

M&S

CORPORATE GIFTS

12

**tips for building
better customer
relationships**





At the end of the day, your customers are people, and they have a lot in common. Universally they sleep, eat, absolutely adore photos of animals wearing hats, and they have relationships. From family bonds to the best of friends, every moment of your customer's life is defined by the connections they share with people they value. So, for a moment, forget the word business, because we want to help you build a real relationship with your customers – and get real results.

Demonstrate your value... with testimonials

Ever heard someone at a dinner party boasting about just how fantastic they are? Unfortunately, it doesn't tend to go down well, and sometimes, it can even make people like them less. Now, what about when a friend of yours reveals a delightful fact about someone you've known for years?

Without saying a word, humility demands respect.

So forget humble-brags, with quality customer testimonials, you can become a humble-brand...





TIPS



NO.1

Ask the right questions - be specific, ask why your customers feel the way they do, and give them the opportunity to speak for themselves with a final 'anything to add?'



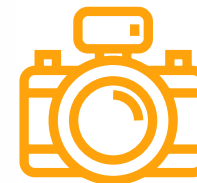
NO.3

Frame responses in stories to make them more relatable and memorable.



NO.2

Aim to get responses from your ideal customer (your millennial audience won't relate to Doris – no matter how much she loves jogging around the care home in her new basketball trainers).



NO.4

Include photographs of your happy customers - studies have found that seeing faces can increase the empathy we feel towards others, even when we've never met them.¹



Express company values... with the right corporate culture

From the way we dress, to the songs that get us grooving and the haircuts we grow to regret – culture is a huge part of how people identify themselves.

The values your company portrays can have a dramatic impact on the relationships you build with customers.

How do you talk to your audience? Are you consistent and reliable in every interaction? Do you have a reputation for facing complaints with a helpful smile, and a resolution? All of these things and more contribute to the way customers perceive your brand, and have an impact on their decision to purchase from you, instead of your competitors.





TIPS



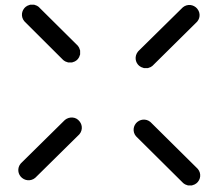
NO.5

Decide on a set of precise (and realistic) values for your company – considering the traits your target audience are most likely to appreciate.



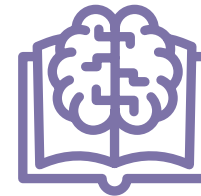
NO.7

To ensure this is kept up, **incorporate a value-review into your monthly meet-ups** – and make sure you reward employees when they represent the company right.



NO.6

Train your employees to recognise and embody your values, starting from their first interview.



NO.8

Invite complaints and criticism from your customers, doing your very best to respond, and rectify the problem (although, nobody's expecting your insurance company to start selling Chinese white pears just because Annabelle really likes them...).

Show customers they're valued...

When interacting with your customers, it's important to do everything you can to personalise the experience (without going overboard – you don't want to freak anyone out). Whether you train your staff to remember unique details

about your customers, like their favourite flavour or type of product, or you include first names, locations and recent purchases in emails and direct mails, these small touches can have a positive effect on your consumer-brand relationship.

This encourages your customers to think of you warmly when they're faced with the all-important purchasing decision.





NO.9

Know your target audience's mind-set – this means understanding their temperament and preferences by applying the latest psychological techniques, like behavioural and personality analysis.



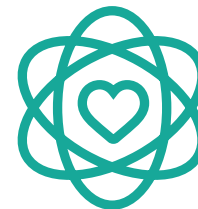
NO.11

Train employees in customer-facing roles to remember and use people's first names and details about their lives in their interactions with customers.



NO.10

Once you've developed a deep understanding of who you're talking to, ensure you reflect this in your tone of voice, the type of content you produce, and the way you post on social media.



NO.12

Offer high-quality incentives for buying with your business.

Give something of value away...

Relationships are all about give and take, which is why one of the best ways to develop a better relationship with customers is to give them something of value. We recommend a high-quality gift card. Why? This offers your customers

the opportunity to purchase something they've had their eye on, but haven't yet bought. It puts the power and control in their hands, whilst positioning you as a thoughtful company, who care about what their customers really want.

To improve customer retention and acquisition, show prospects that you respect their interests. How? Empower them to spend it well with an M&S gift card.

To find out more about **M&S Corporate Gifts**, contact

0330 058 0734

or email

amelia.fidling@mands-corporategifts.co.uk

