

Stress *The Silent Killer*



Do you know?

- 80% of doctor visits can be traced to stress
- Stress costs UK businesses millions of pounds each year
- Even slight stress reduces productivity by 30%.

What is this thing called stress and how does it work?

In simple terms, we're built to learn from past mistakes. When we sense danger of any kind, our bodies go into the "fight or flight" mode. Stress hormones are released. Our heart beats faster, pulse increases, blood pressure shoots up and our capacity to reason is reduced. If a car jumps the curb, we don't get the license plate number first. Rather under stress, we're built to flee...and think later when the danger is gone.

The difficulty is that current research is indicating that many of us live in the stress state for days or weeks at a time without relief. Our bodies are built to switch quickly between stress and peace; not to stay there!

Because there are often few noticeable symptoms until something serious occurs, recognition of stress is the first defense. The following are a few of the many symptoms:

- You're tired, but can't sleep well.
- Can't think clearly; less ability to make quick, accurate decisions
- Personal injuries
- Easily irritated

How do you stop the stress syndrome once you recognize it?

Stressors are never going away. Therefore, change your reaction to stress. Learn to notice how you feel when you're calm and happy and try to reproduce that feeling at the first sign of stress. In other words, choose to avoid it.

Breathe in deeply to a count of four or five; exhale slowly to the same count. Repeat for several minutes. Notice how you feel inside.

Learn to RELAX!

Call us for more information on stress management.

Tips for Writing Sales Letters

Although perhaps obvious, advertising research tells us that the features of direct advertising that generate best response, in order of significance are:

- a single impressive benefit that is more prominent than anything else
- easy to read
- get the reader involved (where possible use 'you', 'yours' etc.)
- something new
- believable unique

The worst performing headlines are product descriptions, the curious/intriguing/oblique, and three witty words or less.

Best performing headlines: a key 'customer' benefit (which benefits the customers of your target organisation), important news, a key product or service benefit.

Avoid the use of 'I', 'we', 'us', 'ours', except for the obvious (eg 'I will telephone you...'). Talk about your intended customer and their market, not your own business.

Use a PS - this is often read before the letter so make it attention grabbing.

Don't forget to follow up with a phone call! (often the worst bit but you MUST do it as the letter will be wasted otherwise).

Loyalty - The Key to Business Success

Talk to many business people about how they approach customer service and the majority of them will say that they are aiming to have 'satisfied' customers. No! What we all should be seeking is to have loyal customers.

Satisfied customers are in a state of nothing – they are neither dissatisfied or happy; they are in between. They will tolerate you while you are of use to them but if a better deal comes along, they're off.

On the other hand, loyal customers are your friends. They will be with you through thick and thin; they will be the first to try out your new product or service; they are willing give you honest feedback; they will regularly refer business to you. This is what you want! But how can you turn a satisfied customer into a loyal one?

Let Them Decide How to Do Business With You

Today customers are a lot more sophisticated in how they want to do business. If your product or service lends itself to be offered via a number of different means, then give your customer the option.

Can you deliver face-to-face? What about telephone services? Could you make use of SMS texts for quick notes and reminders? Do you have a web site through which customers can contact you or even make orders on-line? If you provide a variety of delivery channels which are available to suit the customer's needs then they are more likely to stay with you.

Build a Relationship

Loyalty can only be achieved if you have a true relationship with your customer. Aim to build rapport. Understand who you are dealing with and understand what they are looking for. Keep in regular contact with them; you don't necessarily have to be selling something. Always use their names, especially their first name if you can.

All of this will help in building a long term relationship. Once you have this, they are less likely to walk away.

Generate Staff Loyalty

How can you cultivate a loyal customer if your staff are not loyal to the business? You must have staff who care for the job and will do anything to



protect and move the business forward. Customers will be more loyal if they see familiar faces. A business with a high staff turnover will find it difficult to build a relationship with their customers.

Treat your staff well. Reward their successes and recognise their achievements. Hold regular training sessions so they feel that they are learning and developing. An established training programme will also make sure that their product knowledge is up to date.

Seek Out Complaints

This sounds strange but the average customer has to be encouraged to complain! Many will keep quiet about poor service but if they can find someone else to do their business with, they will. Set up a clear complaints procedure so customers can complain if they wish. Provide staff with the tools to effectively deal with customer problems. Follow up all complaints to ensure that they have been resolved.

Take an Interest

Show your customers that you are interested in their views. Run regular surveys to find out what they think of your service, to find out what you can do differently. You can either carry out a survey over the telephone, or go as far as doing a mailing to all your customers.

Taking the trouble to contact your customers will reinforce the message that you want their custom. But don't forget – take action on what you find out!

Be a 'Can Do' Business

Customers like nothing better than a business which delivers on even the most difficult of requests. 'Can Do' businesses will always have loyal customers. Train your staff to never use words like, "Sorry but ...", "It's not my fault", "It's company policy".

Be a business where solutions are always looked for and problems seen as challenges.

Look After The 'Golden' Customers

The old 80/20 is likely to apply to your business – 80% of your sales or profits are likely to come from just 20% of your customers. Work out who your top 20% are and love them to death! Why not concentrate on turning the remaining 80% into loyal customers? Well, the 20% have already shown that they trust and respect you. A little more effort with these customers will reap more business than concentrating on the 'maybe's'. By all means, run a programme to convert the 'maybe's' but put more effort into the converted.

So, there you have it. Some ideas and tips on how to build and keep loyal customers. Take a critical look at your business and put a loyalty building programme in place, which will boost sales and profits.

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More useful information, advice and tips coming up next month