



Client Retention Tips For Small Businesses



Thomas Fox is president of Tech Experts, south-east Michigan's leading small business computer support company.

You make a sale and get a new customer – that's good, right?

But do you know what is even better? It is when they come back

the second, third and fourth time around to do business with you again.

There is an art to getting your clients to continue with your service – and this is why you need to ramp up your client retention techniques.

As a small business owner, there are many things that you can do to improve client retention and have them return to you again and again. Here are a few ideas you can put to use right away:

Admit mistakes and address issues immediately. A study shows that 84% of customers will tell their friends (and even blog about) a negative experience with a certain business.

Imagine how many potential customers you can lose if this happens to you. The key is to admit the mistake and address the complaint as soon as possible – and your client will most likely remain loyal and tell their friends about the service.

Keep your customer service top notch. Did you know that more than half of all consumers are willing to pay more money for better customer service?

True, customer service will always make or break your business. Always seek to provide stellar service because this will benefit you in the long run and will encourage your clients to choose you over cheaper alternatives.

Remember your clients and they will remember you. Customers are just regular people, too. They are human beings who want to feel valued and appreciated.

Show your loyal clients that you remember them by sending personalized greeting cards. Christmas is a good time to send cards but if December seems too far away, you can always start a customer appreciation mailing program anytime.

Learn about your client's needs.

One of the main reasons why clients stop availing of certain services is because they no longer need them.

People's needs evolve over time, so you may also want to improve your products or services to cater to their new needs.

Keep them in the loop. It is also good to keep your clients informed about new things going on in your business.

Do you have new services? Have you updated your products? Do you have a new branch that is somehow closer to them?

You can keep them informed through in-store presentations, brochures, regular e-mails or even print newsletters (like this one, going strong every month since October, 2006!).

As a small business owner, you do not have to spend thousands of dollars to retain customers. These are simple things that you can do (most of them for free) to keep your customers happy and coming back to you.

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The Benefits Of Proper Networking For Your Business

by *Frank Wright, Service Manager*

Many times a company's network tends to be a difficult part of their infrastructure to decide what they really need.

There are many different ways of configuring a network depending on the company's needs.

A network can be as simple as having your Internet Service Provider's modem connected directly to a workstation or as complex as having thousands of workstations and servers connected to a company's network around the world.

Deciding on what is needed for your network is completely dependent on the intended uses of it. Many factors contribute to this; security, size of network, locations, speed necessary, etc.

For most small companies, they can usually get by with a simple router that has a built-in firewall solution.

While the simple routers take care of giving access to users hardwired to the local network, and in some cases via a wireless connection, they don't offer the features that a higher end router would.

Many companies have multiple sites that they want to have access to all the same files. One solution is purchasing cloud storage to accomplish this.

While that would be a great idea if you needed access when you are

not on your companies network, a much more economical solution is to have a virtual private connection (VPN) setup between sites.

If a VPN is setup between sites the traffic is encrypted with a shared key between the routers which allows the two of them to pass traffic to each other without anyone being able to see what it is.

For instance, you may have accounting files on a network that you only want certain employees to have access to, with a server you can assign specific users access to these files.

Some routers also have the ability to manage bandwidth. This provides companies the ability to manage the amount of data users can use for different applications.



Many large companies need the ability to control how much bandwidth is being used and what is using it. With higher end routers you have the ability to do this.

On the business class firewalls we generally install at businesses they offer a large package

of security tools to help protect your network.

Our business class firewalls offer all of the routing capabilities of the simple, home user routers but also offer antivirus, web filtering, antispam, intrusion prevention system (IPS), and vulnerability management.

The business class firewalls drastically improve a business's security as well as offers many of the features listed above.

If your business is in need of network improvements to increase security and employee productivity, give us a call and we can offer you a network diagnosis to determine what your company's needs are and where your networks weak points are.

This allows you to safely send confidential information to members at a different site.

The biggest advantage of a VPN between sites is the ability to have one server at a centralized location and allow all of your sites to have access to it.

This alone can save thousands of dollars when it comes to the network build, you only need one server.

When it comes to having a server, if properly configured they can provide a significant amount of security on the network.

Servers improve security by offering centralized management and providing a means to allow or deny access to files on the network.

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Office 365 Or Office 2013: Which Is Right For You?

by *Jeremy Miller,*
Technician

You've probably heard a lot of things in the news about Microsoft's Office 365.

Let's explain the difference between Office 365, and the traditional version of Microsoft Office you're used to using on your computer.

Standard versions of Office 2013 are licensed or boxed product. You can purchase a license to this product from any local or online retailer.

Office 365 is a subscription based product. You purchase this license either monthly or annually. You can also use this product on more than one computer and it is transferrable to other computers. This license is not transferrable to another user.

You should know right away both versions of Office will not run on any Windows Operating system prior to Windows 7.

The Office 2013 license is very straight forward: You simply install Office like you always have. However, unlike previous Office versions, you cannot remove it and install it on another computer.

The Office 365 license is much more malleable, and is licensed and sold by version. Office 365 comes in four versions: Home Premium, Small Business, Midsize Business, and Enterprise. Office 365 is licensed per user.

Office 365 Home Premium comes with Word, Excel, Power Point, One Note, Outlook, Publisher, Access, 20 GB of Skydrive cloud storage, and 60 minutes of calling if you have a Skype account. This version is not available to businesses.



Office 365 Small Business includes everything Home Premium has plus Microsoft Lync and business email which will offer 25 GB per month, and many other features.

Office 365 Midsize Business requires an annual commitment. This version will allow you to have up to 300 users. This has everything Small Business has plus Microsoft InfoPath.

Office 365 Enterprise also requires an annual commitment, but there are no limits as to the number of users you can have.

This version has everything that Midsize Business has plus Unified Discovery, Data Loss Prevention, and Role-based access.

Unified Discovery will allow you to search across Exchange, SharePoint, and Lync.

With Role-Based access you can control access and assign it to different groups.

You can create data loss prevention policies and templates for protecting sensitive information. These features will aid in keeping your business compliant with various regulatory requirements.

Choosing your version of Office is pretty straightforward. If you're a light Office user, or only use a few features of Office then Office 2013

is best for you. You can choose which version you need based on the Office tools that you use.

If your company uses many features of Office, and you want to avoid large upfront software costs, then Office 365 is your best bet.

You will still be able to use Office 365 with no Internet connection. It does require an Internet connection to install and sync, however, and of course for email access.

You can access Office from anywhere using Office on Demand, which is not full-featured, but will allow you to read and edit documents.

Office 365 is the best bet for small and growing companies. You can add and remove new users and computers.

When you upgrade computers you will be able to remove Office from the old computer to install on a new computer.

You will also get more features like business email and calendars, a public website, team sites, web conferencing, and instant messaging.

If your company needs any help making a decision about which version of Office would best suit you, or if you would like help installing and configuring Office, please give us a call. We'd be happy to help.



Contact Information

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Social Media: Authenticity And Perseverance

Social media is the current zeitgeist and the way of the future, or so we are told. This makes it all the more important to make sure that we are conducting our social media behavior in the correct manner.

Two of the most important things in the way we conduct ourselves in the world of social media are transparency and authenticity. In other words, do not try to pretend to be anyone or anything but what you are and be honest in all your interactions.

That said, perseverance and a thick skin can also come in handy. You cannot worry over what anyone else thinks about you 24 hours a day, seven days a week in the world of social media any more than you can in the real world.

Build and work your plan and just get out there. Make sure that you manage your brand, your image and your reputation. Take any legitimate criticism onboard, but do not be beholden to it.

Optimizing social strategy in emails

Senior management often tells B2B marketers to be more social when it comes to their B2B marketing efforts, but how exactly are you supposed to go about doing that?

The more familiar channel of email sees B2B marketers pushing their brand, solutions and messaging onto a targeted list of leads who are quite likely to either ignore it or even list them as spam.

One good tip when it comes to using email marketing for social media is to share rather than tell. It is not sufficient to leverage social media by just adding your social media links onto the bottom of an

email. Provide links in emails in order to let leads share the content.

You also need to remember that at the end of the day it is all about the content. Sending the right content to the right person in the social sphere will have the result of amplifying the effect of that content, so take note of who your space's loudest social media users are and try to get them to join in with your communications in order to leverage their long reach.

How to grow your market

There are a number of innovative methods with which you can attempt to connect and ultimately grow your market.

One good method is to actually invent a whole new market segment. B2B marketing is all about making

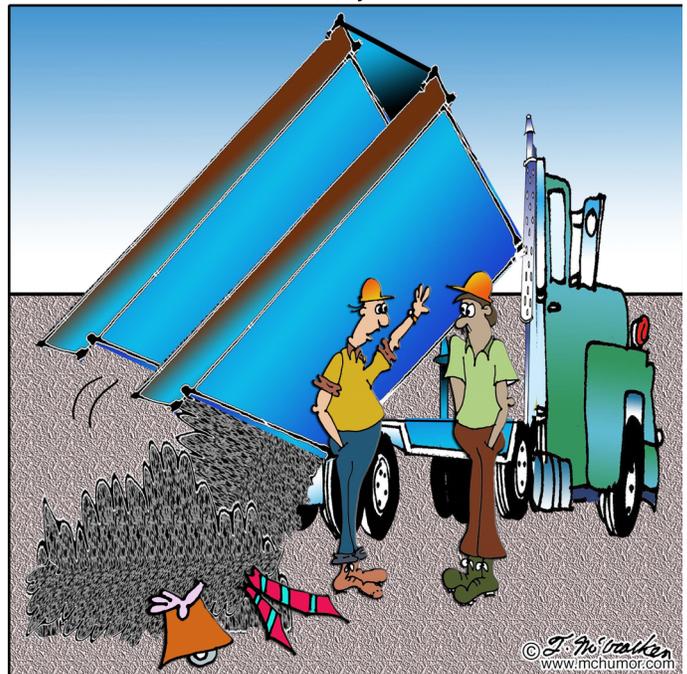
sure that your service or product is put in the position of being at your category's "logical extreme."

For example, B2B companies that create disruptive technologies tend to be heavily funded when it comes to R&D, but the winners will be those companies that have positioned themselves to be the first in people's minds.

Another good method is to swap your sales funnel for a sales network. These days there are innumerable ways to get out of the B2B sales funnel, with the market of today making it very expensive to find new prospects.

The trick is to create services and products that are so amazing that your existing customer base will not be able to stop talking about them to their friends and colleagues.

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"Have you seen that new safety inspector anywhere?"