



95 Ways to get your customers to love you

The ultimate guide on customer delight

by Sonia Thompson

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Every business needs the same thing.

Every business. Whether it's just getting started or has been around for years, they all need the same thing to survive. Customers.

And because every business needs customers, business owners spend crazy amounts of time figuring out how to get and keep customers in their business.

Does this sound like you? It makes total sense if it does. Let me let you in on a little secret.

It's a secret many smart business owners follow religiously to grow a successful business. And if you start to apply this secret in your business, you'll soon reap the many benefits of it as well.

The secret to getting *and* keeping the customers you desire for your business is to get them to love you.

That's it. Simple, right? It's easy to understand why this is true.

When your customers love you, they want to be around you. They want to know more about you. They love the things you do. They love the things you offer. They buy from you. They tell their friends all about you.

And on those (rare) occasions when you may not be at your best, they still stick around. Because they love you!

Having customers that love you is the ideal scenario for entrepreneurs. Because businesses that have customers that love them thrive.

But *how* do you actually get your customers to love you?

That's where customer delight comes in.

First comes delight, then comes love

“Chris and Sarah sittin’ in a tree, k-i-s-s-i-n-g. First comes love, then comes marriage, then comes baby in a baby carriage!”

When you were younger, did you ever sing that song to your friends who showed any signs of liking each other? If only life were that simple. But when it comes to your business, it can be.

Just like with this childhood rhyme, in your business there is an order of events that need to occur for you to end up with the result of having customers that love you.

So let's rework this rhyme to make it apply to your business:

“Your business and your customers sittin’ in a tree, k-i-s-s-i-n-g. First comes comes delight, then comes loooooooooove, then comes a booming business in a baby carriage!”

Doesn't quite roll off your tongue the same way, but you get it. First you delight your customers, then they love you.

And the more you delight them over time, the deeper the degree of the love. Not a bad deal, right?

Delighting your customers is all about bringing them a level of joy or excitement. It's about putting a smile on their face, and making them happy as a result of some type of interaction with you or your business.

The business owners who delight their customers on a consistent basis, are often the ones that are most successful.

You can be one of those successful business owners. But you first have to start delighting your customers.

How to get your customers in the tree

Before you are able to get your delight on, your customers first have to be willing to get up in that tree with you.

So how do you do it? How do you get the customers your business so desperately needs?

You've got to develop a business strategy, and then execute a marketing strategy that supports the business plan you created.

Your business strategy will put you in the best position to get the customers you need. And your marketing strategy will get your customers to want you. It's what will get them to want to get in that tree with you.

Both of these elements are essential in your journey to getting your customers to love you.

You can find details on getting started building a [business strategy here](#). Details on creating a [marketing strategy are here](#).

How to delight your customers

There are tons of ways you can do it. The more you know your customers, the better you'll be able to figure out the best ways to make them squeal with glee.

To help you get going in your quest to be a lean, mean, delight machine that brings joy to your customers every chance you get, I've compiled a list of proven ways to serve up some delight.

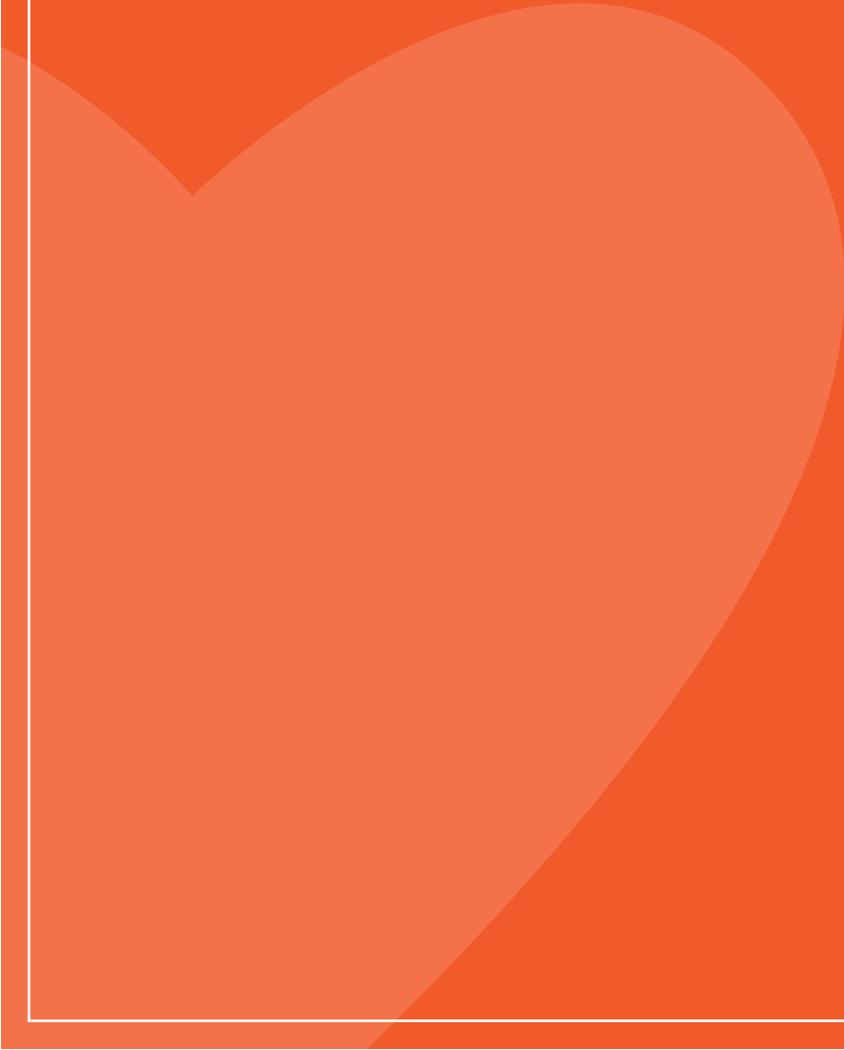
Go through the list. Make note of at least three things you can start implementing in your business now. Then make note of three additional ones you want to implement within ninety days.

Next, get to work delighting those customers! Apply the ideas just as they are here, or better yet, make them your own by adding your special kind of awesome juice to it.

Just get to delighting, so your business can get some love!

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Section 1

Build a Relationship

On the road to getting your customers to love you, one of the key things you'll need to do is build a relationship with them. This will move you beyond very fragile purely transactional relationships as you develop deeper, emotional connections with your customers.

Building a relationship will also turn your customers into friends. And doing business with people you like is more fun for everyone. Besides, your friends are much less likely to run off to one of your competitors when they introduce something new or offer a lower price!

Here are some ways to build a relationship with your customers.

1. Act like you want your customers to stick around

When you invite guests to your home, do you spend time making sure everything is just right? I know I do! I want them to have a great time so they are excited to come back the next time I invite them. We should take on that same approach when it comes to our customers interacting with our business.

Surprisingly, many companies act like they don't care if their customers come back. Don't do that. Roll out the red carpet as you interact with them. Make them feel welcome and comfortable in your home, whether it is a physical store, online, or a service business. Treat your customers so well that they'll want to stay awhile and even come back again for another dose of what you have to offer.

2. See your customers as individuals

View and treat your customers as individuals, rather than a transaction or a target that has the potential to line your pockets with money. See them as unique people, with real challenges you can help solve. It will make a difference in their experience with you for sure.

Seeing your customers as individuals simply means taking the time to treat them as real people rather than numbers. For instance, [Chris Guillebeau](#) sent a personal email to each person who subscribed to his mailing list. There are well over 10,000 people who've signed-up to hear from Chris. And yet, he sent each individual a note to welcome them and say thanks. He saw them as people. New friends. Not subscriber #2687.

3. Use the sweetest sound in any language

In *How to Win Friends and Influence People*, Dale Carnegie explained that the sweetest and most important sound to a person is their own name. When someone calls you by name, it implies familiarity. It brings a feeling as if the two of you have a relationship.

And with the number of businesses that treat customers like a transaction rather than a person, caring enough about your customers to call them by their name will win you mucho brownie points.

This is extremely important in businesses that see customers face-to-face. For instance, if you own a restaurant or a dry cleaning business, when customers enter your world, learn their names and say them. Especially if you see their lovely faces week after week.

4. Remember your customers' names

When your customers come back to you that's always a great thing. Why not reward them by letting them know you remember them? Think about how you feel when someone recalls your name. If you're anything like me, it'll put a smile on your face because it makes you feel like that person thought you were important enough to remember.

Have you ever had to reintroduce yourself to someone you know you've already met? How did that make you feel?

5. Pay attention to your customers

Pay close attention to what your customers do, don't do, and when they do it. Acknowledge them and their habits. And then use what you learn to deliver on what they need. It will help you serve them better as well.

When you are so tuned in that you are able to solve a problem your customers didn't even know they were going to have, you become super valuable and poised to be in a position to delight them over time.

6. Engage your customers

Your customers may be a little shy, or have a lot going on. As a result, talking to you isn't always top of mind for them. You will often have to make the first move to begin engaging with them. Having conversations and other forms of interaction with your customers are great ways to help you build a relationship with them.

Lots of businesses do this with their social media platforms like Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram. They are convenient ways to connect, and stay connected with your customers. Not sure what to say? Start with simple questions about themselves, or ask them to sound off on a current event. Sometimes all it takes is an invitation to open up to get your customers talking.

Danny Iny of [Firepole Marketing](#) engages his readers by encouraging them to send in their questions on entrepreneurship. He then answers them in his daily email.

7. Get to know your customers

As you get to know your customers, you'll learn more about them, their likes, and dislikes, as well as how you can best help them. Getting to know your customers can

be a real joy for both of you. And as your relationship grows, your customers will grow in their desire to want to be around you.

My accountant Gary got to know me by taking me to lunch. By spending time together talking about things related to our businesses, our life philosophies, and just shooting the breeze, we were able to strengthen our relationship beyond the joys of tax preparation.

8. Listen to your customers

I have a friend who was elated because she casually mentioned she wanted an electric blanket to a special friend of hers, and a few days later an electric blanket arrived on her door step. Her friend listened when she expressed a desire, and he made it happen.

Your customers are no different from my friend. They want to be heard. They are speaking all the time, expressing what they like, dislike, challenges they're having, and things they wish they had. When you pay attention to what they're saying, you'll get all kinds of clues about things you can do to delight them. And by acting on some of their feedback, you'll quickly show them you were listening. And that will make them feel real good.

9. Don't let your customers hear the sound of crickets

When a customer communicates with you, either via email, social media, blog comments, fan mail, or something else, that's a win. Woohoo! It's always great when your customers engage with you. When they do communicate, don't let them hear only crickets due to a non-response. Take the time to respond to acknowledge you heard them. Move the conversation forward. Show them you appreciate that they took the time to connect with you. It'll make their day.

Every time I comment on a blog I enjoy, I'm always a little giddy when the author of the post takes the time to respond back to what I said. It makes me feel like they see me and they care.

10. Get feedback from your customers

Want to know how your customers are feeling about something you do for them? Ask them. Get feedback from them directly on how well you're doing at solving their problem. Your customers will be pleased that you care enough about their experience to want to ensure it's a great one.

You can also get feedback on existing areas of frustration for them. But then you have to do something with the information your customers give you. They'll be delighted that you listened to them, and actually used what they said to make improvements. Especially if those improvements make their lives better in some way.

11. Remember your customers' love for peanut butter

You don't have to remind your friends what your favorite drink is, or that you're allergic to avocados. You don't even have to tell them you're addicted to peanut butter. They just know. Because they paid attention to what you did and said as you spent time together. They noticed when you went through that jar of peanut butter in a week. You should pay similar attention to, and remember your customers' preferences. They'll appreciate it more than you think.

While waiting for a chai latte in a Starbucks one morning, I heard one of the baristas say *"Hey Jason, do you want your usual?"* I looked over to the man who had just walked into the shop. He commented "sure" and went about paying for his order. He was clearly a regular, and I can totally see why. The team in the coffee shop remembered his preferences and acted on it.

12. Understand your customers' needs

Doesn't it feel awesome when you come across people who just get you? People who completely understand what you're going through and what you need? When you understand your customers' needs really really well, they experience that same feeling of awesomeness.

I used to have a hair dresser that I went to for years. I loved how I didn't have to tell her certain things about the way I wanted to style my hair, or certain other preferences I had in caring for it. She just knew. And when certain things changed in my schedule, like adding a swimming regimen, she knew exactly how to advise me on how to maintain my swim schedule and my hair. It was just one of the many reasons why I loved her.

13. Remember special occasions

People you have a relationship with know and remember special occasions in your life. Whether it's birthdays, anniversaries, or business milestones, it's always nice when those in your world remember and acknowledge it. This is a great thing to do with your customers. Acknowledge happenings in their life with a note, email, coupon, discount, or special gift.

Some businesses I frequent keep track of my birthday. So every year in my birthday month I get a coupon to use to buy myself a little gift. It's always appreciated.

14. Be personable

There's a Chinese proverb that says "*A man without a smiling face should not open a shop.*" This is absolutely true! Have a (genuine) smiling face, and be warm, friendly, and personable with your customers. It gives them a sense that you actually want them to be there with you in your business. Help your customers feel as at home and comfortable as possible whenever they interact with your business.

15. Trust your customers

There's just something empowering about the honor system. It shows you don't expect your customers to do dumb stuff or steal from you. So when you trust your customers will do the right thing, and won't try to stick it to you, it often inspires them to rise to the occasion as they prove worthy of the trust they've been bestowed. It gets pretty tough to build a relationship with someone when you do things that imply you don't trust them.

One year I got my teeth cleaned at the dentist just before the holidays. While reviewing my chart, the hygienist noticed that it was also time for dental x-rays. Then she said, *"I know you were only expecting to pay for the cleaning today, and it's the holiday season. If you need to, you can pay for the x-rays in the new year."* I thought it was so sweet that the office trusted me enough to pay later for a service they were rendering that day. I paid my bill in full that day. For both the cleaning and the x-rays.

16. Fix it when you mess up

Sometimes you may mess up. But if you fix things with your customer as soon as possible, you put yourself in a great position to delight them.

Besides, data shows that customers who have had a complaint handled satisfactorily by a company are even more loyal than those who never had any problems with an organization at all.

Bottom line: when you mess up, fix it.

One time I was out to dinner with some friends. When the food came, my friend's salmon wasn't cooked the way he requested it. When he let the server know, they not only made him a new entree cooked just the way he liked, but they gave him his meal for free to try to make up for the inconvenience. We all thought that was pretty cool.

17. Fix it when your customer thinks you've messed up (but you really didn't)

There may be times when you've done right by your customers, but for whatever reason they think you haven't. It happens. Sometimes customers make mistakes. Rather than haggling over who's right, just make it right.

Show them that you care more about the long-term value of the relationship by quickly overcoming a short-term disagreement. And if your customer ever realizes his error, and that you took care of him anyway, you'll have endeared yourself to him even more.

18. Let your customers know how you feel about them

People like to know where they stand. And if you love and appreciate your customers, let them know. Tell them. And if you can do something to show them, that's even better.

19. Write your customers a hand-written note (love letter)

With all the email, junk mail, and mass messages you get these days, isn't it nice when you get a personal note written just to you? And isn't it even nicer when that note is handwritten? It's just an extra nice touch and it feels a lot more intimate.

A while back I was a bit under the weather, and a good friend of mine sent me a card in the mail sending well wishes. In the card she hand wrote a lovely note that I cherished. Don't underestimate the power of the written word! Especially the handwritten ones.

Check out how the Grammy-winning singer Lorde sent a [handwritten-note to her fans](#).

20. Show gratitude

Without your customers, your business wouldn't exist. So when your customers reward you with their time, money, and loyalty don't take it for granted. Express gratitude. And if you do it in a cool way, you're customers will love you all the more.

[TD Bank in Canada said thanks](#) in touching ways to their customers. Check out the video and see if you don't shed a tear.

21. Take the high road

Mistakes, disagreements, and conflict sometimes happen. The key is not to let them spiral out of control or to get lulled into doing what's best for you at the expense of others. Take the high road. It may not always be easy, but you will certainly be appreciated for it.

A while back my credit card company had a security breach. They recognized the issue quickly, and sent out a new card with a new account number. But they didn't stop there. Because sensitive information for many of their customers had been compromised, the company offered a year of free credit monitoring as a means to safe-guard against potential unauthorized use of my credit card. The company didn't have to do it, and I'm sure that credit monitoring wasn't cheap. But the company chose to take the high road to protect its customers.

22. Let customers into your world (behind the scenes)

People like to know what goes on behind the scenes. It makes them feel connected to you. It helps them feel like they are getting an insider's view of how you work and how you produce all the awesome that comes their way. Why not let them in at least a little? Give them a peek. Give them some access.

Lots of famous stars have incorporated this as a way to stay connected to their fans. Simply go to YouTube and type in "Beyonce behind the scenes" and you'll find video after video of behind the scenes access to the megastar's work. And her fans eat it all up, happy to get more of a glimpse into her world.

Section 2

Make Your Customers' Lives Better

There are lots of things competing for your customers' time and resources. The things and people that will ultimately win the battle for their attention are those that make their lives better in some way. It's not always sexy, but it will certainly help your customers be great. And that's certainly something they will love you for.

Here are some ways to delight your customers by making their lives better.

23. Solve your customers' problem

The whole reason your customers come to you is so you can provide good feelings or a solution to their problem. So when they come to you, solving their problem puts you in good standing. Even better, solve their problem like no one else can. Should they ever have the problem again, your customers will know exactly where to turn.

24. Know your stuff

Be an expert in whatever it is your business does. The more you know, the better position you'll be in to not only help solve their problem, but to wow them in the process. When you really know what you are talking about, you'll find that customers who are interested in that topic hang on your every word. So know your stuff. Become the go-to person for all things on a particular area. It'll really help you add value.

Author Steven King has published fifty novels, five non-fiction books, and hundreds of short-stories. He's sold more than 350 million copies of his books, and several have been turned into movies. It's safe to say he knows a little something about writing. :) So when he wrote a book about writing, *On Writing: A Memoir of the Craft*, those interested in improving their writing chops were quick to scoop up and devour a copy.

25. Add value

When you add value to your customers in a way that makes them better off for having you in their world, they'll most certainly want to keep you around. The more value you add, the more indispensable you'll be.

I know of bunches of people who swear by using [Evernote](#) to remember stuff. In using their apps and products, they've been able to store bits of information in an organized way that let's them come back and easily put their hands on it later. Once they started using it, they quickly experienced how much value it added to their life. Now they can't imagine going through life without it.

26. Do what you say you're going to do

Do what you say you're going to do. Do what you say you're going to do. Do what you say you're going to do. Do it!

This is just the basics, but you'd be surprised how many businesses aren't able to do this well. It is critical! Sometimes the simplest of things bring all kinds of delight. No matter what else you do great, if you don't get this part right, everything else will be a long uphill battle.

Let your word mean something. So if you say you're going to call at 3:00pm, call. If you say you'll be finished on Wednesday, do it. If you say you'll email,well you get it.

27. Exceed expectations

You can't go wrong when you give your customers more than they expect. They'll appreciate you, will probably tell others about it, and will be much more willing to become your customer again as a result. Go ahead. Go above and beyond the call of duty. It's a sure fire way to make your customers feel wonderful, and see you as someone they want to keep around.

28. Be different from all the other options out there

Me-too is lame. And you are too unique to be just a carbon copy of other options that are available to meet your customers' needs. The more differentiated you are, the more you are able to endear your business to the customers who are likely to appreciate your kind of awesomeness.

Marketing guru Seth Godin refers to this as [the purple cow](#). It's all about standing out in a way that people notice. Customers are much more likely to be delighted by a purple cow (because hey, you just don't see those every day), than by another plain old black and white one.

29. Be consistent

Have you ever gone to a restaurant and had a fabulous time, and then when you went back again, it was a completely different experience (and not in a good way)? Do the opposite of that.

Give your customers a fantastic experience every time. Without fail. Great one day and mediocre or sub-par the next just won't cut it. Set the bar really high. And then keep doing it. And if you do find yourself doing something a little inconsistent from what your customers are used to, make it because you're increasing the awesome factor of the experience, rather than the other way around.

30. Be accessible

Your customers may have questions. They may want to connect with you, or they may want to get your product at 3am from anywhere in the world. In a day where people very much "want it now," when you are able to give your customers some type of access to you and or your business whenever they want it, that's a good thing.

So maybe for you being accessible means having lots of information on your website for your customers to devour. Perhaps its providing the ability to purchase your products online. You might even make it so you or someone from your team is able to communicate with your customers live at certain times. No matter how you choose to be accessible, it's all helpful in allowing your customers ways to get the good stuff you have to offer.

31. Always be one or two steps ahead

New technology pops up, new challenges appear, and often customers are looking for solutions to help them navigate through their situation. Those companies who are able to have a solution in place to solve customers' problems before they even know they need to ask are the ones that customers appreciate and find invaluable.

Requirements for [emailing customers in Canada](#) changed recently. I had no idea until I saw a post come through my inbox from Copyblogger summarizing the changes, and what I needed to do as a result. I always appreciate how Copyblogger is always steps ahead of me, informing me of what I need to know.

32. Give them what they didn't even know they needed or wanted

Have you ever had someone give you something you didn't realize you needed, but once you had it you wondered how you ever lived without it? Yeah, those are along the lines of best gifts ever, and they are super, super memorable. When you do this for your customers, you'll forever earn a place in their hearts.

Besides, your customers won't always know what they want. Henry Ford mentioned, *"If I had asked people what they wanted, they would have said faster horses."* Customers wanted a faster way to travel, and Henry Ford translated that into the car. Something they couldn't have even fathomed needing, let alone wanting. Do the same for your customers, and they'll be smitten for sure.

33. Make things convenient

The more convenient you make it for your customers to access what you are providing, the happier they will feel with you. You don't often hear of a lot of people being pleased with cumbersome or long and drawn out do you? In fact, research shows that increasing the simplicity of a decision for a customer increases their loyalty, and likelihood of both purchasing and recommending what you have to others.

Tripit.com is a website that makes things super convenient when I travel. Keeping track of every confirmation email, and various itineraries can be cumbersome. But Tripit makes staying organized with my travel plans extra easy by putting all my details in one place and in order of when they occur. All I have to do is forward them my travel confirmation emails, and then they work their magic! They also make it really easy to share details of my trip with others. I like it a lot!

34. Make common inconveniences more convenient

Sometimes we have to do things that are inconvenient or not the most fun. I suppose that's just a part of life. So when companies are able to do something to make common inconveniences just a little more convenient for the benefit of their customers, they are definitely doing well in the delight department.

At the security checkpoint at Tampa International Airport, they used to provide disposable shoes for passengers to slip on. Most of the time having to take off my shoes means I'm barefoot, something I never want to do on a dirty airport floor (yuck!). But the disposable shoes made going through the security line a much better experience.

35. Respect your customers' time

Time is precious. And with so many things out there that are competing for your customers' time, make sure when you do get their attention that you make the most of it. Add enough value so they feel like the resources they spent with you were more than worth it.

36. Be simple and intuitive

Complicated isn't necessary. Make it easy for customers to do what they gotta do with you. The easier the better. Your customers will thank you for it.

Amazon.com makes buying a book so simple, it's a bit dangerous. With their "purchase with one-click feature", I can have a new book loaded onto my Kindle within a matter of seconds. It's so simple, I can't mess it up. It's so intuitive, it compels me to click away. It's such a no-brainer, I need to work on my clicking habit so I don't overspend on books!

37. Automate

Amazing things can be done with automation these days. Try using automation to your advantage to make things easier for your customers.

I was filled with glee one afternoon when buying routine toiletries at my local Rite Aid pharmacy. They made it so the coupons they gave me were automatically applied to what I bought. I didn't have to bring in the coupon that was given to me from a previous purchase (which I almost always forget to do). By swiping my rewards card, the system was able to recognize that I had previously received a coupon, and gave me the credit automatically. I was delighted!

38. Educate

If you're an expert at what you do (See #24), go ahead and take the time to educate your customers on the specific problem they have. By giving them tools, tips, and education that answers their questions, you will serve them well, and enrich their life.

A while back when I started running, I went to a store that specialized in running gear to get some shoes. The gentleman who helped me was extremely knowledgeable, and gave me all kinds of information about the way I walked, how that impacted the way I ran, the types of shoes I needed as a result, and a whole bunch of other interesting information.

39. Teach them something new

There is always something new to learn. Always. And sometimes when topics are just extra complex, I greatly appreciate it when companies educate me by breaking them down in easy to understand terms and giving specifics on just what I need to know.

40. Share helpful information

There's tons and tons of information available, especially online. And there's just no way possible to keep up with it all if you plan on doing anything else besides consuming content. So if you happen to come across a piece of information you know would be useful to your customers, share it.

Don't let them just have to hear about, find, or figure something out on their own. This goes a long way to helping make their lives better.

Each weekday morning I get an email from the Huffington Post that gives me the highlights of all that's happening around the world. By reading the snippets of curated content, I'm able to stay in the know with what's going on at a high level. And when something peaks my interest, I can dive a little deeper with the links they provide to get more details.

41. Be relevant (evolve with the times)

Times change, that's a given. And if you would like your company to be there for your customers over the long term, you'll have to continue to evolve and be relevant no matter what changes come. By evolving before you are forced to, it makes it much easier for you to be in a position to delight your customers and give them what they need (and more). It helps you be one step ahead. It also allows you to stay relevant over time.

Have you ever walked into a restaurant that reeked of the 1980's? How about visited a website that still looks like it was made in 1999 with all the yellow highlights and

such? Don't let that be your business. Don't get stuck. Continue to learn about trends and things as they evolve. Make sure your business isn't on the lagging end of being relevant to the things that make your business useful for your customers today.

42. Let your customers customize their experience

Your customers are unique. As such, if it is possible for them to build something that suits their needs exactly, why not let them? Your customers will love the product they designed the way they wanted, and will be thankful to you for allowing them to have it their way.

Brands like Mini Cooper, Chipotle, and Build-A-Bear do it. They let customers customize their ideal product by choosing what they want included from their selection of options.

43. Give your customers something one-of-a-kind

There are many companies that let you customize what you want within certain guidelines. But then there are the ones who let you personalize what you want by creating something one of a kind, just for you. When customers are able to get something one-of-a-kind, their degree of delight is often taken to a whole new level.

Lamborghini delighted their customers with a car that was only three-of-a-kind. Their [\\$4 million dollar Veneno](#) model sold out quickly to three buyers who were eager to claim their ultra limited edition model of the sports car even before it hit the production line.

44. Create a community

There's strength in numbers. And whether they are joining a movement, in need of support, or working to get better at something, your customers can benefit from engaging with others. You can be the one to help them connect. You can help them organize and have a sense of belonging that's also connected to your business.

People like feeling like they are a part of something. By creating a place for them to come together, you are doing a great thing.

Weight Watchers knows the importance community has on helping their members lose weight. So they have meetings all over the place, to provide their members with support, inspiration, and other tools they need to continue along their journey to getting healthy and losing weight.

45. Introduce new stuff

When your customers love the stuff you give them, they're going to want more. So if you can introduce new things that add value to their life, they'll be super excited to get it. Introducing new things is also a great way to stay relevant (see #41).

With each iteration of the Apple iPhone, customers have waited with bated breath to see what new features will be introduced. And although super-fan customers may not be camping out overnight any more to immediately get their hands on the new model, they still get super excited with all the buzz surrounding upcoming launches.

46. Be competitor friendly

Just because you serve the same customers doesn't mean you have to be sworn enemies with your competitors. As a business, your goal is to serve your customers. And if serving them best means being friendly with the folks who also serve your customers, so be it. Your customers will appreciate that their needs are your top priority, rather than beating out the competition.

47. Move and inspire your customers (tug at their heartstrings)

Inspire your customers. Make them think about something profound. Show them good still exists in the world and that it's possible for them to make life better.

Dove did it with their [“You’re more beautiful than you think”](#) campaign, in which they took the focus off their products and inspired women to embrace and appreciate their own beauty. Duracell did it too with the never give up story of this [deaf Seattle Seahawks football player](#).

48. Help make dreams come true

Have you ever had one of your dreams come true? Remember how wonderful it felt when something you’ve wanted and worked towards for so long finally became a reality? You can help your customers have that feeling. If you are in a position to make some good happen for them, do it. They’ll certainly be extremely grateful to you, and it’ll be something they won’t soon forget. So go ahead and teach them how to achieve their dreams, or make some connections for them. Whatever it is you can do to help them get to where they want to go, do it. You’ll have some delighted customers for sure.

Section 3

Reward Your Customers

Rewards are just plain awesome. Not only do they provide your customers with a “cookie” so to speak for good behavior, but it also gives them a reason to keep coming back to you. And it makes them feel extra special along the way. That’s a reward all by itself!

Here are some ways you can reward your customers.

49. Treat everyone fairly

Remember that [*scene in Pretty Woman*](#) where the women in the store weren’t so kind to Julia Roberts’ character because of what she was wearing? And then when she came back the next day in new fancy clothes they were falling all over themselves to help her. Remember that?

Yeah, don’t do that to your customers. Let them know they are a-ok in your eyes no matter what. Your customers don’t want to feel like they are getting the short end of the stick. Let them know that no matter who they are, how different they are, or how much they spend (or don’t spend), they’ll get your very best.

50. Play favorites (to your best customers)

As long as you’re treating all your customers fairly and with respect, there’s nothing wrong with giving some of your best customers special treatment (just don’t make your other customers feel bad). It is a cool thing to make your customers feel like they are your favorite. So give them great deals. Give them the best table. Give them early access to a show or a product you’re going to release.

Treat all your customers well. And treat your best customers even better.

51. Treat your customers like they are the most important customer in the world

We live in a time where people are over scheduled, and they have lots and lots of distractions. As a result, very little if anything gets someone's undivided attention. So give your customers a different kind of experience when they interact with you. Make them a priority and give them your total and undivided attention during the time you have with them.

Work to treat them so well and feel so important to the point where they feel like they are the most important customer in the world. Answer their calls, respond to their emails, don't take calls or look at your phone when they are in your presence. Make them feel like the time you are spending with them is the most important thing you could be doing at the moment.

52. Make your customers feel exclusive

Make your customers feel like they are part of an elite group of people who get to be a part of your crew. Offer a limited time package, or a limited edition. Give them access to something that only a select few get to see. It'll make them feel super special, like they're your most favorite customer in the world.

Holders of the "[Citi Private Pass](#)" credit card are able to get early access and preferred pricing to concerts, that other would-be concert goers can't get.

53. Be thoughtful

When you take the time to think through what your customers are going through, and then do something that shows you were thinking of them, you'll certainly gain brownie points.

I've always appreciated those doctors offices that were thoughtful enough to tape reading materials on the ceiling or on the wall for patients to read while distracting themselves from any discomfort during an exam.

54. Introduce a loyalty program

When your customers come to you again and again, give them a little reward to remind them why they should continue to come back. Hotels and airlines do a great job of this with their loyalty programs where customers can earn free rooms, upgrades, and flights.

I am often ecstatic when I'm able to use my rewards points to get free stuff for something I was using anyway. I was on cloud nine when I cashed in airline reward miles to get a flight to China. I ended up only having to pay the taxes and fees for the roundtrip ticket which was tiny compared to the price of a roundtrip flight. If you're customers are able to cash-in on a loyalty program you offer them for something real good, they'll be ecstatic too.

55. Give your customers an unexpected surprise

I know, I know, everyone doesn't like surprises. But when you surprise your customers with something good, something cool, something they'll no doubt enjoy, they tend to remember and appreciate it.

WestJet, an airline in Canada gave lots of unexpected surprises when they [provided the exact gifts](#) their customers said they wanted in real time. Customers were over the moon delighted as a result!

56. Bend the rules for them

Rules are important to have. They help keep order and are often designed to get the results you want. But sometimes, you'll be faced with a reason to break or bend the rules. And there are times when you should totally do it. For the good of your customer.

Especially if no one would get hurt or if other customers won't feel alienated as a result. And when your customer knows that you bent the rules for her benefit, she'll appreciate you all the more.

57. Let your customers tell their story

Everyone has a story. When you allow your customers to share theirs, it helps them connect with you and others in your community (see #44). You might be surprised at just how much people like to share!

58. Make your customers the star

Your customers do interesting things. If you find they are doing cool things with your products, try letting your customers be the star by sharing their stories with the world.

GoPro [makes their customers the star](#) on their website by showcasing photos and video of their customers doing cool stuff with their cameras.

59. Let your customers be a part of you

Customers like to be a part of something. And when they feel like they can be a part of you in a way that matters and contributes to the achievement of something great, then customers often jump at the chance.

You could let your customers participate in market research, or let them name one of your new products for instance. Doritos let's their customers be a part of them each year for the Superbowl, by allowing them to [create their own commercials](#) for the chance to have it aired during the big game. Fans are also able to participate in the process by voting for which ad they want to see.

60. Let your customers in on your secrets

While you're letting your customers into your world, consider sharing some of your secrets with them. By giving them "behind the scenes exclusive access" to some of the keys to your success, they'll feel even more connected to you. Sharing a bit of your "secret sauce" will certainly go a long way to increasing their loyalty to you.

61. Do the right thing for customers

Do what's good for your customers, even if it isn't the most financially sound business decision (this does not mean to do unprofitable things). Choose the healthier option or things that are better for your customers' well-being, rather than taking the cheap way out.

A while ago, I was out to eat with a friend at this [delicioso Indian restaurant in Philadelphia](#). When the server brought out one of the small plates we had ordered, he told us that the chicken was organic. That made me smile. I thought it was great that the restaurant served organic food, even when it wasn't advertised as such. Better quality food is better for customers. As a result, I couldn't get enough. I went back to that restaurant two additional times that week.

62. Hold a contest

Introducing a little friendly competition to your customers to allow them to win some cool prize is always a fun thing to do. And depending upon the type of prizes you make available to your customers, it has the potential to really change things for the better for them.

James Chartrand does it with an essay contest she conducts each time she opens up enrollment for her [writing course for business owners](#). The winner of the contest wins a scholarship to the course.



Section 4

Be Awesome, Do Awesome

Awesome is awesome. And when you are able to be and do cool things, it makes it even easier for your customers to love you. Not only will you give your customers more reasons to choose you instead of some other option to get their needs met, but it'll make it an enjoyable experience for them along the way.

You're already pretty darn awesome on your own. Here are a few more ways you can be and do even more awesome for your customers.

63. Be cool (code for be yourself)

Who doesn't like cool? These days cool takes on all kinds of different forms. The best possible way for you to be cool is to be yourself. The customers you are best suited to reach, the ones who will most appreciate your kind of awesome and what you have to offer will love that you are embracing being your cool self, rather than an uncool version of someone else. It'll give them permission to be they're cool selves too.

Celebrity chef Gordon Ramsay is known for his fiery temper and use of expletives in his quest for perfection in his restaurants. While his approach to consistently putting out high calibre food and getting the best out of the chefs he trains and helps isn't for everyone, his authenticity in the kitchen has earned him followers all over the world.

64. Love what you do (and let it show)

Have you ever watched someone who just really loved what they did? You can just tell they get a rush when they are in their element. With so many people who go about their day to day work watching the clock for the moment when they can go home and do anything else but what they're currently doing, it is refreshing to engage with someone who loves what they do.

When you love the work you do it shows. The love comes through in what you deliver. Your customers will love all the love you put into what you give them!

65. Give your business some G.A.S.

Sonia Simone over at Copyblogger coined the term “[giving your business some G.A.S.](#)” In short, it is about caring a whole lot about your business, your customers, what you’re doing, how you do it, your customers’ experience, and so on. It’s about caring so much that you pay attention to all the details both big and small to make things better for your customers. The difference between those businesses that G.A.S. and those that don’t is amazing. And the results between the two are pretty amazing as well.

For instance, have you ever gone to a restaurant and found their restrooms were in pristine condition? You know, the kind of restroom that was so nice you didn’t mind hanging out a bit, and didn’t necessarily feel the need to use a paper towel to touch every surface? Yeah, those are the companies that care a whole lot about their business, and the experience their customers have with it.

66. Have awesome people

When you have the right people on your team it can make all the difference in your business’ success. Your people are able to connect and delight your customers. They also play a major role in helping create loyal customers. In addition, your people can help you behind the scenes when they implement ideas that improve the experiences your customers have with your business.

A while back I had to stay in a hotel for a few months while work was being done on my place. I had a fabulous time at the hotel because the [people working there were just so wonderful](#). They made my experience with them over the top, and I looked forward to interacting with them each day.

67. Take care of your (awesome) people

Customers notice when you do right by the people that work for you. And if you have

awesome people that your customers have grown to care about, they'll want to know that you're taking care of their friends.

Employees that are treated well tend to be happier in their work. As a result, they are much more likely to treat your customers better. From your customers' point of view, companies that do right by their team are much more likely to do right by customers. Especially in a world where many companies treat their employees like crap.

In Detroit, fast food company Moo Cluck Moo is treating they're employees well by starting store workers at [\\$15/hour instead of minimum wage](#). That's well above the industry norm, and they're reaping many positive benefits because of it.

68. Be remarkable

Be something that's worth talking about. Every year people flock to view things that are remarkable such as the Eiffel Tower, Niagra Falls, the Pyramids, and the Taj Mahal. Be amazingly fantastic in a way that your customers can't help but notice and be drawn to you as a result.

The flagship [Apple store on Fifth Avenue in New York City](#) is so remarkable in design, that loads of tourists flock to it all year. From the street, all passersby are able to see is a big glass cube with a sign featuring the Apple logo hanging in the center. It is a site to see, and one that is able to lure mesmerized customers into the store to get a closer look at the brand's products.

69. Be memorable

While you're busy being remarkable, don't forget to be so awesome that customers will never be able to forget you or the experience they had with you. Be epic. Be and or do something so amazing, that the memory will be etched in your customers' minds for years to come.

One year in college I did an eight month long internship in New York. The company I worked for put me up in an apartment for the duration of my time with them. The apartment just so happened to be a penthouse, with a bathroom the size of my little old condo I had in downtown Philadelphia years later. That bathroom, which I will never, ever forget, even had a sauna in it. That penthouse that I was blessed to live in at the Residence Inn was so memorable, one of my former classmates recently reminisced about how fabulous it was on Facebook. More than ten years later.

70. Shake things up

Forget thinking outside the box. Get rid of all the boxes. You don't need them. Change the industry, to heck with the status quo! Do things differently. Your customers will love you for it.

Dick Fosbury did it when he invented a new and [more effective approach to the high jump, deemed the Fosbury flop](#). Gary Vaynerchuk did it too when he launched [Wine Library TV](#), and changed the way people looked at and talked about wine. How will you shake things up?

71. Be awesome in unexpected small ways

Awesome is always a great thing. And sometimes it's the little things that make all the difference when it comes to putting a smile on the faces of your customers. Smiles equal delight!

[Marathon Grill](#) delighted me with a simple but oh so awesome hard red and white swirl straw they put in my to go cup of water. It was cute, cooky and it put a smile on my face.

72. Be awesome in unexpected big ways

Small goes a long way, but if you can provide an amazing experience for your

customers in a big way, then by all means go for it. It'll have them talking about how awesome you are for a while!

One of my favorite ways I was delighted in a big way was from the airline Virgin Atlantic. I've flown business class with them a few times to London and the experience is always over the top and highly memorable. They give out [sleep suits to change into](#) during the flight so you don't wrinkle your clothes. You've gotta admit, pretty awesome, no? :)

73. Start a movement

When you take action or take on a personal cause, what you do can help inspire other people to make a difference as well. You'd be surprised how big an impact one person can have. Your one simple act can set off a series of events that inspires others to do, dream, imagine, and ultimately be more. Don't believe me?

Check out how the simple act of [buying a fun pass at Caine's Arcade](#) changed one young man's life, and [inspired a movement](#) that got kids all over the world to explore their creativity with cardboard.

American Express created a movement around shopping small businesses. By thinking up and promoting [Small Business Saturday](#) for the Saturday after American Thanksgiving, the company has been able to get millions of shoppers to participate. Estimated spending in 2012 was around \$5.5 billion.

74. Be fearless

Daring to be different takes guts. And as you go about delighting your customers, in many cases you'll be going against the grain. Keep going. Keep pushing fearlessly as far as you need to in pursuit of making life better for your customers and finding new ways to delight them. Be fearless in whatever you do. Your customers will take notice and appreciate you for it.

You've heard of the Wright brothers, right? :) They're the guys credited with inventing and building the world's first successful airplane. The thing is the Wright brothers did not have a pilot's license. They changed the world of travel as we know it today, and they did it fearlessly without having any type of qualifications or credentials giving them "permission" to do so.

75. Tell the story about your product

Your product has a story. And if your product's story is an interesting one, let your customers in on the backstory. It'll give them more reasons to love your product and connect them to it a little more.

At my last corporate job, we made [insulin pumps for people with diabetes](#). Our customers wore the product nearly 24-hours a day. Since they had their pumps with them just about everywhere, we would often give tours of our on-site manufacturing plant where their pumps were "born". This would allow our customers, their families, and healthcare providers to see how the pump was made, and get all kinds of cool details and facts about the testing that was done prior to it getting shipped out. It never got old seeing the wonder on customers' faces as they learned the story of how their pump came to be.

76. Do mundane things in a new, different and unexpected way

Break up the monotony and do things differently from the way everyone expects you to. The W Hotel in Westwood made riding an elevator super fun. The hotel had cameras in the elevator that would show several images of you during your ride. I couldn't get in that elevator without striking a pose. That's one elevator I always enjoyed being in, and one I'll always remember (see #69)!

77. Empower your team to make a less than optimal experience right

Because things sometimes just don't happen the way you'd like them to, there's

always a chance for recovery to make the situation right (see #16 & 17). When people on your team are empowered to make a situation better for your customers on the spot (without having to go and ask someone if it is ok), then everyone wins.

One night while staying in a hotel, the shower wasn't working properly. When I checked out, I mentioned it to one of the staff members, and she promptly offered me a boatload of loyalty reward points to make up for it. She didn't have to ask anyone for permission. She just fixed the situation, and left me super delighted with my points.

78. Be prepared (for anything)

Sometimes no matter how much you plan, unexpected things happen. And if you aren't prepared, those unexpected things can turn disastrous. But when you're ready for anything, you can totally be the hero for saving the day.

Bill Bowman, long-time coach of Olympic swimmer Michael Phelps made sure his star swimmer was mentally prepared for any scenario during a race. He went as far as to step on Michael's goggles one practice to train him to swim when he couldn't see, and having his driver pick up Phelps late for another meet so he'd have to miss dinner. By training Michael Phelps to become "familiar with chaos," he helped groom the swimmer to become the most decorated Olympian of all time.

79. Have an ego

Sometimes it's ok to have a big ego. Especially if it causes you to work hard to be the best. Strive to be the best at what you do. Work to be better than you were yesterday. Be the kind of company that solves your customers' problem like no other. As you relentlessly pursue being better and better each day, your customers will not only reap the benefits, but they'll love that you're working hard to be better for them.

General Electric (GE) had a big enough ego that led them to declare they would be #1 or #2 in any industry they participated in. Not an easy feat by any means, but one they

were able to realistically target through their relentless pursuit of excellence and continuous improvement.

80. Don't take yourself too seriously

Have a little fun! It allows everyone to let their guard down and gives customers a chance to get to know you and have a good time with you. So let the good times roll! Not sure how to do this? Laugh at your mistakes, acknowledge you're human, and don't feel like you have to be perfect at every little thing.

[“Body spray of seduction with a hint of flame-broiled meat.”](#) This is how Burger King describes Flame, their meat scented perfume. It is hilarious. And a great example of a company that doesn't take themselves too seriously.

81. Make them lol (literally)

You like to have a good time don't you? You're customers probably do too. Make your customers' day by giving them a giggle. Laughter is such good medicine, and you might be the only one who makes them laugh that day. Next time your customers need a bit of a pick me up, they'll know they can count on you.

Watching this [Old Spice commercial](#) makes me laugh every time! It just doesn't get old. Kmart gave their customers a giggle as well with their [“Ship My Pants”](#) campaign.

82. Dance

Dancing isn't just fun, it's cool. And it is just another way to connect with your customers and make them smile. So get your dance on. While you're at it, give your customers a reason to dance. It doesn't really matter how good you are at it. And if you need some inspiration on how, let [Kid President](#) show you how to do it right. His dancing skills (along with his message) landed him millions of views on YouTube.

Just in case you ever wondered, here's [proof that dancing is contagious](#) (as well as a reminder that it only takes one person to start a movement - see #73).

83. Sing a song or rap

Maybe dancing isn't your thing. Perhaps singing or rapping is? Have a little fun, and sing your customers a song. Captivate them with your voice. And if you're not the best singer, at the very least you can make them laugh. You don't have to be super fancy. You really don't even have to be good. You just have to care enough about delighting your customers to give you all the reasons you need to go for it.

Check out how [Fiat UK rapped their way into mothers' hearts](#). Visit The Green Room rapped and danced their way all over the internet in their [Christmas Jammies](#). Fun, fun, fun!

84. Turn your customers' frowns upside down

Sometimes unfortunate situations happen. And when those situations are beyond the control of your customer to make better, you can add all kinds of delight to their life by turning their frown upside down. Make a bad situation better. Your customers will appreciate you for it, and be thankful for you.

Emirates airlines did that for me by turning [some lemons into lemonade](#). After my flight got cancelled, Emirates made it so I didn't have to spend another twelve hours in the Shanghai airport. They whisked me and all the other passengers off to a fancy hotel where we could eat, sleep, and get cleaned up. And all for free! It was awesome, and my frown was absolutely turned into a great big smile!

85. Make it bigger than you

A good friend of mine told me the art is always bigger than the artist. Make what you do more than about your bottom line. Make it more than about you. Recognize and

embrace your role in making life better for your customers, teams, communities and anyone else that is impacted by your business.

Mega-star Beyonce has a cause that is bigger than her music: women's empowerment. The self-proclaimed modern-day feminist often touts girl power in her songs, and even has an all-girl band dubbed The Sugar Momma's. The singer created the band with the intention of inspiring young girls to get involved in music.

86. Take a stand

Stand up for what you believe in. Don't cave into doing something contrary to your values when pressure comes your way. Not only will you be sticking with your convictions, but you'll please the customers who stand for what you believe in as well.

Cheerios stood by their ad that [featured an interracial family](#), even after getting lots of backlash. Instead of giving in to those who took issue with their portrayal of a family, they simply stopped listening to them by disabling the comments on YouTube.

87. Love the environment

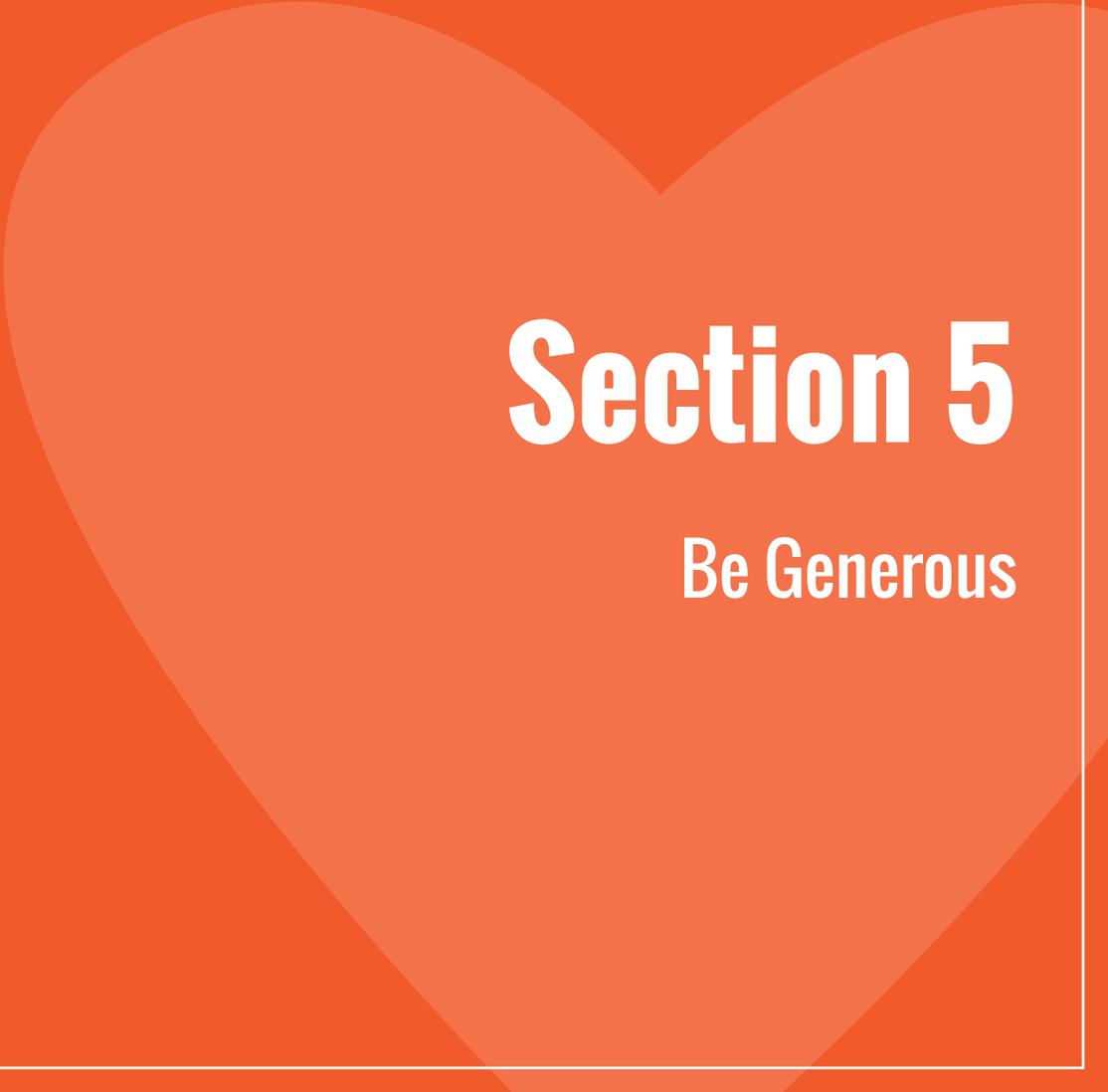
It is always great to see when a company cares more about things that don't directly impact their bottom line. So when a company makes a point of taking care of the environment in which we live, it always makes me feel good. Whether it's in using recycled materials, recycling, utilizing materials that are sustainable, or in creating as little waste as possible, it'll mean something to the customers who are all about being green.

88. Make your customers proud

When you perform at your best as a business, people take notice. And when you win awards, get accolades, or just have big successes, your customers who have

been on the journey with you, who've seen you grow, and have loved you as you've built a relationship with them, will be thoroughly proud of you as you accomplish great things. Make your customers proud. Do and earn something cool. It'll give your customers just one more reason to love you.

Every year Philadelphia Magazine comes out with a Best of Philly issue. In that publication, they highlight businesses that they have identified as being the best of the best at what they do. I was super proud of [Honeygrow](#), a restaurant I frequented regularly for being chosen as the “Best Healthy Lunch” in the city.



Section 5

Be Generous

Being generous is always in style. Now here's the thing about giving: the more you give, the more you have to give away. It's counterintuitive, but it's pretty amazing how that happens. The more you give stuff that makes your customers' lives better, the more they'll be drawn to you. That's definitely a good thing.

Here are some ways to start being generous with your customers.

89. Don't be stingy

Just be generous. Give, give, and give to your customers to the point where it feels uncomfortable. Besides, when was the last time you were delighted by someone being stingy? Approach your customers with an attitude of abundance rather than scarcity. They will love you for it!

Customer service expert and motivational speaker Bob Farrell describes how being generous to his customers by [giving them an extra pickle](#) made a big difference in their experience in his restaurants.

90. Offer free advice

People love free. Since your customers are coming to you as a potential solution to meet their needs, go ahead and help them out by giving them a little advice for free with no strings attached. By addressing their specific situation, you'll instantly endear yourself to your customers.

[Blogger Jon Morrow](#) and his team did this by offering to take a look at blogs and provide personalized feedback to commenters via a blog post. I tried it for myself and the feedback was fantastic and highly valuable. I was delighted by the generosity of Jon and his team. And I wasn't the only one. There are well over 2000 responses to that single post filled with bloggers eager to get some valuable advice from these experts. Specific, valuable, and free. Pretty awesome.

91. Give your customers free stuff

Skip the cheapy free stuff that no one ever uses. Be generous and give away some goodies your customers will actually use and love.

Papa John's gives Tampa Bay Ray's fans a free large pizza if they were in attendance at a baseball game where the Ray's pitchers recorded ten or more strikeouts. With the amount of pizza that's consumed on a daily basis in the U.S., that is certainly a valuable gift.

92. Make your customers feel like what you gave them was worth way more than they paid

Adding value to customers is seriously underrated. The more customers feel like the winner when it comes to buying from you, the better they'll feel about buying from you again. Your goal should be to add so much value, to bake so much goodness in whatever it is they are buying from you that they feel like what they bought was worth way more than they paid. And of course they should feel like it added so much value they would have gladly paid a higher price!

When I took out-of-town friends to [Sabrina's Cafe](#) in Philadelphia, I was delighted when I realized the bill for three people for brunch came to less than \$25. Not only was the food delicious, but we were also so stuffed from the humongous portions, we didn't need to eat again for hours. No wonder there's always a long line of people waiting to eat there.

93. Do special things

Special celebrations are fun! Make a big to do and make it so customers are able to benefit from that to do. Perhaps, you could throw a flash sale or a "just because you're awesome" type celebration.

You can make it something big, like one of [Oprah's famous things giveaways](#), or do it small. Just introducing something special for your customers is what matters and will take their delight to a new level.

94. Bake them some cookies

Bake your customers some cookies. You'll have their hearts for sure. And it doesn't necessarily have to be cookies exactly, just something in value that's way up there on the thoughtfulness and awesomeness scale. Something that will penetrate your customers' hearts and make them remember you for always.

The DoubleTree Hotel by Hilton welcomes guests to their properties with [warm fresh-baked chocolate chip cookie](#) at check-in. They are mucho delicioso. And they instantly put a smile on the faces of their many guests.

95. Give back

Show you care about the people and communities that share the world with you by giving back. Donate some of your profits. Donate your time. Find some ways to show you care about more than just your bottom line. And the more you show you are committed to making life better by giving, the more your customers are sure to appreciate and support you for it.

For every pair of shoes purchased at TOMS, they provide a pair of shoes to a child in need. For every pair of eyewear purchased, TOMS restores the sight of someone. [One for One](#). That's their philosophy. That's their business model. Since launching in 2006, TOMS has given more than 10 million pairs of shoes to children in need and restored site to more than 200 thousand people. Makes me wanna go buy some TOMS. :)

Next Steps

You've been through the list. You've made note of the things you can start implementing in your business now, and within the next ninety days.

Now the only thing left to do is getting to work! Start delighting!

As you go along delighting your customers, be sure to share your progress and success. I'd love to hear all about it.

Talk soon,

Sonia

About the Author



Hi, I'm Sonia Thompson, a marketing-loving business strategist.

I've pretty much loved marketing for a long as I can remember. My career aspirations were influenced early, as I watched Eddie Murphy be a cool advertising exec in the movie *Boomerang*.

Since my appetite for marketing never went away, I fed it some more by studying it in college and getting my MBA from Florida A&M University.

Then I spent more than ten years being a marketer and business leader growing brands around the world for large healthcare companies such as Johnson and Johnson.

Now, I combine all those experiences, including many years of being an observant, delighted, and at times frustrated consumer, to help entrepreneurs like you succeed with your business.

I have been known to break out into dance when so moved. For the record, Bruno Mars, Beyonce, and 1990's hip hop and R&B often moves me.