



Marketing Matters



by Cindy Mobey

Welcome to Marketing Matters. I am really excited to be a part of 'The Deux-Sèvres Monthly' and I hope you find my column useful. If there is anything you'd like me to talk about in future issues, please feel free to email me.

Whether you've just started your business, or have been going for a while, planning and organisation at the beginning of the year is a key factor to success. Plan your business goals so you know what you want to achieve. For example, one of my goals for this year is to keep my website updated. Having a plan forces you to look at what works well for you and what doesn't, and to look at what you need to do next.

Know Your Customers

We all know that customers are really important – without them you don't have a business, so do you know what your customers want?

Look at your competitors... why are they successful? Look at the price, quality and customer service they offer. Why will potential customers choose your products or services over your competitors? What do your customers like about your products? What do they currently buy from you? Why do they buy from you and do they give you repeat business? If you're not sure, you could conduct a short survey and ask them...and give them an incentive to reply, such as 10% off any order over 20€. Everyone likes something for nothing, so an incentive to answer a few questions is very appealing and, if you do the survey on Facebook, or on your website, it could bring new customers.



Provide Great Service

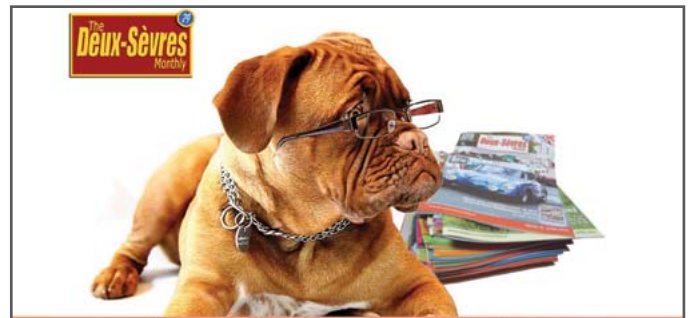
If you treat your customers well and always provide what you say you will, your customers will be satisfied. Go beyond being good, go that extra mile and you will delight them. Every single interaction you have with your customers, be it face to face, on your website or via social media, feeds into their overall impression or experience in dealing with your business. So do everything you can to make sure that all those interactions are good ones. If they have a positive experience, they are more likely to share that experience with friends and family and recommend you...and word of mouth is one of the best ways to get new business.

The Personal Touch

Finally, always be warm, friendly and enthusiastic. Get to know your customers wherever you can - make helpful suggestions and show a genuine interest in what they do and what they want from you. I find it so frustrating when I ring a company and get that dreaded, "Press 1 for 2 for" Most of the time I hang up. But when I get someone I can talk to, the experience is so much better. So think about what you would like if you were buying from you! Put yourself in your customers' shoes.

Providing the personal touch and taking a genuine interest in your customers fosters a sense of loyalty and can help you find out what motivates them. Remember...happy customers will share their experiences!

Contact Cindy Mobey
Tel: 05 45 31 13 86 ~ Email: cindymobey@outlook.com



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Published by Sarah Berry, 3 La Bartiere 79130 Secondigny. Tel: 05 49 70 26 21
Email: info@thedeuxsevresmonthly.fr. Siret: 515 249 738 00011



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Cindy Mobey
Freelance Writer &
Marketing Consultant

For all your marketing needs.
Writing services include website
content, blogs and newsletters.
First consultation free.

Email: cindymobey@outlook.com
Telephone: 05 45 31 13 86
www.cindyfreelancewriter.wordpress.com



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