

WE KNOW

# SALES

## EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

QUICK GUIDE

This Quick Guide provides you with tips on how to communicate effectively with your customer base to increase loyalty and gain additional exposure.

### COMMUNICATION

When times are hard, it can be tempting to put your head down and hope it will all just go away. However, in the current environment, it is more important than ever to be engaging your customers and making your presence felt.

In tough times, your current customers are the best resource you have; they know you, your products /services, how they can buy them and so on. If you are finding that your customer base is dwindling or they are no longer spending the same amount, then you need to get to the bottom of why this is before you can move forward. Remember, it has been conservatively estimated it costs you 5 times more to get a new customer than it does to retain an existing customer.

Whilst you're busy doing this (see *Effective Marketing Quick Guide*), you should also be regularly communicating to your customer base to ensure they're aware of everything your business has going on.

Below are some tips to help:

- Find out which form of communication your customer prefers – electronic, hard copy, audio/visual or a combination of all mediums.
- The cheapest form of communication is email
  - Keep your email database up-to-date and ensure you have permission from your clients to contact them this way
  - Email newsletters to your clients and suppliers – give them information that will be both interesting and useful to them, while reinforcing what you are doing to respond to challenges, what your strengths are and how you can help them through the current tough times – this also helps keep you top of mind.
- Maintain your website – keep it up-to-date, relevant and refresh the site with new information/news/product updates regularly.
- Use newsletters and your website to include any updates on your business, new products, any specials, and perhaps provide useful tips or inspirational quotes, a thought for the day, or a quiz question.
- Consider getting endorsements from your key clients. A third party view of your products and services can really help sell them to new customers, especially those in similar sectors.
- Use the media to tell your story
  - If you have a newsworthy event, innovation or activity within your business, the media – especially locally – may be interested in your story. Find out which reporters cover your industry and get in touch to discuss your news

- A well-written media release can help you get your information into the news
  - If your business gets media coverage, make sure you promote this through your website or directly to your customers. This will help to underline your strengths.
  - Don't forget your staff – they need to stay up-to-date too on what is happening
    - Develop an intranet for them to provide updates on new products/services/suppliers, as well as to share good news
    - Encourage staff to contribute ideas and creativity by, for example, using an ideas box – you might be surprised what they come up with
    - Train your staff in effective communication and encourage your staff to learn
  - Hold regular staff meetings –
    - Encourage employees to contribute to the meeting by adding items to the agenda
    - Staff can even take turns running the meeting and taking minutes
  - Have staff report on their activities and roles so that everyone understands what each is working on.
  - Have staff contribute to the business plan – this gets their buy in to your vision, values and goals, leading to better understanding and a team environment.
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The Chamber has a range of resources available to help you implement the above tips into your business:

### Resources

#### Quick Guides

- Effective Marketing
- Identifying Core Strengths
- Protecting Customer Relationships

### Training & Events

Strategic Planning

Business Expos

Networking Events

For further information on Effective Communication, or other aspects of communication, please contact The Chamber advisers, email [info@cecc.org.nz](mailto:info@cecc.org.nz) or phone 03 366 5096.