

# **If People Love You They Give you More Money**

(the undisputed secret of repeat business)

By Ross Shafer

In tough times, most companies become obsessed with their competition. They want to know if *they* are struggling, too. Progressive Insurance wants to know what Geico is doing. Macy's wants insider information about Nordstrom. Ford wants to know Chrysler's secrets...and so on. And, because I speak or consult with 70+ organizations a year (often your competition), my clients assume I have the answer...so they can steal it. Well, I do...and here it is. (insert drum roll here)

*If your customers love you they will give you more money.*

Love is the secret differentiator for capturing money in a sputtering economy. When we are working with tight budgets we want to only want to give money to people we like.

Too simple, right? Not "high tech" enough for you? Couldn't apply to your business because you're not a customer facing business? Or, maybe your performance metrics are too sophisticated to measure something as touchy-feely as "soft skills?" Ah, you must not sell your goods or services to human beings.

For the sake of the conversation, let's say you want to experiment with this "love" idea. How would you go about it?

## **1. Understand that human beings have one emotional barometer.**

Many of you make the mistake of thinking your customers, clients, or patients are in a business relationship with you. Wrong. Customers expect a human relationship because they can't tell the difference. Customers respond to bad service with the same hurt and emotional triggers they experience in a bad personal relationship. If you ignore them, they feel unimportant. If you second guess them, they feel defensive. If you dismiss them without satisfying them, they get angry. They can't help it. Unless they are heavily medicated, humans don't have a firewall to protect them from their feelings. However, the feelings of happiness and cooperation surface if they feel loved and respected by you. They want to feel understood by you. We all want to fill our lives with people who treat us well. We want to see those people as often as possible because they make us feel good. Customers want to be emotionally connected to you. So, all you have to do is love them. Loving your customers makes them want to return...and when they do, they will give you more money.

## **2. Loving you means customers can stop dating other companies.**

Your customers and clients and patients have a dizzying number of choices these days. Not only are they constantly bombarded by TV, radio, and print - but the online options further blur their buying decisions. In fact, reluctant customers often experiment with several companies before settling in with their "favorite place to shop." You want to be the place they "settle." Because, when customers finally find a shop, service, or product they love, what it means to them is that they can stop "dating" other companies and commit to you. Feeling loved by you is a relief to your customers. It makes them feel

smarter for picking you. They can finally stop spending time and money with your competition and start focusing on you.

### **3. Your “internal” customers need love, too.**

Let’s say you aren’t in a “customer facing” organization. At some point you’ll have to talk to someone in your organization, right? A boss? A coworker? The UPS guy? These people are your internal customers and they need love, too. Companies who grow “love” their associates. The competitor’s secret may be that *their* employees love working there. They’re happy, content, challenged, respected, and have an emotional connection with the company. Do you feel that way about your company? Does your team feel that way? If not, you’re going to lose good people to your competitor and they are going to take your customers with them. Lost love, internally, means lost talent and lost revenue.

### **4. You can actually quantify ‘loving’ your customers.**

After one of my seminars, a man named John Hixon from Sweetwater, Texas told me he took over his father’s grocery store when his dad passed away. John found out that the little store had annual sales of about \$250,000/yr but had lost \$200,000 during the same period. He decided to take a leave from his insurance business to liquidate the store. When he couldn’t find a buyer, John decided to step in and see what he could do to save the market. He couldn’t afford to renovate or add new products so he turned to his customers - by doing something radical – something his dad would never have done. John started loving the customers. He would stand at the front door and say hello to everyone. He’d tell them, “I sure appreciate you coming into our store.” With a twinkling eye he’s say, “We’re small but we’re mighty.” If they asked for an item he wouldn’t just point them down an aisle. He would escort them to, let’s say, the oatmeal aisle. Then he’d explain why he carried that particular brand. Then, after the customer went through the check out stand, John would be standing at the door to say goodbye and wish them a nice evening...or weekend...or holiday. John told me that within 9 months the little store was on pace to gross \$1.5 million! And, the only thing John Hixon changed was that he started loving his customers. What’s even more incredible was that during that time, Wal\*Mart opened just a few miles away.

There is the secret you’ve all been pining for. *If people love you they give you more money.* That is, of course, unless you’re too sophisticated for something as silly as that.

Ross Shafer is the author of *The Customer Shouts Back, Nobody Moved Your Cheese, Customer Empathy and Are You Relevant?* Ross is also the founder of the *Customer Empathy Institute* and producer of (14) HR Training films. He is a frequent keynote speaker and trainer for Fortune 1000 organizations.

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