



***Tarrystone***  
CONSULTANTS

The  
LITTLE

**BIG**

**CUSTOMER  
BOOK**

How we really build relationships  
between Customers and Businesses

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## Why

The idea for this little book came from my work in Marketing and Customer Relationship Management.

It seems a great pity that now we can talk to any organisation at any time and that they have the computer power to know so much about us all is being wasted.

If CRM is to mean little more than Cost Reduction Management then we must learn to deal with Customers as people and allow the people who deal with Customers to be people too.

*Use this book as a reminder the next time you are analysing a data transfer of this week's transaction in the context of a specific target cluster regarding the propensity to churn through a multiple cross tab and a Venn.*

If all that is gibberish to you don't worry, it most certainly is to the Customer!

Use this book because you quite simply want to improve your relationship with your customers. Whatever business you are in.

## Who

Every business has Customers. Every business needs more of them spending more.

Modern marketing seeks loyalty through incentives and collector schemes yet implicit in the word and in being a *CUSTOMER* is loyalty. Custom means more than once. Customers are more than simply shoppers. Customers are human beings.

Built into the human psyche are the need to belong, the desire to be loved and the hope to succeed.

Yet we are all individuals who like to be recognised for what we are.

These Darwinian fundamentals do not change because technology creates new ways of doing things that appear to be quicker and cheaper.

Deal with a Customer quickly, cheaply and badly and you will lose a Customer. Not right away but you will. The most expensive thing a business can do.

That is why every business should work out how it deals with its Customers.

**This little book will help you get BIG with Customers**

## **U**nderstanding

This little book is not about to tell you what you do. That's your business. What we are aiming to do is to remind you how to treat Customers so your relationship with them grows profitably.

This means seeing the Relationship as a whole from start to finish. The aim is to make friends with your Customers. In a professional and business-like way of course but none the less friends. But friendship has to be built. We are suspicious of instant friends. Friends have to prove themselves to be friends.

So let's start by thinking about how a relationship itself starts, how it grows and is then sustained, often through thick and thin.

This is my list of the key stages of any relationship-

- **Meeting & being introduced**
- **Hello**
- **Pleased to meet you**
- **Getting to know you**
- **We're all right really**
- **Thank you**
- **Nice to see you again**
- **Anything I can do for you**
- **An invitation**
- **I was thinking of you**
- **Thank you**
- **Oops! - I didn't mean to do it - I'm sorry**
- **I won't do it again - thanks for understanding**
- **Goodbye - hope to see you again**
- **Hello - nice to see you again...**

As a business we need to recognise these circumstances and situations with our Customers. You should think through how you deal with each of them individually - in person, on the phone or written.

Just before you do - are you sure you really understand the basis of a good relationship...

## **B**asis

The basis of any good relationship is mutuality. I'm OK, you're OK.

Here is my little list of the main points that mean we have a relationship-

- **We know each other**
- **We understand and are comfortable with each other**
- **We trust each other**
- **We respect each other and don't want to offend or refuse**

Now substitute the words 'each other' for Customer and ask yourself how does your business stack up?

## **W**hy

What is the point of this you might ask? Why are relationships so important?

### **Because life's too short!**

We need relationships because they save us time and we need to have things and get things that only come with relationships. It is why we invest so much time in them and why we are prepared to be forgiving because we do not want to waste our personal investment in the relationship and have to start again.

Those in business are wrong to call this the lethargy factor. If you are getting things wrong now but not yet losing Customers you will. If you are getting things wrong but trying to put them right tell your customers they will understand and may stay Customers.

## **E**xpectations

In reality we do not expect much.

Just think of the often-heard comments - '*She's OK because she always does what she says*' or '*at least he understands my point of view*'.

So at the heart of your customer relations management must be an understanding not to promise too much. By being realistic and consistent your delivery of your Customers expectations will remain good - what they expect. Over promising simply raises expectations to an undeliverable level. Now matter how well you do.

These are the golden rules -

- **Do what you say you are going to do**
- **Be realistic**
- **Be consistent**
- **Be pleasant with a mutual outlook even if you have an unpleasant task or message**
- **Understand the other point of view**
- **Keep in touch (not only when you want something!)**

Take the gardeners approach - Let the relationship grow and nurture it for best results.

## **D**elight

It is actually quite easy to not only to please your Customers but also to delight them.

I am pleased when things have happened when I expected them but I will be delighted in they happen sooner or that my needs have been anticipated and someone knows exactly what I need. (Better still if they know what I want!)

So remember we are more than pleased -

- **When nice things we didn't expect happen - *thoughtful things & helpful things***
- **My needs are anticipated**
- **Someone understands exactly what I wanted**

Remember delighted Customers tell others.

## **B**egin

Bringing these thoughts to your business is not difficult but it is not easy either. The first thing you must do is to find out what your customers are thinking and saying.

What is their experience of your business? You will find your own ways to do this. Start by asking them... After all if the Customer knows best - Best know the Customer.

Then you should consider how do we start to behave as a business that wants to have Customer Relationships.

It is a simple thought that you say hello and introduce yourselves - *even though you have already met but never really spoken*

We would like to tell you about ourselves and ask about you to find out how we can serve you better. Oh and we promise to keep in touch...

**Now it is up to you.**

## **A**bout

Tim Arnold for many years worked in Sale Promotion and Direct Marketing - going as far back as Green Shield Stamps through Pets Clubs and Kids Clubs and Petrol Points schemes and Coupons & Competitions for major Companies and Retailers. Now with the advent of greater knowledge and business ability to communicate and interact with Customers he provides Consultancy on how Marketing integrates with Customer Relationship Management.

For new processes to work an understanding of technology and data analysis has to be matched with a real understanding of the Customer and what builds a relationship.

**This little BIG Customer Book is just a timely reminder.**

In this business feedback is welcomed - [tim.arnold@tarrystone.com](mailto:tim.arnold@tarrystone.com)

## **Tarrystone Consultants**

Making Customer Relationship Marketing work...

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