

## **Praise Your Clients to Financial Success**

by: Susie Fields

Have you ever wondered why some business owners are more successful than others? Of course. We all have. What is it? The office? The manager? The staff? What do they have that you don't? This question has been asked often by business owners just like yourself.

Are you ready for the secret of success? Praise and recognition- something so incredibly simple, yet something so often overlooked. In my work with various businesses, the number one reason why clients do not return is that the businesses with whom they do business do not appear to appreciate them. A little praise and personal attention can accomplish wonders: improvement in client morale, creation of more sales, additional referrals.

That's what you want, isn't it? There are three types of recognition. The first is cash, the almighty dollar. Reward your clients with cash incentives. Offer discounts off the total price for purchasing larger service or product packages.

For example, if your client is talking about the \$800 package, and you desire to move him or her to the next lever, offer a cash discount to encourage a stretch to \$1,000. I offer my clients 25 percent discounts if they provide three qualified referrals within a certain time period, or a \$100 gift certificate to a terrific restaurant or department store. It takes about 30 days to form new modes of behavior so I dangle the carrot for at least that period of time, thereby encouraging them to consistently think bigger. Though I invest only \$100, I have the power to increase any salesman's totals by several thousands of dollars annually, and I feel that is a marvelous return on a small investment.

Secondly, there is verbal acknowledgment. Nothing is sweeter than, "I really appreciate your sending Mr. Jones to me. I believe we'll both benefit from doing business together." You need to honor and recognize that person.

Many of our clients look to us as mentors or parent figures. Just as a child needs encouragement from his/her parent for doing something right, or an Olympic athlete needs praise and direction from his coach, so do our clients need praise from us.

Make it a goal of yours to find someone doing something right and acknowledge them for it at every opportunity. As an example, perhaps your client was written up in the newspaper as Man of the Year at his lodge. If you let him know how proud you are of his success, and tell him you knew he was the kind of person who would do great things, you will be amazed by the dramatic increase in referrals, increased purchases, or other benefit to you and your business that he will be apt to create in the following month. Remember, the little things in life make the bigger picture. Try this technique and watch what happens. You'll be amazed and delighted to observe the eagerness to please and to attend each future meeting with a new referral or greater purchase in mind!

Thirdly, acknowledge each occasion of benefit received from your clients. Business owners and managers underestimate the power of this type of action. Among those acknowledgments could be: thank you notes for referrals, birthday cards, flowers, a gift for the office, such as a plant, or chocolates for him and his staff. This should be a really big deal. I want each client to receive some sort of appreciation acknowledgment from me. I love to create win-win relationships with my clients. Use your personality to create what works best in your business. Try it for a month and watch your clients respond.

Remember, the speed of the leader is the speed of the gang. If your clients are not giving you the results you wish, maybe it's time for you to reevaluate your business.

Do you have a plan of action? Do you know what you personally would like your staff to do? Do you know what each client wants from his/her own business? Where do your career goals lie? When you have the answers to these key questions, you are on your way to total success.