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How to Leverage a Satisfied Customer

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Have you ever really thought about the power that peer review has over consumer decisions? It plays a major part in every industry, from which sneakers your teenager wants to wear on the first day of school to which company you hire to do your marketing, your promotion, even your payroll. Word of mouth and insider referrals are crucial, especially now, at a time when consumers and business owners alike are holding their cards (and their wallets) close to their chests.

Consumer Reports, one of the top 10 most circulated magazines in the country, has over 8 million subscribers that consult its pages before they buy even a bottle of all-purpose cleaner. And these are referrals are from complete strangers! Imagine if your business had an army of ambassadors spreading good reviews about your service or product to their peers, colleagues, practically everyone they knew? In just a few days, you could enlist, and arm, your happy clients with everything they'll need to promote your business easily and, even do the selling for you. Ambassadors will help you sell more in less time than you ever thought possible -- but first, they'll need the right tools to do it.

Every business should assemble an Ambassador Toolkit. It'll help you better leverage your satisfied customers and turn them into a walking and talking word-of-mouth army. By providing your Ambassadors with the tools they need at their fingertips, you make it easy for them to promote you. Here are the *5 Ambassador Toolkit Must-Haves*:

1) A Real Company Case Study: The first step in designing your Ambassador Toolkit is to highlight an outcome you have created as a direct result of your solution. A case study tells a short story of your customer's business challenge, the solution you've provided, the result of your solution, and a testimonial from your customer that speaks to their satisfaction. Regardless of the features or even the benefits of your product or service, prospects want to know the bottom line: what results have you provided for others that you might also be able to provide for them. Writing a case study allows you to showcase this and it doesn't have to be complicated. In fact, it can actually be quite simple if you follow this basic formula -- customer name; business challenge; solution; result; and testimonial.

2) A Hardcopy Brochure: Print up a marketing piece designed specifically with your customer, ambassador and their contacts in mind. Keep it short and to the point. Highlight the specific work you've done with past customers and include testimonials from those who have used your solutions. Electronic versions of this collateral should also be provided. Produce a leather-bound flash drive with your logo on it and then burn any electronic information you have that is pertinent to your ambassador's industry so they may have the information for themselves, as well as share the information with their colleagues and peers in that industry. Plus, a flash drive is something that can easily clip onto a keychain (which often make their way into important business meetings, *hint*hint*).

3) Media Coverage: Any media coverage your company has should also be included in your toolkit, such as magazine or newspaper articles, online articles, TV interviews and the like. They can be assembled as a hard copy, on your website, and on that flash drive we talked about. Having everything in easy to find locations will make it easier for your ambassadors to locate the material quickly and effortlessly.

4) Published Materials: Anything you or an executive at your company has written such as journal articles, columns, and books should also be included. These items especially help to establish credibility with your Ambassadors, and show them that you, and those at your company, are experts in your field.

5) A Buzz Video: If you don't have a video on your website you are behind the times, you must get one. The video should show personality, and it shouldn't be overproduced and cold. Content should include an intro about you and your company. Keep this part very short. Focus on the viewer, what do they want to hear? Why does the viewer care about what you do? How can your company, service, or product impact them and better their lives, their bottom line, or increase their own businesses profits? Remember, you have 7 seconds to get their attention, 30-60 seconds to tell the story and convey what's in it for them to do business with you. Include industry buzz words in the video so the ambassador, if sitting with one of your prospective customers, has all the info they need to excite their contact. Make sure your ambassadors know where to find this on your website, make it *easy* for them -- all in one place!

Once you've put your Ambassador Toolkit together, you are ready to use it as an effective tool to teach your customers how to promote you and your business. The passion that a happy client brings to the sales process is the one thing that you can't manufacture yourself, but the Ambassador Toolkit enables you to spread that passion quickly and turn it into profits.

Remember, you may not be able to be everywhere at all times, but your happy clients can be.