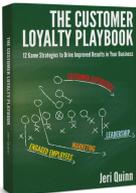


THE CUSTOMER LOYALTY PLAYBOOK

12 Game Strategies to Drive Improved
Results in Your Business

Jeri Quinn



Interested in the rest of this book? You can order it at http://www.amazon.com/Customer-Loyalty-Playbook-Strategies-Improved/dp/0989943208/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1391374213&sr=1-1&keywords=customer+loyalty+playbook

Advance Praise For *The Customer Loyalty Playbook, 12 Game Strategies to Drive Improved Results in Your Business*

Engaging, stimulating and full of wonderful surprises, *The Customer Loyalty Playbook* is just like Jeri Quinn herself -- an invaluable resource offering great insight and exercises that lead to growth and fulfillment. I'm excited about using Jeri's great new book to find new ways to better serve my clients and to boost my income. Thanks, Jeri!

Tom Martin, President, Tom Martin Media, LLC

Great step-by-step methodology for customer loyalty. Each chapter gives specific steps you can utilize immediately. **Linda Stinson, President, RLS Focused Solutions**

Now you don't need a library to help you build great customer loyalty! In this one book you have everything you need to turbocharge your business. A loyal customer base is the foundation of a strong business, and this playbook shows you step-by-step how to build the business you've dreamed of. I just wish Jeri had written it sooner!

Norman Usher, Founder, Winterhill Consulting Ltd, UK

One of the fastest ways to grow your business is to develop loyal customers that will buy more and refer you to their friends. In this book Jeri gives you the key simple steps you can take to create more raving fan customers and dedicated employees, who are committed to the success of the company.

Joy Putnam, Peak Performance Coach

Jeri's book is more than a book about customer loyalty; it's a book about leadership. If you implement the strategies and "playbook ideas" Jeri has defined, you'll not only gain incredible customer loyalty, you'll become a great organization.

Mike Goldman, President, Performance Breakthrough

There are many books that touch upon the issues Jeri addresses in *The Customer Loyalty Playbook*. But this one is special because it aggregates difficult concepts into one cohesive, easy-to-grasp narrative for small business owners. The case studies are especially helpful. A must read.

Bruce Stout, President, Rainmakers Forum

Who knew there was a connection between our vacations and our business customers? The Playbook makes logical and useful connections between our work and how it impacts customers, and allows you to create your own spiderweb of connections that will open your eyes to how you can build a next-generation business for yourself and your organization. Great insights and an easy read.

Robyn Rickenbach, President, Springboard International Inc

Any business owner, including myself, will benefit from this book, getting a lot of new ideas about how to improve every day operations. It answered so many questions that lingered in my mind. So much knowledge from such short reading time. I've always believed that my success depends on a good team of people (it's impossible to make it alone) and loyal clients that are happy and comfortable to stay with me for all their insurance needs. This book has motivated me to organize my thoughts and implement all the ideas I've had in my mind for some time. I feel it puts me on the right path to succeed with my business. Thank you again.

Daniella Kirfeld, President, Interwest United Insurance Brokerage Inc

The Customer Loyalty Playbook makes sense and is specifically designed for small and medium companies to make an immediate difference in the bottom line. Need a topic for a sales meeting? It's here. Setting goals for the next quarter? Use this. Rallying renewals? Jeri has your back. The basic blocking and tackling guide for small and medium sized companies puts ready to use and easily executed plans at your fingertips.

Carey Davis, Business Broker, Transworld Business Advisors of NY

This is a book that every entrepreneur and their team needs to read. Without keeping your existing customers happy and developing new customers, a company cannot not grow and prosper. Jeri has written a

playbook and road map that is easy to understand and will yield immediate results in growth and profitability.

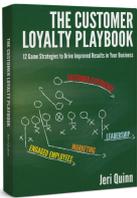
Larry Putterman, Serial Entrepreneur, Business Coach, and founder of LarryPutterman.com

Loyalty is earned...it stems from actions that are taken and the words that are spoken by employees. The author of this book takes you through a set of straightforward management practices that will inspire your workforce and improve your bottom line. Whether you are a business owner, manager of people or a consultant practitioner, you will be able to apply what the writer conveys by way of examples, easy to understand diagrams or the provocative questions and references she offers that, if applied, will certainly help to improve performance and bottom line results.

Norm Gauthier, Managing Partner, Heritage Hill Partners Inc

Jeri's ideas and concepts are easy to comprehend and more importantly, easy to implement. Following her recommendations will lead to increased profits for any type of business.

Neil Miller, Founder, N.L. Miller Accounting



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DEDICATION

To my parents:

Phyllis Reeve who instilled in me a love of learning and the aspiration to become an author.

Chester Reeve who inspired and modeled the balance of an easy going nature with a persistent work ethic.

To my husband Richard Quinn

For all the love and support to grow in my own way

To my children

Tara, Brendan and Shane who teach me more every day about how to live life more fully

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I express my deepest gratitude to the many people with whom I've worked to produce the tools and ideas presented in *The Customer Loyalty Playbook*. Thanks goes to the moral support provided by the members of BNI chapter 25 in New York City, especially Tom Martin (publicist), Siho Ellsmore (who created the cover and interior graphics), Christy Goldfeder (sales copy), Angela Matthews (social media strategist). Having these individuals as part of my team allowed me to expand the capability and reach of this book and its impact on the world. All the BNI chapter 25 members have been interested and supportive which has empowered me to finish the book. They've also helped promote the book and referred me to speak about the book.

A special thanks goes to June Clark (editor) who revealed my blind spots about what was missing and confusing. June's experience, encouragement, dedication and thought provoking questions helped me consider what I was writing from the reader's point of view.

Members of two professional mastermind groups provided caring intelligent comradeship, accountability and many suggestions. Thank you to Robyn Rickenbach, Norman Gauthier, Kevin Collins, Kevin Brimhall, Hank Sullivan, Mike Goldman, Linda Stinson, Eric Merz, Norman Usher and Denise Corcoran. Your words of encouragement and accountability deadlines helped me get moving again when I was stressed and blocked.

I acknowledge Joy Putnam and Grace Cheng for constantly challenging me and giving me tools for overcoming inertia and overwhelm. Their caring stand for me and this book has kept me on track to bring this project to completion.

This book would not have been possible without the support of my closest friends, Barbara Block, Jeanne Friedrichs, Evelyn Kalinosky, and Mike Andrews whose faith in me to live into my potential and share my knowledge and experience kept me moving forward.

Doug and Polly White, Rick Lochner and Greg Stuart, fellow consultants/coaches, have inspired and challenged me with the publication of their own books. They've provided words of wisdom, examples, insights

gleaned from their own mistakes, and gems of knowledge around the promotional use of their books. Thank you for sharing your wisdom with me.

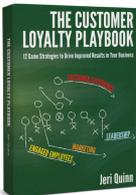
Special appreciation goes to Dick Quinn, my husband, for the continued support and interest in this project. Thank you for being my biggest fan.

The material in this book was honed over the course of my career by using it with clients. Their continual feedback of what works and doesn't work has allowed me to have insights into what is useful and what communicates effectively. Through the leaders I've coached, the groups I've facilitated, the entrepreneurship classes I've taught, these concepts and tools have become more clarified, more useful, and easier to implement. I salute all the people I've coached, facilitated, taught, and consulted with. You are the true heroes of this book. I have grown in your listening of me. I give you my heartfelt appreciation.

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The Focus of this Book

Did you know that a 5% increase in customer loyalty could add an extra 25-100% of profit to your bottom line?

Did you know that it costs 5-8 times more to get a new client than to keep an existing client?

Did you know that loyal customers who buy regularly help you have predictable cash flow?

This book gives you the 'why' and the 'how' of customer loyalty so you can have these benefits in your business.

INTRODUCTION

“In the NFL, the playbook is a sacred hardbound diary of trust. It's an accumulation of decades' worth of knowledge, tweaked and perfected, sectioned off by scribbles and colored tabs.”

--Elizabeth Merrill, ESPN.com

This book has been written for the owners and executives of small and midsize businesses. Over the last thirty years, I've worked to make the companies I've owned successful. I've also consulted with and coached small and medium-sized business owners, helping them create bottom line results and quality lifestyles.

Government statistics state that 50% of small businesses fail in the first 5 years. If you've got a new business, I'm sure you don't want your business to be part of that statistic. If your business has been running for over 5 years, you may want to keep your business moving in a positive and lucrative direction. The intent of this book is to support you in creating sustainable successful results by focusing on key elements.

As a small business owner, I know what it's like when the cash flow is tight. With no big corporation to guarantee my salary, “I ate what I killed.” My companies learned to do more with less. As small and medium-size businesses, we deal with tighter budgets for hiring and outsourcing. We sometimes have family members or friends working in the business, which introduces complex dynamics and succession issues. On the other hand, we can get closer to our customers and be more responsive to their needs. We care more about our employees because we know them personally. We are free to create a vision for our business and ourselves. Most of all, we do what we love and love what we do.

So why did you start your business in the first place? It's important to take stock of your reasons to be in business so you can maintain your motivation and empower yourself.

Through working with thousands of business owners, I've learned that

these are the main reasons why people want to own their own businesses:

- To make money with no upper limit
- To have the freedom to create a flexible schedule
- To be your own boss, do what you love and have control over your own work (and do the job or run the business better than the last boss you worked for)
- To bring a great idea to life
- To build something successful and derive pride, recognition, fulfillment
- To provide jobs for family or community
- To give yourself a job because you can't find a job working for someone else

Most small/midsize businesses are inextricably tied to their owners' personal lives. That's the nature of the beast. You want your business to serve your life, providing a livelihood and a quality of life that you desire. What good is a great business if you lose your health or your family or your friends or your personal values/standards? What good is making a lot of money if you aren't proud of the way you acquired it? And what if you're not enjoying your work? Your business is meant to enhance your life, not diminish it.

The Customer Loyalty Playbook will help you design structures in your business so that you can achieve your quality of life goals around time, money, relationships, and accomplishments. The focus of these structures is to improve customer loyalty, which is the backbone of a highly effective business. I know my life worked better when my company's leadership was customer-focused; when knowledgeable, committed employees took ownership of their work and delighted the clients; when effective marketing systems were attracting our ideal clients; and when we generated profits from our clients' loyalty.

You may get so caught up in the day-to-day whirlwind of getting things done that you may overlook seeing the big picture of where you are going or what you can do proactively to take your business to the next level. You may even lose sight of the reasons why you started your business in the first place.

This book's underlying purpose is to help you focus on the big picture, readdress your goals, and create a solid infrastructure proactively and in spite of the whirlwind. It will also show you why improving your

relationships with employees, clients, and customers is key to your success, and how to more effectively attract, manage, and retain these relationships.

There are a lot of books on the market that address these issues. What's different about this book? This is an easy to read, image-based playbook. Just like a football playbook it defines game winning strategies. A football playbook presents formations, runs, passes, and movement on the field. It shows the plays in diagram format and then gives detailed descriptions. This book does the same. It identifies the playmakers, presents formations of people in the right positions, guides the coaches and players, gives step by step tactics, and sets up measurements to put on the scoreboard. A winning game plan creates momentum that builds on itself to create a victory. And that's what *The Customer Loyalty Playbook* can do for you and your business.

According to research collected by HubSpot, 90% of the information transmitted to the brain is visual and visuals are processed 60,000 times faster in the brain than text. Any sports coach will tell you the same thing.

My own work confirms HubSpot's research and the sports coach's instincts. In my work coaching and consulting with small and midsize business owners and their teams, I've found that images have been instrumental in comprehending concepts quickly and easily. Over the years, I've developed a collection of pictures, matrixes, and diagrams that I've used in my work--my own playbook that I've shared with clients. I will now share this material with you as a way to help you understand business growth strategies more intuitively.

Each chapter in the book presents an image that illustrates a crucial business concept that you can include in your own team's playbook. There is an explanation of why this concept is of benefit and how to incorporate it in your business. This is followed by a case study that shows successful use of the concept. Discussion questions are included to help you further explore the concept and stimulate discussion with your team. Supportive information, including full-color versions of the images for reproduction, is available at www.CustomerLoyaltyPlaybook.com.

Some people believe knowledge is power. But I believe that *applied* knowledge is power. It doesn't matter how many great business books you read, the knowledge is worth nothing if you don't apply what you've read.

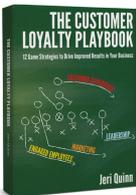
That's what makes this book different. It is actionable by its very definition as a playbook. Each image conveys a concept visually, creating more immediate understanding. The chapters are short. The questions facilitate execution in your own environment. Each chapter is complete in itself and can be used separately from the other chapters in any order you

wish.

Here is one way to use this playbook. Select an image from a chapter you want your team to understand, download it from the website, print and distribute, or project it on a screen for your whole team to see. Have a few members of your staff pre-read the chapter's explanation and case study to summarize for the rest of the team. Then, let them proceed to ask the questions suggested in the book. Engage your staff in contributing their ideas. Select the best idea--or a combination of ideas--to implement that moves the company forward. You've started to practice distributed leadership, which generates your staff's active interest in implementation. You're now already practicing one of the things the book suggests. Each chapter can be used at a "lunch-and-learn" or team meeting to build employee involvement in making the business more customer-centric.

I invite you to visit my websites

www.customerloyaltyplaybook.com or www.drivingimprovedresults.com to share how you've used this book to create more success in your business.



Interested in the rest of this book? You can order it at http://www.amazon.com/Customer-Loyalty-Playbook-Strategies-Improved/dp/0989943208/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1391374213&sr=1-1&keywords=customer+loyalty+playbook

CHAPTER 1

THE WHY AND HOW OF BUILDING CUSTOMER LOYALTY

Did you know that a 5% increase in customer loyalty could add an extra 25-100% of profit to your bottom line?

Did you know that it costs 5-8 times more to get a new client than to keep an existing client?

Did you know that loyal customers who buy regularly help you have predictable cash flow?

Customer loyalty, customer service, and customer experience are terms that have been bandied about a lot recently. You can apply them like a bandage to an organization through talk and add-on programs. But a bandage is only a short-term remedy. Sustainable effectiveness is only achieved when the infrastructure of the business is customer-centric.

The focus of this playbook is to help you—the small or mid-market business owner—see, in a clear and simple way, the importance of *why* you need customer loyalty and *how* to build it. Using pictures, we will discuss how you can enhance your infrastructure so that customer loyalty is a natural outcome.

But before we get to the pictures that show *how*, let's talk about *why*. *Why* do you want to improve the loyalty of your customers? *Why* is customer loyalty the backbone of your business? Why do you want to play this game?

Here are nine compelling reasons *why*:

1. Loyal customers generate profit.

Let's look at a customer from the business owner's profit-making point of view. When a customer makes a purchase, you subtract all the

direct costs of providing the product or service. What's left is called *gross margin*.

If the customer buys once, this gross margin covers the customer acquisition costs—all the costs associated with attracting and pursuing that client, such as your company's branding, marketing, and sales efforts. Many companies don't know their true customer acquisition costs because they have never tallied all of the costs associated with attracting customers: sales commissions, marketing, advertising, website and SEO, social media, business cards and brochures, trade shows, marketing salaries, promotional items, and portions of management salaries used to put all these elements in place. If you add up all of these expenses and divide the total by the number of new customers obtained during that period, you'll get a more realistic sense of just how much up front cost you've invested in each one.

You probably will not make a profit from a customer until he purchases a second or perhaps a third time. Since you're paying a substantial cost to land that customer, the more he buys, the more you leverage your investment in the acquisition of that customer.

If all you get are first time, single purchase customers, you are probably losing money on each one of them unless you're charging a high fee. It's only when customers make repeat purchases (three or more in most cases) that they truly contribute to your profitability.

2. Loyal customers buy more.

From the customer's point of view, the first purchase is a test to see if buying from you works out well and makes him happy. It doesn't matter if it's a product or a service—your organization is providing something and you've made a commitment to him. He wants to see if you're reliable, hassle free, and can keep your promise. The second time he patronizes your business, he's looking to make sure the first time wasn't a fluke—he wants confirmation that this buying experience is repeatable and trustworthy. The third time, he actually becomes a customer because he knows that his needs will be met and that it will be a pleasant and positive experience. He now trusts you and may be ripe to purchase more from you and at a higher price point. You now have the opportunity to *cross-sell* and *up-sell* because your customer is comfortable enough to try new things you recommend. You are now a trusted vendor. He is giving you more of the dollars that otherwise might have gone to a competitor.

3. Loyal customers give referrals.

Customers who are delighted with your product or service can't wait to spread the word to colleagues or friends. They are excited and may even show the product or the results of the service to others around them. An ideal client is bound to have other friends or colleagues who can also become ideal customers or clients. Word of mouth is the least expensive and most cost-effective customer acquisition strategy. It can also be the most powerful because the relationships that the customer has with the people he refers foster an added level of trust for your business.

This is especially true today. People share their best and worst experiences on Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Yelp, YouTube, and other social media networks or blogs—not just in writing, but also with photos and videos. Consumer websites compare products and buying experiences. Loyal customers are now more likely than ever to express their positive or negative testimonials online. This organic and unsolicited word-of-mouth referral from a loyal customer is worth its weight in gold.

4. Loyal clients are not as price sensitive.

Loyal customers are not only looking at the purchase price. They expect and want a delightful and meaningful buying experience. They are willing to pay extra for your company's product or service to get the personal recognition and individualized experience they desire.

5. Loyal customers help your business thrive by paying on time, which provides you with cash flow.

Your faithful customers love what you offer, buy regularly, and pay when expected. This establishes a steady, predictable cash flow from which you can pay your expenses and subsequently reinvest in more manpower, training and development, customer service software, and other business enhancements.

6. Loyal customers interacting with an engaged staff generate an upward value spiral.

Loyal customers become loyal because your staff provides delightful experiences and extraordinary value. In turn, dedicated customers improve your employees' morale, enthusiasm, and commitment, enhancing the customer experience even more. This impact is positive for business in many ways. Employees have more

pride in their work and in job satisfaction. Long time clients develop personal relationships with specific staff members and that leads to a stronger, more enduring business relationship. There is also an increase in personal fulfillment. Employees stay longer reducing the expense of recruiting, rehiring, and retraining. They become more productive and efficient. Satisfied employees also attract more ideal clients. This “virtuous circle” leads to the next reason to work at customer loyalty . .

7. Loyal customers give your company competitive advantage.

The virtuous circle creates enhanced profits and cash flow, giving your company a financial advantage. You then have the resources to enhance your product/service and customer experience even more. This continuous improvement results in your company taking market share away from your competitors. You can then become more selective in your choice of customers.

8. Loyal customers lead to reduced servicing costs.

Every time you acquire a new customer, you set them up in your order entry system, your delivery system, your e-mailing list, and your customer survey system. The more often you service that client, the more you know about their preferred delivery arrangements, payment plan, and order specifics. You've also trained them on how to reach you and who to ask for, which improves communication and response time. Your staff gets more efficient at servicing that customer and anticipating her needs.

9. Loyal customers are more forgiving.

Even when striving to provide a quality experience, mistakes can happen. When they do, loyal clients will accept your apology and the “fix,” and move on. They look at your company from the point of view of caring and trust, so that imperfections have less significance. In fact, the speed and quality of your fix creates a “wow” factor that reinforces how good your company is. This creates more positive stories for testimonials and referrals.

Building customer loyalty multiplies sales revenues and reduces costs. It generates cash flow and sustains growth. It creates an energetic, motivated and fulfilling workplace. But what does it do for you, the owner of the business? These are the ultimate reasons why you personally want to incorporate customer loyalty as the core of your business.

Four Personal Advantages for Building a Customer Loyalty Focused Company

1. You'll have a better quality of life where you can leave work at a reasonable hour, delegate tasks with confidence, and even take a lengthy vacation. You get to enjoy your family and friends.
2. If you want to sell your business, it will have more value as a self-sustaining organization, rather than one that needs you to do all the work of the business or land all the clients. A self-sustaining business is more attractive to an investor and will likely command a higher price.
3. Pride of accomplishment for growing a successful enterprise.
4. More money in your pocket. The more profit you make, the higher your salary and bonuses.

And Now for the How

Now that you understand the reasons *why* you should build an organization focused on customer loyalty, *how* do you do it?

You focus on the customer more than you ever thought was possible.

This process doesn't happen overnight; it evolves just as the company culture evolves. It takes time to build infrastructure and start the ball rolling, just like it takes time to develop a winning sports team. However, once it gets started and becomes part of your company's culture, it's highly sustainable.

The chapters that follow focus on *how* to build and sustain customer loyalty. By continually maximizing and optimizing these strategies, your reputation will grow and your business will thrive.

These are the four main areas of focus:

Creating Customer Loyalty by Enhancing Your Leadership

Hockey legend Wayne Gretsky said, "I skate to where the puck is going to be." As a leader you will want to know where your business is going and how to get it there. If you aren't developing yourself as a next level leader now, you won't have the skills or perspectives to get you or your business there tomorrow.

A leader is always educating and developing himself. That includes reading/listening to business books, articles, and magazines. It also means getting to know yourself, your talents, and abilities. Leadership is a people-

centric capability. If you are more task-focused, you need to sharpen your emotional intelligence. It may mean learning how not to react with anger or negativity, or how not to overwhelm your staff. It means learning how to bring the best out in others through listening, coaching, getting their buy-in, and taking a stand for them when they don't necessarily believe in themselves.

Practice is required in being a good leader, whether creating an effective team from a group of unrelated individuals or understanding the effect of your communications and the impact of your decisions. You can read books and attend lectures about these topics but to really master these skills, you must take what you learn and do it. Small/midsize business owners especially are known for learning by being in action, taking risks, learning through experience, making mistakes, and failing forward. Action happens on the field, not in the stands.

How is a *customer-centric* business different than a *company-centric* business? What does a culture of distributed leadership look like as compared to a culture of centralized leadership? A leader needs an open mind to explore concepts, use creativity, and then know when to hone in on the best option and make a decision.

Leaders who want customer-centric businesses with highly engaged employees and loyal customers intentionally build businesses with infrastructures that support those expectations. This empowering infrastructure is not a department that gets added on or something that the account manager owns. It's not a "Buy ten, get one free" loyalty program either. This customer-centric empowering infrastructure is built into every nook, cranny, job description, incentive plan, performance review, customer relationship management technology tool, transaction evaluation, customer recognition program, recruiting/hiring procedure, on-boarding and training program, development and leadership process, marketing promise, brand experience, the facility décor, and the language staff uses. It's an integral part of the business plan. It's the business' *culture*.

Business thinkers use the term "healthy organization" to refer to a company where the culture is welcoming, the employees are fully engaged, where they have habits and attitudes that support the focus on the customer experience, where they are happy, growing, and their personal and professional goals are being fulfilled.

As the business owner, you are in charge of your culture. That's one of your main jobs. Many owners of smaller businesses aren't aware of this and that holds them back. This takes skill and an awareness that you need to develop before your business will grow reliably and be scalable. Winning

teams have coaches that purposefully provide the edge needed to face tough competition. You can become that coach.

Your managers play a critical role in your company's culture. In many growing businesses, the managers are long-term employees who received promotions as others got hired below them, but have never been trained as managers. Surveys show that the top reason most people leave a job is because of the ineffectiveness of their manager. Managers act as liaisons between the executive team and the individual contributors. Their roles in a growing organization fulfill a very necessary function—one they must prepare for if they are going to supervise those on the front line with your customers.

Chapters 2, 3, and 4 present game strategies that focus on enhancing your leadership to earn customer loyalty.

Creating Customer Loyalty by Engaging Your Employees

Many of us have seen employees that are 9-to-5-ers. They put in their time and collect a paycheck. They are not invested in the company's success. They don't care much about the quality of their work. If they deal with customers, they might not care if each customer has a great experience.

On the other hand there are organizations where employees are engaged in delighting customers and finding ways to make things happen as customer advocates. They take initiative to make sure the customer experience is better than expected. They care about the quality of their work, the contributions they are making, and the success of the company. They look for ways to cut costs and make projects run more efficiently. They want to learn. They make many of their own decisions. They care. They are a team.

How do you grow an employee culture like that?

1. You set up an environment of coaching and collaboration rather than command and control.
2. You hire those who are most likely to flourish in a well-led environment and weed out those that sabotage your efforts.

Leaders who empower and develop their employees earn trust and commitment. Leaders who inspire their employees with a clearly stated vision create clarity, which results in everyone working toward the same end game. Successful leaders encourage employees to “own” their jobs,

contribute their own talents, and make and learn from their mistakes. Leaders who care treat their employees as unique individuals, giving them plenty of acknowledgement and respect in every situation.

How does all this contribute to customer loyalty? The way you treat your employees is the way they will ultimately treat your customers. Your employees are the face of your business. By their words, actions, attitudes, and commitment to success, they define your brand and the perception in the mind of each customer. They are also the guts of your business. They do all the work. They define the quality. They keep the promises. They meet the deadlines. They provide what the customer is buying. When the customer returns and eventually becomes loyal, it's due to the positive actions of your staff.

Part of your role as a leader is to make sure all your employees are doing work that suits their talents, competencies, and preferences. Are they playing the field position for which they are best suited? Is each one of them in the right role and giving the best they have to give? If so, you will get the best return on investment for the salary you're paying.

Are they being developed so they can have career paths? At different levels of the organization different skills are needed. Are you setting each person up for success by providing the help they need for maximum success? If you were the owner of a sports team, wouldn't you be investing in maximizing each player's performance?

Each person has thoughts, reaction patterns, habits, and mindsets that are part of his character and comfort zone. To really delight each customer, we can't just say on a bad day, "I'm not in a good mood today. I'll delight the customer tomorrow." In a customer-centric culture, your employees must learn how to shift their mental state when necessary and put the customer first.

Chapters 5, 6, and 7 present game strategies that focus on engaging your employees to earn customer loyalty.

Creating Customer Loyalty by Engineering the Customer Experience

When you are a customer, how do you like to be treated? Personally? Warmly? Are you pleased when a salesperson remembers your name or what you ordered last time? Does the employee's positive attitude come through? Do you feel that the salesperson cared? Do you feel supported and special? Do you feel better after the interaction than before?

The Sales Executive Council conducted a study of the purchase of

20,000 different products. They asked consumers about the criteria that most influenced their buying decision. Here are the results:

19% - the company's reputation, brand and website

19% - the product itself and the company's ability to deliver

9% - the value to price ratio, analysis if the item was worth the money

53% - the sales experience

When creating the infrastructure to earn the client's loyalty, we generally put our attention on all the processes that go into developing the first three items—the 47%. It would be advantageous to place emphasis on the other 53%--the sales experience.

You have a lot to gain by providing a great sales experience to your customers. What if every time your customer purchased something from your organization, the experience was so easy and delightful that it felt like a vacation? What does it take to create that experience and build that bond?

There are points of connection during interactions with your customers where they are practically begging you to connect with them, say something special, offer them some fun and laughter, show them you care, and truly listen and engage. You can leverage these points to provide a much richer customer experience. You can train your staff to consistently deliver this type of rewarding experience with customers and to anticipate the customer needs and desires. The keyword here is *anticipate*. Customers love to have their needs anticipated. It makes them feel recognized and understood without having to ask to be recognized and understood. Don't leave the design of the customer's experience to chance—engineer all those points so the experience is consistently delightful.

Chapters 8, 9, and 10 present game strategies that focus on engineering your customers' experience to earn their loyalty.

Creating Customer Loyalty by Focusing Your Marketing

The purpose of marketing is to grow more business and attract more customers or clients. But do we want just any customers or clients? No, we want *ideal* customers and clients, the ones who will get the most value from our products and services, who are fun to work with, who pay promptly, and refer us to others. Some prospects are not a good fit and are unlikely to become loyal. So, to this extent, loyalty is dependent on us targeting the right prospects.

The first rule of marketing is to know whom your company is targeting. Is it businesses or consumers? Who are your buyers and what are their issues? Having a clearly defined target market is key to zeroing in on specific needs and wants. When buyers see themselves in the picture you paint of your ideal clients, they become attracted to you like moths to a flame. Providing them with solutions tailored to address those needs and desires is the natural next step. When the fit between the people you attract and the service/product you offer is perfect, you have opened the door for a client to become very loyal. It's a necessary first step. The second step, getting them to step over the threshold, is determined by your customer experience.

What is your growth strategy? You can grow by expanding the number of products/services you offer. You can also grow by targeting additional markets. Another alternative is to create a customer experience that outshines your competitors. As your business' customer loyalty increases over time, your reputation and profits will also increase, often growing your market share. Focusing on the customer experience now is a marketing strategy that sets the foundation for the development of new products/services or expanding to a new geography in the future.

How will your sales revenues be generated? What mix of products and services and target markets will determine your company's income? You can and should plan this each time you do annual planning. Build loyalty into these interactions, too. There are opportunities to up-sell and cross-sell based on the trust you and your team have built with your clients. You've earned this trust; now leverage it.

Potential customers and clients expect that the quality of your marketing efforts reflect the quality that they will eventually experience should they invest in your product or service. Regardless of your budget, make sure that your marketing activities provide a quality experience. Good marketing builds on itself. One activity builds on the awareness generated on the previous activity, especially if they are linked.

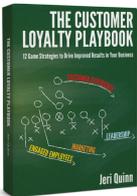
A push into any of these three growth areas requires first-rate communication. It's similar to an offensive campaign in sports. Using your playbook is the best way to teach a complex offense.

Chapters 11, 12 and 13 present game strategies that focus on your marketing to enhance customer loyalty.

Again a reminder . . .

It is not necessary to read the chapters of this playbook in sequence. Each concept presented is executable on its own and each one you implement will build on the one before so that you will see actionable results for yourself, your employees, and your customers.

Happy implementing!



Interested in the rest of this book? You can order it at http://www.amazon.com/Customer-Loyalty-Playbook-Strategies-Improved/dp/0989943208/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1391374213&sr=1-1&keywords=customer+loyalty+playbook

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Jeri Quinn is the President and founder of Driving Improved Results, an executive coaching and management consulting firm that supports CEO's of small and mid-size companies in creating customer-centric sales-driven cultures that generate client loyalty, engaged employees and bottom line results. With more than 30 years experience leading her own companies as well as coaching other business owners, she has developed experience in over 40 industries. Jeri is committed to empowering others to grow, learn, and play a big game. It is a theme running through her entire life as a teacher, dance/movement therapist, wife, mother, business owner, friend, coach, consultant, author and speaker. Jeri received her BA from Lycoming College and her MA in Dance Movement Therapy from New York University. She lives and works in both New York and Pennsylvania.

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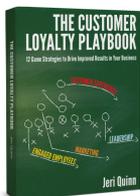
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3. Jeri's background in education and psychology gives her an advantage in communicating business and leadership concepts so that you implement. This is in contrast to others who have business experience but don't necessarily have the ability to lead you to execute in your own business.

If you'd like information on having Jeri speak at your company or conference, or on ordering bulk quantities of this book (customization available), please contact:

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Join Our Network of International CEO Mastermind Groups for Small/Midsize Businesses

The Concept: 12-20 owners of small and mid-size businesses from 2 countries come together for business opportunities and growth, leadership, and cross cultural exchange

Why: Because we grow when our assumptions are challenged by learning how others do things in different cultures, because business coaching/consulting drives improved results, because the world is getting smaller and we want to be an active player, because there are financial opportunities, because we want to grow personally and professionally, because understanding and communication generate peace making the world a better place for our children.

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When: Groups now forming.

Seeking: Participants, facilitators, sponsors, board members, connections

Want to find out more? Contact Jeri Quinn, 212-923-5820,
jeri@DrivingImprovedResults.com