



PROTOCOL

Integrated Direct Marketing Services

**Use your lead management resources to improve
your Business-to-Business customer relationships
and increase revenue**

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Overview

We all know that it's easier—and cheaper—to keep an old customer than to get a new one. It follows, then, that it's also easier to sell to a current customer than to a prospective customer. This is an often overlooked tactic for increasing market share and customer loyalty. Increasing those two dynamics leads to increased shareholder value, which is the ultimate goal of your company.

Treating your customers differently from your prospects has become standard practice now, and your customers expect it—even from business-to-business companies, which have traditionally lagged behind business-to-consumer companies. When a current customer calls to inquire about a new product you offer, do you recognize them and treat them as such?

If you have a sales lead management program for prospects, you can use those same resources to improve your relationships with your current customers by managing sales opportunities within your installed client base. Frequently, customers become prospects, associated with yet another sales opportunity. They require different handling from the “uninitiated.” By modifying your lead management procedures, you can ensure that your most important customers—as prospects—are handled appropriately.

As the “owner” of the lead management process, include customer procedure up front, and make it part of your ongoing lead management procedures. Modify prospecting and handling to communicate with customers specifically. This process will allow for new communication with your installed base and for gathering continuous information for strategic decision support from your customers. A natural benefit of special customer handling is the useful information you can feed to your customer care and product development departments. Customers also are an ideal starting point for primary research projects.

Results of this special handling will be better customer retention and increased sales into your customer base. Data gathered from this process will indicate the best way to improve procedures and cater to your customers' needs and requirements. Consider the following steps to impact your customer relationships.

Resource Requirements

- ▶ A lead management process in place with trained teleprofessionals who know your products and services.
- ▶ Customers as a population of your prospect database.
- ▶ Buy-in and support from customer care and sales management.
- ▶ Clearly defined and agreed-upon objectives.

How To

Pre-sale

1. Develop a customer-specific marketing communications/promotional plan.
 - ▶ Some studies suggest that 70% of your entire promotions budget should be earmarked for customer-specific activities. Customers deserve special focus, and frequently, a modified message. Design your message/promotional activity to address new, longer-term, and lost customers. Create separate approaches for your best (\$) and long-standing customers.

During the sale

1. Identify and handle customer “prospects” differently.
 - ▶ Track their historical information in your prospect database—what they purchased, when, and for how much.
 - ▶ Your customers are familiar with your company and your products and services. Acknowledge this fact in communications with them.
 - ▶ Ask your customers questions regarding how well you handled their requests, their satisfaction levels, and competitive interests (who else they might consider and why).
 - ▶ Frequently, your customers are assigned to a specific sales person within your organization. As a follow-up process for a customer, you might plan to notify the designated sales representative of the new opportunity, regardless of the customer’s qualification grade.
 - ▶ As part of your information fulfillment, adapt the cover letter to your customers. Thank your customers for their past business, and include an incentive for new purchases. Acknowledge their understanding of your products and services in the collateral response (i.e., don’t send them an introductory brochure).

Post-sale:

1. Leverage your lead management resources to do post-sale customer service contacts.
 - ▶ Once a sale occurs, use lead management teleprofessionals to do follow-up calls: How was their experience with your sales and marketing groups? What improvements would they suggest in your product/service? Are they considering any new applications? Probe for competitive information—which competitors did they consider and why did they select you?
 - ▶ This type of customer communication is another ongoing activity in your lead management process.
2. Do primary research using your customer base as a list source.
 - ▶ Depending upon your objectives, customers might be a portion of the complete population for a primary research project. Third-party lists as well as your proprietary prospect database might also be a source for names and give you comparative data.

- ▶ Customers are an ideal starting point to obtain information about a specific marketing objective, new product introduction, or enhancement. Identify how they obtain product information (what is their decision-making process, etc).



Helpful Hints

- ▶▶ Once your prospects become customers, don't lose sight of them. New customers cost you six to seven times more than existing customers.
- ▶▶ Strategic handling of your customers through your lead management process can identify when new sales opportunities are on the horizon, so you can alert key personnel within your company.
- ▶▶ Use your lead management process to build customer loyalty and support customer retention. One-to-one marketing is more than a concept. The hard facts dictate the necessity to cater to customers as did the mom & pop shops of the past. The sooner you implement your vision of excellent customer service, the better.

In Summary

By modifying your lead management process to acknowledge customers, you allow for on-going communication. You know who your customers are, when they are considering a new purchase, and exactly what they need. You now have visibility on the reactions of this critical group—your installed base.

The information you'll gather will allow you to develop customer-driven strategies for marketing, products, services, and handling procedures. You will gain customer loyalty and retention, and impact the bottom line of your organization.

For more information on how Protocol can help you manage your relationships with your customers, contact us at 800-865-4390 or knowledge@protocolusa.com.