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[Contact.repname-hederman]



[Contact.repemail-hederman]

Phone: [[Contact.repphone-hederman](tel:Contact.repphone-hederman)]

Contact Us

Hederman Brothers
247 Industrial Drive North
Madison, MS 39110
TOLL FREE: 800.844.7301
hederman.com

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Top Customer Loyalty Factors: How Do You Stack Up?

Do you have loyal customers? Do you even know? According to experts, there are “loyalty behaviors” that, when tracked, can help you understand how loyal your customers are. Once you have the answer, you can develop marketing strategies to improve loyalty where necessary and keep those customer relationships strong.

Here are the five behaviors of loyal customers. How would your customers stack up in each?

1. They are repeat buyers. Do you track your customers' purchases? Do they continue to buy from you after the first or second sale? If this is not something you track, you should consider doing so. If you have a low repeat purchase rate, your customer loyalty needs some work!

2. They recommend you. Do your customers recommend you to their friends and family? Have you ever asked? A simple print or email survey can tell you a lot.

3. They are forgiving. When you make a mistake, do your customers blast you on social media? Or is their experience with you strong enough for them to offer grace? If a mistake comes to your attention, be quick to apologize and make amends. Send a letter (always a direct mail letter—email apologies fall short), offer a “we're sorry” discount, or make things right another way. Use your mistakes as a chance to deepen, rather than disrupt, the customer relationship.

4. They trust you. Here is another place surveys can play an important role. Ask customers to rate how much they trust you on a sliding scale. Create different scales for different areas of your company (products, service, customer care). If you rank low in one or more areas, you know where to get to work.

5. They try new stuff. Happy, loyal customers buy more, and the more loyal they are, the more they buy over time. If you track your customers' purchases, you can suggest upsells and cross-sells and alert them to new offerings based on what they have purchased in the past.

Customer loyalty is serious business. Knowing these five loyalty behaviors gives you a head start on where and how to focus your efforts on communicating with your customers and keeping them happy, satisfied, and buying more.