Language Guide

This little book is simply brilliant.

Chris Bloor
Quality Business Institute

*"How to Gain and Retain More Customers"
is a must read for every business owner!*

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**How to Gain
and Retain *More*
Customers -
*A Plain Language Guide***

Written by James Yuille

“Make more sales, get more referrals and generate all the repeat business you could wish for!”

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**How To Gain And Retain *More Customers* -
A Plain Language Guide**

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A Plain Language Guide**

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Introduction

Over the last 30 years, I've worked in, managed and owned several different businesses. My focus has always been sales and I've instilled into everyone I've worked with that the task of gaining and retaining customers is not just the sales or marketing person's task; it's **everyone's responsibility**.

The nature of the business doesn't matter.

You can be running an accountancy practice, a law office, a natural health care clinic; be involved in computer maintenance, dog washing or hair care; run a café or as I do, a training consultancy; it doesn't matter. The fundamentals are the same.

Non-sales staff get confused because they see the function of their job, be it maintenance technician or accounts clerk, as unrelated to the revenue generation aspect of the business.

Nothing could be further from the truth

This is a very important concept; one that few businesses really grasp and yet it's a major cause of the breakdown in the process of creating and maintaining long term client relationships.

The purpose of this little book is to explain by use of real-life examples, how easily the supplier / client relationship can be enhanced or destroyed.

In his book, "Critical Path" R. Buckminster Fuller outlined a formula for working out the number of relationships within a group of people. Here's the formula - x represents the number of people...

Number of relationships = x^2 minus x

Suppose you have four staff and they're all involved with six staff members from a client company. There are a total of 90 relationships involved. Hard to imagine? Yes, and that's why everyone involved in **your** business needs to fully understand the contents of this book.

Throughout this book, you'll find examples of how you and your staff can do it better. Sometimes though you can't help wondering about the customers. Try this one...

A man walked into the convenience store where my son works. He asked if they had tomorrow's local newspaper. My son replied, "How can we have tomorrow's paper?" to which the gentleman responded "You're not with it son, are you?" My son said (in his own unique sarcastic voice) "I guess not". How did the customer respond? "Don't worry son, you'll understand one day". Understand *what*, I wonder.

Enjoy!

James.

Part 1. Lets get straight to the point – It’s all about getting customers to spend money!

Let’s start by making a couple of general statements about running a business.

Any business owner would agree with me that the aim of the business is to generate a profit, and preferably lots of it.

Before that can happen though, the business has to have an income.

- ◆ Revenue comes from making sales.
- ◆ Sales come from customers.
- ◆ Repeat sales are made to satisfied customers.
- ◆ Profits come when overheads and costs are less than sales revenue.

Everyone is involved in gaining and maintaining customers

It stands to reason therefore, that in order to make profits, the business needs to find and keep customers. That’s a process called selling...

Putting it very bluntly, you have to sell something to somebody!

In order to continue to make profits, and for profits to increase, you can either reduce overheads or make more sales. The truth about reducing overheads is that you can only go so far – cut the phone and power bills, reduce other expenses but that may reduce costs by 5% which really doesn’t make much difference to the profit line - so all you can really do is sell more or buy better. Buying better isn’t all that easy, so the solution is to make more sales.

Any business without customers won’t be able to put a single dollar in your pocket. It won’t matter if you have an honors degree or the best product on the planet. No customers = no cash flow.

Unless someone sells something, nothing else happens!

For the sake of simplicity, I want to focus on the *customer* aspect. After all, without the customer we’d have no revenue and therefore no business.

Some business planning purists would say that the starting point of the enterprise is a vision or a goal of where we want to be in two, five, ten years. That’s fine, but in the everyday battle of making money, those admirable aspirations are forgotten; especially by the staff whose main motivation is the next paycheck.

Cash flow and profits have a common starting point – CUSTOMERS

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In real terms, we're dealing with the day-to-day interaction between your staff and your revenue source. Remember that most of your staff members don't share your vision or aspirations. When you look at it like that, what they do and say suddenly becomes important, doesn't it?

Yet typically we don't take any time to train our support teams in customer communication skills.

Let's look at generating clients

You might be the best printer in town; be the finest chef, have the nicest function rooms but if you can't generate clients, what's the point?

Unless you can sell your service, you're unemployed!

I know I'll cop some flack for this but building a better mousetrap is only part of the battle. You have to be able to sell it. You're far better to be a brilliant marketer with an OK product than a totally hopeless marketer with a brilliant product.

Marketing has but one purpose: To sell stuff. Get good at marketing; attract more prospects and get good at sales and you'll get more customers.

Getting clients comes down to identifying what you have to offer them and then packaging your advertising, marketing and presentations to meet that need. You are essentially a problem solver where the problem is the gap between where your client is and where they want to be, or what they have and what they want to have.

By asking astute questions and listening attentively to their answers, you can find out what issues they are concerned about. What are astute questions?

These are questions that help you identify what's going on in their business or in their lives. You're looking to uncover how you can (*as Anthony Robbins says in "Awaken The Giant Within"*) give them pleasure or help them to avoid pain.

These are the simple motivators for all decisions. The gaining of pleasure or avoidance of pain. Sometimes in business, we'll hear this expressed as making or saving money. When you think about it, both expressions mean the same thing so take your pick!

OK, so there will be more complex theories expressed about buying motivation. Fear, hope, reward, saving face and more but when you boil them all down, they're all the same.

Pain/Pleasure

Ask yourself this question right now:

“How does what I sell help generate pleasure or help avoid pain?”

“Communication is the response you get”

In other words, ask a dumb question and you'll get a dumb answer.

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Answer this one simple question and you're on the way to gaining loads of new customers. Make sure that you and your team fully understand this simple motivator, and you're well on the way.

You **have** to understand the benefit of whatever you sell. Your entire reason for existence is the value you can bring to your customer. You've heard this before – **What's In It For Me?**

Remember that all along, your customer is saying to himself or herself, *"What's in this for me?"*

This might be a knockout punch to you but let me tell you this straight - if what you do doesn't add value, people won't come to you.

Here's a simple check to tell you whether what you sell is a benefit:

When you explain what you do in such a way that your buyer can answer *"So what?"* you've not provided a benefit.

By comparison, if they reply, *"That's interesting"* or *"Yes, I see"* the chances are you've provided a benefit.

Not sure what I mean by benefits? OK, let's look at some examples. Let's take a lawn-mowing contractor as an example. Yes, he cuts your grass. But what he *really* does is saves you time, energy and lots of hard work. Mowing grass in 33°C heat is plain hard work, yet he does it day in, day out. Result is happy customers who have great looking lawns all year round.

The **real benefit** is that the time you'd otherwise spend mowing the grass you can spend with your family or doing something more relaxing.

If you're a bookkeeper, the service you provide your clients is that their books are being maintained by an expert who understands exactly how their business works and who can make sure the financial aspects of your business are properly recorded for you, your accountant and the Government authorities.

You're selling peace of mind and the time to do more revenue generating work within your business (or to take some time off). If you spend five hours each week doing the books, how much more revenue could the business generate if you spent that time generating revenue?

Ask yourself what you can do to bring the greatest value to your customer and how you can do so in the least threatening way.

Whatever you do, don't get wrapped up in your product. Your focus is to sell what people want to buy. This means you have to package and present what you sell in such a way that they find it irresistible. (For instance, people don't want to buy sales training. What they want is to find out how to make more sales.)

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Go back into the annals of advertising. Read any of the classics such as “Tested Advertising Methods” by John Caples or “My Life In Advertising” or “Scientific Advertising” by Claude C. Hopkins and you’ll discover that selling benefits is as old as advertising itself.

Modern day advertising and copywriting gurus such as Jay Abrahams, Gary Halbert, Dan Kennedy, Brett McFall, Chris Bloor and Mark Hendricks will tell you the same thing.

So what does all this have to do with gaining and retaining clients? Simple. Unless you satisfy needs by solving their problems, they won’t buy and they won’t stay.

It’s the marketing department’s job to attract them, it’s the sales department’s job to secure them but **it’s everyone’s job to get them to stay.**

There’s a very distinct difference between sales and marketing by the way. Put simply, marketing is the process by which buyers are attracted to your business. It’s the sales process that gets them to spend.

Direct marketing by comparison, sits in between the two. Direct Marketing is a process that attempts (*generally*) by a one or two-step process, to secure the business without the need for a salesperson.

30 years of experience in this field tells me that no one solution fits all businesses. From the largest business to the smallest, the human factor comes into play.

Ultimately, people do business with people. People they like. People they **trust**. Now there’s another biggie. Trust.

What does this mean?

My dictionary defines trust as “Reliance on the honesty, etc., of a person, or on some other quality; confidence.”

- ◆ **Do your customers trust you?**
- ◆ **Are you honest?**
- ◆ **Do you inspire confidence?**

Of even more importance; do you and your staff exude trust, honesty and confidence? Have you developed rapport? Tom Vizzini¹ puts it like this “*Inside rapport, everything is possible.*”

If not, then you have a problem...

Remember the young lady who told me her boss “Didn’t locate here” She didn’t inspire confidence in me. The message I got was that she was ill informed and poorly trained.

¹ www.essential-skills.com

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That suggests that the owner of the business wasn't paying enough attention to the front end of his business. The public face. Remember that every staff member is an ambassador for your business. You NEVER get a second chance to make a first impression...

He didn't empower his staff with the right words to inspire confidence. Imagine for a moment that you phone your accountant or solicitor and instead of answering the call with the firm's name and then their name, they answer “Yea?” How would you react?

Here's a test for you: get a friend to call your office when you're not there. Ask them what happens. You'll likely be surprised. That's the purpose of a mystery shopper. To tell you what you probably didn't want to hear!

When a potential customer phones, emails, visits your website or walks into your store, what's the single most important thing you need to do? (I'm not talking about take-away food stores here by the way)

The most important thing you can do is to get their name!

Why?

Because you need it in order to stay in touch with them because people don't generally buy on their first visit. They usually need convincing.

The most important thing you can do is get their name

And if you haven't got their name, how can you get back to them?

So here's the first part of the strategy - establish a process to get your visitor's name. There are lots of ways to do this. Here are a few...

- ◆ Run a contest where you give away something of value every month just for visiting the store. In men's clothing for instance, you could give away quality ties or quality polo shirts.
- ◆ Invite them to join your mailing list to get advance information on new releases and specials.
- ◆ Tell them about your loyalty program and explain that even though they're not yet customers, the benefits apply.

Not sure how a loyalty program works? Here are a couple of examples:

Ladies hairdressing. Explain to your customers that advertising is expensive and rather than spend hundreds on newspaper adverts, you'd rather spend hundreds of dollars on your clients. Give them a few cards introducing the salon to their friends, offering a free treatment of some kind as a benefit.

At such time as the client has introduced three friends each of who have visited three times, give the original client a quality gift basket or a meal voucher for two at a quality restaurant.

Car maintenance. Provide credit points for extra services for each scheduled maintenance visit. Credits could be used for minor scratch and dent repairs, wheel alignments, etc.

Once you have their name recorded, and have permission to use it to send them information (necessary where privacy laws exist to stop “SPAM” marketing), you need a follow-up program.

To do this, you need a plan and you have to follow it up. Depending on what business you’re in, this may be all direct mail, a combination of mail and phone, fax or visits or email broadcasts.

You need to store these names in a database of some form to enable you to merge details such as names and addresses into your letters. Now you can automate your marketing campaigns.

If you have a website, you can add a space on your site for people to subscribe to your newsletter – you can subscribe to my electronic newsletter (“ezine”) James Yuille’s Sales Tips at www.jamesyuille.com Use your mailing / email broadcasts to further develop your prospective customer’s trust.

Email broadcasts are the easiest and cheapest by far. Use an Autoresponder program such as [AWeber](#). This amazing software allows to you send either a sequence of pre-programmed messages or a broadcast message to your database. It’s all done online so you need an Internet connection. Their software is very easy to use and it’s the service I use for my ezine.

If you run adverts where the aim is to have people call you, make sure again that you get their names. Sounds simple but it’s easily and frequently overlooked.

I made a call to a Company recently as a result of seeing their advert and asked about their products.

A male voice very enthusiastically answered all of my questions and also told me whom their competitor was when he said, “*We’re cheaper than Company X too*”. He didn’t even bother to get my name. You can guess the name of the Company I called next...

Another male voice answered my call at Company X. He asked who I was and what my interest in their product was. I told him and he asked me a few more questions before recommending a solution. He then asked if I had Internet access and directed me through their website to let me see more about it. Then he walked me through the site with the net result being that I bought from them. It’s obvious why, isn’t it?

What questions do you ask?

Questions fall into two basic categories; open and closed. In turn, there are two more categories; fact-finding and feeling finding questions. Fact-finding

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questions reveal factual situations; feeling finding questions reveal emotions and opinions.

Open questions start with "*who, what, when, where and why.*" They're designed to solicit wide-ranging responses or in other words, to get the customer talking.

Try asking, "*Who is your current supplier?*" or "*What do you find most / least convenient about the way your current supplier does this at present?*"

Closed questions look for a choice answer. This could be yes or no; this week or next; manual or automatic. Use these to seek confirmation of minor aspects of the discussion.

DO NOT use them as closing questions!!

In fact, don't try to close the sale.

Closing the sale is the worst thing you can attempt to do. **Ever.**

Look, if you're still reading sales training manuals that teach closing the sale, throw them away immediately. If your sales manager or trainer is teaching closing the sale, I think you have a problem... They're probably losing you more customers than they're generating.

Closing questions are as relevant today as a crank handle is on your car. It's like your accountant using 15-year reference guides to do your tax return.

Your buyer is not going to appreciate you using any manipulative tactics to get them to buy. Sales are generated and customers retained by a process of identifying their needs and politely showing them how their needs can be met by your product or solution.

Providing you have identified a need and described how your solution fits it, and they have the funds and the authority to buy, they will generally buy. (It might not be today but urgency is another issue)

Here are some of the reasons why the sale isn't made.

- No authority
- No money
- No trust
- No help
- No hurry
- No solution

Who,
What,
When,
Where,
Why.

Five question starters that will get you almost any information you want...

If we take them one at a time, here's how you interpret them.

No authority

Basically you're trying to sell to the wrong person.

That's your fault.

Instead, identify what the decision making process is within that organization (or family) and enlist this person as your advocate. By arming them with enough ammunition, they will then assist you by influencing the key players for you.

No money

Simple. They haven't the ability to pay.

Can they accept terms; partial payment for partial delivery or does it need to be postponed until next month or next year? Again, it's worthwhile in the first place to let them know what the money aspect is likely to represent. You don't buy a new Ferrari on a Kia budget.

A word of caution here: money is often used as an excuse when there's nothing else to consider. This is generally revealed when your customer says that's he can buy the same thing elsewhere for less.

What that tells me is that you haven't painted yourself or your company as an essential part of the solution. You need to consider your warranty / guarantee, service offering or how you've bundled your offer in terms of support materials.

I have a client who owns a bike store. When I met him he complained about other stores being cheaper and that he needed to discount as a result. This guy is a serious bike rider having won titles on machines he designed and built himself.

The solution was simple. We looked at what bike buyers bought along with their bikes. He now bundles helmets, drink bottles and gloves in with the bike. He has added a free three-month maintenance check where he adjusts the brakes and gears; he offers courses in bike maintenance and runs three weekly enthusiast rides starting from his shop.

He now has a point of difference over the discount.

No trust

They don't like one or more of you, your company or your product. Maybe your phone operator asked them "Where do you locate?" Were you dressed appropriately? Was your business card thin and flimsy with a homemade look? You only get one chance to make a first impression. Do it well.

No help

They didn't believe you could be of assistance and didn't reveal their real issues to you as a result.

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No hurry

You didn't identify any degree of urgency. It's essential to reach agreement on a timeline for implementing your solution.

No solution

What you offered didn't meet their needs; solve their problem; take away pain or provide pleasure. Rethink your offer.

Think back on every sale you're missed recently and I'll bet one of the above was the reason.

It's really quite a simple process.

Let's summarize it in seven bullet points to make it easy for you to follow.

1. Identify someone who might want what you sell and get together with them.
2. Establish yourself as a viable supplier.
3. Ask questions to confirm that they could indeed use what you sell.
4. Explain how your solution will work for them.
5. Check that they can make a decision and can pay for it.
6. Agree to a timeline for the transaction to take place.
7. Get their money.

Ah, I hear you ask. That's all very well but how do I get to them in the first place?

Here's a thumbnail intro to marketing.

I have a theory that until you can sell your product, you can't create a marketing campaign for it.

Until you've learned what you're selling (in other words, what it will do for your buyer), you can't create an advert for it. Neither can you write a direct mail piece.

A thumbnail guide to marketing tells us that marketing is simply a process that gets potential buyers to put their hands up to say "I'm Interested."

How do we do it?

Basically the options are a one-step or a two-step approach. I'm not talking about dance steps here by the way. This is not a disco!

Let me explain.

One-step marketing is where an advert or letter stimulates the buyer sufficiently that they get on the phone, send a fax, walk into your store and pull out their VISA card and buy without you ever knowing who they are.

Advertising is simply
salesmanship in
print.

If you can't sell your
product, how can
you write an advert
for it?

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Two-step marketing involves the potential buyer in calling, emailing, visiting your website, faxing, clipping a coupon, or walking in to ask for more information.

You might offer a free report, the results of a survey, an initial free consultation, a seminar ticket or some other inducement to find out more about what you offer.

This involves no risk on their part by the way. Your task is to follow up with the information in such a way that they are influenced to buy.

The object of one-step marketing is to generate a sale. Frequently this is a solo sale meaning no ongoing business. The objective of two-step marketing is to get a name. That's why you need a database of names so you can mail, phone or email them with further offers.

Once you have their name, you can rightly assume that they have some interest in your service so now you can maintain their interest by providing ongoing information.

Be aware that in business-to-business sales, it is generally recognized that the sale is more likely to be made after four or five calls than after one or two. This varies between products and services of course. So the simple message here is *don't quit too soon*.

Health care professionals generate patients on the first visit as do dog wash and lawn mowing businesses. (Funny that isn't it?) Specialist sales such as home finance or computer installations take longer.

You'll of course know the timeframe for your business because you track and record what happens with your marketing responses already. Oh, you mean you don't?

Remember this: If you can't record it, you can't measure it.

Unless you track the response to each campaign you'll never know if it was profitable so get to it! Start today. Get some ebooks on writing headlines and copy.

Here are some tools that can help you with this... [take this link](#)

Part 2. Some simple case studies

Over the years, I've seen some fantastic sales people in action, witnessed excellent customer retention efforts; seen some dreadful mistakes made and helped any number of people do it better.

Here are a few examples - the Good, the Bad and the Downright Ugly!

Let's start with some examples of good service...

This one demonstrates an understanding of the lifetime value of a customer. Put simply, lifetime value relates to the total spend that client is capable of making with you over the years you'll do business together.

I have a training client who has been with me for five years. The first sale was only about \$5,000 but over the time, their total spend has been well in excess of \$45,000 and they have generated at least five other substantial clients through referrals.

That's a valuable client!

Here's another:

My lawnmower man was driving down my street one Sunday and saw me pruning some bushes in the yard. He stopped, grabbed his chain saw and started to help. I asked him how much he wanted and he said, *"Nothing mate. I was on my way to the tip and the trailer isn't full"*.

He knows the value of a customer. Gary has cut my lawn on average 20 times a year for the last ten years. I pay him \$25 per mow - that's over \$5,000 so I guess a free load to the dump wasn't that much to give away. He saved me having to borrow or hire a trailer and it meant I could relax and watch the game that afternoon, too.

A couple of pages further on I'll reveal how I show owners of businesses like this to build their customer base quickly and effortlessly.

And another...

A few weeks ago, I had a flat tire. More than flat actually, it was destroyed because I reversed into the sharp edge of a storm water drain. (OK, it was *my* fault!) Anyway, in trying to change the tire, I couldn't undo the wheel nuts. I had to call a tow truck! We took the car to the Bob Jane T-Mart where they were able to remove the nuts but reported that they were fastened on **extremely** tightly.

It occurred to me that they had been the last to remove the wheels and I started to discuss the inconvenience with the store manager. He explained how with their specialist equipment this problem couldn't occur and he asked me if anyone else might have taken the wheels off.

It was then I realized that the car dealer had done a brake replacement a few weeks before and the problem was likely to have been caused then. So

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I paid for the tire and drove off to see the dealer. Explaining the situation to them, they checked all of the wheel nuts on the other three wheels and found them all to be far too tight.

They fixed that and because they realized all my inconvenience had been due to their initial error, they refunded me the cost of the tire. Why? Because the episode had made them aware of an internal problem. Checking other vehicles serviced at around the same time showed that some others had suffered from the same problem. (The report on the Bob Jane invoice certainly helped)

Bob Jane T-Mart certainly know how to do it right. Like McDonald's, to Bob Jane T-Marts, customer service is everything. If you ever wonder why companies like these get to be so big and so successful, that's why! Their systems are entrenched, bullet proof and reliable. Their staff are trained and understand that everyone has a role in customer generation and retention. There's a message in that.

Here's a quick and simple message – both these companies understand the lifetime value of their customer. Each experience has to be good to make sure you return.

Examples of small businesses who understand lifetime value

Jeff Lee opened a Barber's Shop at Pinelands Plaza at Sunnybank Hills² about 10 years ago. I went in for a haircut in his first week there and took my sons soon after.

The three of us have been there once a month over those 10 years, that's a total of 360 haircuts we've had between us. Jeff's prices are reasonable – an average of \$10 - \$12 each, so over ten years we've been worth over \$3,500 to Jeff. A visit to Jeff's was always fun; always a laugh and good conversation. He's a great barber, too!

Jeff was clever. He realized that Monday mornings were quiet so he offered an aged pensioner \$7 haircut promotion. The word soon spread and soon you couldn't get near the place on a Monday morning. It turned into a meeting place for the “old boys” of the neighborhood. The leggy blonde Jeff had working with him added to the promotion somewhat as well.

The local Optometrist / eyewear shop Eyes Fantastic is similar. My wife and I both wear glasses and over the same ten-year period (the Optometrist is almost next door to Jeff's) we've averaged one pair of glasses each per year. I guess we've spent over \$4,000 with them in that time. My sister, mother and many of our friends go there as a result of our custom.

They're good, friendly, trustworthy people who always go the extra mile to make sure your frames are just right.

² In case you're in Brisbane, Jeff has since moved to a new shopfront in Spring Hill next to the Post Office. Highly recommended!

An example of great retail service

I went shopping for a new pair of shoes. Nothing difficult about that you'd think but in just one big shopping mall I walked out of three stores. Why? No one came near me despite actually taking shoes off the display and trying them on. Amazing – you'd think they didn't want to make the sale!

In the fourth store it was different. I took a pair of shoes off the display and a young lady called Katie came over and asked me if they were my size. I nodded. Katie offered me a shoehorn to help me put them on and then said something really surprising.

Picking up the shoe I'd taken off (a black brogue) she said *"Isn't it funny that when you put the old one beside the new pair how tired it looks?"*

"Yes" I replied.

"Let me show you how to fix that" she said, reaching over to her counter.

"Watch this." She took the cover off a Colorado shoe wax pad and ran it over my old shoe.

It immediately looked like new.

"Great – now do the other one for me"

"When you buy the new pair I will" she said with a cheeky smile and ran the pad over the brown shoe I had tried on. *"See, it even makes that one look better"*.

"Wrap them up, I'll take them and you'd better put a couple of those cleaners in, too." Katie grinned, cleaned my other black shoe and wrapped them up. I never asked how much the shoe wax pads were. They were about \$12 each – adding a nice sweetener to the shoe sale.

Now some not so good customer service

I tried to call a local business leader to discuss a socially responsible fund raising activity. I called his office and asked for him. The reply staggered me:

"I'm sorry," the voice said. *"He doesn't locate here"*.

Now this gentleman runs a large business. You'd know his name instantly if I told you. Yet here's a frontline staff member talking utter gibberish.

Can you tell me what *"Doesn't locate here"* means?

Needless to say, I wasn't able to talk to him so I took the proposal elsewhere...

Here's a great way to alienate callers

"Please can I speak with Mrs. xxx?"

"Do you have a name?" comes the reply.

"Yes I have." (Of course I have...)

Why not simply ask *"Please can I let him / her know who is calling?"* or *"Please can I ask who is calling so I can introduce you?"*

I'd give them my name. I'd then expect that when I'm connected, the recipient would know my name. Why doesn't that always happen? Don't you hate it when asked your name and then you find that you've not been introduced?

Simple mistakes but they all infuriate your callers. Hey, they're your revenue stream, your profit source so why infuriate them? Likewise, clients hate it when they call you and you don't call back.

If I'm looking to spend money with you, and leave a message, the least you can do is call me back.

Today when everyone has a mobile phone, a voicemail service, SMS facilities and email, not *returning calls is inexcusable*.

Here are some others that will make you cringe...

At 8.30 am a wealthy client walked into a store that sells photocopiers and provides a copy service while on his way to make a presentation to the local council at 9 am.

He had decided to make a back-up copy of his lengthy presentation. The shop appeared to be open - doors unlocked, lights and machines on, etc but the young lady who met him said she couldn't do photocopies until 9 am because that's when the copy center opened for business.

What did he do?

He walked down the road to the Library and did them himself at 10 cents per page, spending \$11.00.

Guess where he won't look to buy his next copier?

Another

A friend told me that he walked into a bakery/café with a client at 4.50 pm and asked for two coffees and two slices of cake. They were told they could only have the cake to take-away as the shop closed at 5 and coffee took too long to make and drink.

They left and went elsewhere.

The irony is that my friend's client is a local council aldermen and the Deputy Mayor owns the shop.

And another

The owner of a local café went on holidays and hung a sign in the window "Have taken 10 days holiday. We knew you'd understand". I understood. I went around the corner, discovered a new café that has given me a voucher for a free coffee for every five I buy. I'm been back frequently and have enjoyed several bonus cups!

Here's a tried and proven way to build revenue and customer loyalty in a café.

When you see two or more people earnestly engaged in a conversation long after their coffee is finished, move to the table to collect the dirty cups and just say “*You look like you're here for while. Shall I get you another?*”

A skeptical client agreed to try this and the first time he did, he **almost doubled** the day's takings. He added an extra twist because when he took the second cup back, he took a small selection of cakes on a tray and said, “*Can I tempt you?*”

Simple, effective and profitable, and it creates goodwill with customers. They come back because you've looked after them.

Here's how you can quickly create a profitable lawn mowing, window cleaning or other direct to customer service business.

1. Identify a suitable customer in a nearby street to where you live
2. Offer the first couple of services free
3. Visit every other nearby house with the potential to buy
4. Explain that you're doing number 46 and that if they get theirs done next time you're in the street, they'll get 10% off
5. Continue with nearby homes or offices until you have a full day's work
6. Repeat again in other nearby streets until you're fully booked. Now you're busy every day with little or no traveling

Think it won't work?

Try it. You'll be very surprised.

Now for some examples of dreadful sales approaches

These are Downright Ugly, as you'll see.

A couple of hours ago whilst writing this a telemarketer rang me.

“Hello, I'm from XYZ Home Ceiling Insulation. I'm calling homeowners in your area today to offer them a free quote to install ceiling insulation. Or do you already have it?”

“Already have it” I replied. That was the end of the call.

I don't have ceiling insulation but what a silly question to put at the end of your opening line.

I had another telemarketer call me recently. Here’s a rough transcript of the conversation. Think about it.

(Telemarketer) Hello, Mr. Yuille?

(Me) Yes?

Mr. Yuille, it’s Tracy from XYZ marketing (*names changed to protect the innocent*).

Yes, Tracy.

Mr. Yuille, I’m calling to update our mailing list. Can I just take a minute to check some details?

Yes, but let me ask you; what do you want to send to me?

Ah, well, I’m just new here and all I’m supposed to do is check to see if the database information is accurate. Can I ask you, is your Company name IMA Group...

(Interrupting) Tracy, let me ask you again what mailing list is this for and what do you want to send me?

Uh, well, I don’t know. I’m just a casual employed to make these calls...

Thanks, Tracy – can I ask you to find out what they want to send me and call back so I can decide if I even want to be on this list?

Hum, no, I’m sorry but I don’t know. I’m calling from home and it’s for an agency. If you like, I can delete you from the list.

Good idea, Tracy, thanks. Bye.

Goodbye Mr. Yuille.

There’s a very simple message here to anyone running telemarketers: Tell them why they’re doing it. It’s part of what I call the “Bullet-proofing” process. What it means is that every member of your team has to know what you’re about.

It really irks me when someone says *“That’s not my problem; you’ll have to talk to (accounts, service...) about that”* It IS their problem. Why? Because the person they’re talking to is a customer. THEIR customer.

The message is plain and simple. The customer belongs to everyone.

Far better to say *“I’m probably not the best person to answer that for you. Mary in accounts would have better access to the information you need. Let me see if I can get her for you right now...”*

I urge you to listen to what your staff members are saying to your customers. You might be shocked...

Let me make one more quick but relevant observation ...

I frequently see businesses spend huge sums of money on marketing – brochures, adverts, direct mail etc - because their belief is that if they increase their enquiry rate, they will make more sales.

That’s only valid if their salespeople are capable of converting those enquiries into business.

Before you spend money on marketing in the attempt to gain more sales, consider how many sales opportunities you’ll miss if your staff can’t convert the extra leads you generate into business. Wouldn’t you be better to invest in some quality training to make sure you significantly improve your conversion rate?

Someone said to me recently *“Why would I spend time training my staff only to have him or her up and leave to work somewhere else?”*

I replied, *“Why take the risk of not training them and have them stay?”*

In another workshop, a doubting Thomas named John asked, *“What if I try these things and they don’t work?”*

My response was simple *“What if you don’t try them and they do?”*

Do you suffer from this problem?

It’s called sales apathy.

Let me explain sales apathy. It’s when the supplier doesn’t care. It’s when your staff doesn’t understand that gaining and maintaining customers is everyone’s job.

That it’s a fundamental marketing activity. That’s it’s key to being paid their wages.

Here’s a simple example to illustrate my point.

I did a mortgage transaction recently involving a significant amount of money.

Three organizations failed to follow up. One was my own bank with which I had my previous loan. The second was a major national loan originator and an accountant friend recommended the third. The successful vendor was a broker to whom I was referred. He did everything I asked (and more) within the time frame I needed and went out of his way to explain just how the loan worked.

Guess who I’ll be referring people to in future?

In this day and age of voicemail where you have to listen to seventeen different menu options and then get a message saying you’re third in the queue and the estimated waiting time is eleven minutes?

One local bank here in Queensland advertises with these two questions:

Who’s your bank manager?

What’s their phone number?

The point they’re making is that they offer a personal service.

Compare how easy it is to open an online account with Clickbank or PayPal by comparison with a “real world” bank. It took me just a few minutes with both, yet recently when I wanted a credit card merchant facility with my own bank; it took nine emails and five phone calls and two weeks to get it done.

How easy is it for your clients to do business with you? Do your processes create obstacles and stumbling blocks people have to negotiate or is it easy? It has to be easy.

When they walk into your store or your restaurant, do they know how to go about a transaction? I was once about to walk out of a café because no one had come to take my order when one of the staff told me I had to go to the counter to place my order.

Why didn’t I know that already? Because in the ten minutes I sat there, I was the only customer. Don’t you think they would have come to see me earlier?

If you have a store, you’d know that the worst thing you can say to a customer is “*Can I help you?*” The universal answer is “*No, just looking*” isn’t it?

Why not turn it around and say this:

“Hi, is this your first time here?” If they reply that it is, you can then take a few seconds to explain how it works and invite them to fill out a coupon or to call you over if they need information. This is non-threatening and results in a positive, lasting impression.

Sadly today, there’s not a lot of real selling done in the retail environment today. Very few staff in stores behaves as proactively as Katie in my shoe store example did. I found another one recently at the Myer Carindale store when buying shirts and ties with a Christmas gift voucher (thanks mother-in-law). There’s a lady there called Irene who really knows her stuff. I found out more about ties in ten minutes with her than I’ve ever known!

Sadly though, the Irene’s of this world are exceptions. I don’t know what it is other than apathy. Even in stores where staff members get paid commissions, there’s not much selling going on. Certainly no database collection.

Here’s another example. Both my sons are very keen basketball players. Both play in three teams — school, club and district rep. They train and play all year round which means they chew through shoes. Both have at least two pairs of basketball shoes - one for training and the second for playing. Invariably they buy them from one of two stores.

“Make more sales, get more referrals and generate all the repeat business you could wish for!”

The brands they prefer - AND1 and Nike shoes aren't cheap yet in the stores where we buy them, we've never been asked our names and consequently we never get any offers from them as a result.

I guess we buy at least four pairs of basketball shoes every year. At close to \$200 per pair, that's a lot of money. Over ten years, it's a small fortune. How easy would it be for the store to lock us in by offering a loyalty card program or by having a mailing list promoting new shoes at the start of the season?

Some years ago I gave a sports shoe store client the idea of presenting all his shoe types together. They were mixed up like Brown's cows. He put the entire range of cross trainers in one place, all the running shoes in another, etc. As a result, when someone came in, they were able to identify their desired shoe type and look at different models to find their preference. It sure gave his staff an easy intro. *“Looking for netball shoes?”* was their line.

The next questions were easy, too. *“How often do you play”* The answer gave them enough information to help them start to select the right shoe.

Sales went through the roof. *(Shoe sales play a big part in this book, don't they?)*

Where are we going with this?

What I want you to do is look closely at what you're doing and ask some questions about what you could do better.

By doing it just 10% or even 5% better, what would the result be? Significant. By increasing your conversion rate by 5% and increasing the spend (like Katie did and as McDonald's do with their famous *“Did you want fries with that?”* line) and by selling to them once more every year your turnover will sky rocket.

If your average is to convert 1000 people per month with an average sale value of \$100, adding 5% to each increases your turnover by a \$5,000 per month. If they buy five times per year and you can increase that to six, you will see a **significant** increase.

Now imagine that each customer is bringing you one new client per year (loyalty program or on the Internet, by an affiliate link) and each one of them does the same thing, your figures and profits will have gone ballistic!

I'm no mathematician but I'm sure I can leave you to do the numbers!

Take the time to explain all this too your staff. Explain just how important a *“Gain and Maintain”* attitude really is. Provide them with a reason; an incentive based on retention.

Don't fall into the apathy trap

Part 3. What Next?

Marketing guru Jay Abraham says, *“Change can either be your greatest ally or your mortal enemy”*

With that profound statement in mind, let me challenge you. Has anything I’ve said in this short, content-rich book struck a chord with you? Can you relate to any of the problems and scenarios I’ve discussed? Can you see things you need to change? If your answer is yes, then you need an action plan.

Please understand that there isn’t a miracle cure-all solution. It comes down to lots of little things all done in sync. One of my clients says that it’s a matter of doing everything just 5% better.

Remember too that you’re only as good as your weakest link so if that’s sales and marketing, that’s where you need to work first. If the weakest link is your staff, start coaching them to do better. Most people want to deliver their best after all; sometimes they just don’t fully understand the game plan or what is expected. All too often, staff are recruited and then just thrown into the deep end with no induction process and little or no training.

You have two options.

- 1. Do nothing**
- 2. Make some changes.**

REMEMBER:

The best athletes and the best teams have coaches. No one does it on their own.

Let’s look at the consequences of each option:

- 1. Do nothing: nothing changes.** Status Quo retained. Do the same, get the same. I heard a great line just the other day that brings this all home and very simply explains why you need to do it differently...

“If there’s more than one of you doing the same thing, one of you is (or will soon be) redundant.”

- 2. Start to work on them yourself. Do some more reading.** *Where to start?* Start with the companion product to this book. It’s called the “How To Gain And Retain More Customers” self-study guide”.

The manual is a 110-page workbook designed to help you spotlight the key sales issues for your product that will empower you to create powerful marketing messages to attract new, qualified leads to sell to. More details about the guide are on the next page.

About the "How To Gain And Retain More Customers" self-study manual"...

- ☑ **The four key steps to making any sale; why you need to cover all four and why you need to keep them in a prescribed order.**
- ☑ The 4 stages everyone goes through in their skills development. Simple, but not 1 person in 50 understands this scale. When you understand it you'll reap the benefits.
- ☑ **Why so many people have trouble getting appointments with potential customers, and how to turn that around in a matter of days.**
- ☑ Why the "old standard" sales lines can actually work against you, and why doing things differently can be the BEST thing you can do.
- ☑ **A simple strategy building exercise that will guarantee to get customers telling you what they want to hear from you.**
- ☑ A questioning technique so simple, you'll wonder why you never thought of it and hope your competitors never do!
- ☑ **A simple, very powerful technique that gets people to talk about their product likes and dislikes.**
- ☑ How to create a customer database and why you need one.
- ☑ **The frightening truth that there are only four factors that can influence turnover – and what they are.**
- ☑ Why price alone isn't a buying motive.
- ☑ **Learn one simple question *that on its own* sold thousands of dollars worth of expensive office machines and has since helped other salespeople sell everything from bookkeeping services to prestige cars.**

To find out more about the "How To Gain And Retain More Customers" self-study manual [click here](#).

To subscribe to the Sales Tips newsletter, [click here](#).

“Make more sales, get more referrals and generate all the repeat business you could wish for!”

About the Author...

In 1972, in his first year as a salesperson, James sold Bundy Clocks. He out-sold every salesperson in the Company. Yes, as the youngest, most inexperienced of all, he outsold 20 seasoned professionals who had been with the Company for years. For over 30 years since, he has consistently outsold his peers, winning awards, prizes, and trips, smashing sales records along the way.

Here are just some of the highlights ...

- ◆ Top salesperson selling Bundy Clocks (they were machines that stamped your time card when you clocked on and off at work).
- ◆ Four years of selling telephone answering machines, outselling every other salesperson the Company employed. He was selling telephone answering machines back when they were expensive, heavy machines. These machines sold for between \$600 and \$1,500 and to give you an idea of just how much that was back then, you could buy a new car for \$3,000. The industry average conversion rate was one in two or three appointments – his was three from four. For years, hundreds of answering machines in town answered with his voice on them!
- ◆ Four years of selling binding and laminating machines. James won overseas trips and several weekends away. Won Salesperson of the Month 18 times in two years winning every sales prize the Company offered. In the last year, 65% of his quota was filled from back-end sales of consumables from the previous years' equipment sales. All this was achieved while doing **less product demonstrations** and making **less sales calls per week** than anyone else in the office!
- ◆ One year selling mail handling machines (*he says hated this one*) but still managed to top the sales figures. In the first six months in the job James achieved 118% of budget *from a standing start*.
- ◆ Six years at the top selling facsimile machines, with record sales of over \$1,000,000 in ONE three-month period. In that job, he created a direct mail campaign that resulted in an unbelievable 40% conversion rate, creating over \$300,000 in orders in just six weeks. After a year in the role, he became the State Sales Manager and ran the most successful sales team in the country.
- ◆ Two years managing retail cell phone stores during which time he created a simple 3-point sales questionnaire that resulted in **an 80% conversion rate for walk-in customers**.
- ◆ Six years selling and delivering IT training during which time he sold and delivered hundreds of training workshops around the country.

In every sales position he held, James found new, better, easier ways to sell whatever had to be sold. What's more, the techniques he developed have been passed on to others who have also significantly increased their sales results.

He now spends his time running training workshops, consulting with clients and providing an excellent range of sales and marketing resources. He is contactable on 61 7 3344 6566 or by email - jamesyuille@jamesyuille.com.au

"Make more sales, get more referrals and generate all the repeat business you could wish for!"

What others are saying...

In 8 months I had not made a single sale and on James' advice I made small and simple changes to my sales process.

The result was immediate.

I very shortly made my first sale and made six more in rapid succession. I have continued to apply James' techniques and record steady and consistent sales.

David Newington
Docwise Information Management,
Brisbane

Your training manual has encouraged me to think harder and plan better and to analyze exactly what it is we sell and what it is our customers want to buy.

Since adopting your four-step concept I have seen immediate benefits.

I believe any business would benefit enormously from investing in your training system or in you personally as a sales coach. You have both the ability and the knowledge to help any sales person or business owner **significantly improve their skills, make more sales and improve their bottom line.**

Mike Bartram,
Futurekids, Adelaide

As new business owners, we struggled with how to sell our services until we had a two-hour meeting with James.

The amount of effective, down to earth and ready to use information James packs into a brief period is amazing **If you are not getting the sales you want James will tell you how to.**

Every moment, every cent we spent with James was a solid investment in our business.

Michael Brook
The Lighthouse Team, Brisbane.

In particular, I appreciated that James' focus has always been to teach the process of selling, rather than telling the reader the words to say. **I would**

recommend his process to any person looking to improve their sales skills.

Barry Morris
Inductions Extra, Brisbane

What James taught me worked like magic! \$20,000 in new sales with a new product inside 4 weeks!

The money I spent with James was the best investment I've made in years.

Stephen Bradshaw
Acorn Software, Brisbane

James has changed the way I approach business, work with my clients, plan my sales strategy and manage my time and as a result, **I now enjoy a measurable improvement in sales.**

Peter Foyster
Sales Consultant,
Prime Property, Brisbane

What James shared with me through his book not only turned virtually everything I had ever held dear about selling on its ear, it showed me how to make hundreds of thousands of dollars. Now it's your turn...

Chris Bloor
Quality Business Institute, Perth

You are a consummate salesperson, James, and an excellent "coach". I've lost count of how many customer generation ideas you've given me.

I have no doubt that many other people could benefit from your expert knowledge and inspirational ideas.

Peter Hearnden
Paramount Events, Brisbane

I like the worksheets and your urging for your readers to DO IT!

Blase DesMarais
Guaranteed Success Sales & Marketing, Maine, USA