

The Power of Wow

— WHY —

THANK YOU

MAKES

DOLLARS & SENSE

HOW TO INCREASE SALES,
RETAIN STAFF & HAVE CLIENTS
RAVE ABOUT YOU!

Caroline Kennedy

The Power of WOW – Why “Thank You” Makes Dollars and Sense
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INTRODUCTION

- Do you run a business and find it difficult to stand out from your competitors?
- Do you feel frustrated when a client buys from a competitor based on price?
- Do you have the headache of high staff turnover?
- Do you want customers coming back, or better yet, recommending you to others?
- Would you like to increase sales?

Now is the time to make lasting improvements for your business, and *The Power of WOW – Why “Thank You” Makes Dollars and Sense*, will help to guide you along the way. By implementing the 7-step method outlined in this book you will start to experience an increase in repeat clients, less competitive buying patterns and improved revenue, with more clients wanting to work with you - or buy from you.

My knowledge can be your knowledge - my objective with this book is to share with you the insights I've learned over the years. Most of these insights have come from necessity or through learning the hard way. Simply put, and not to sound arrogant,

I get things done, and most importantly - I get results. I have a passion and commitment to helping businesses grow while adding an element of fun.

I have worked for 17 years in the demanding corporate world heading sales and marketing departments using my roles to deliver multi-million dollar results. I was responsible for generating revenue for businesses such as Cox & Kings Australia (incorporating four multi-million dollar brands), Rydges Hotels & Resorts and the iconic Cable Beach Club Resort, to name a few.

I have observed a high percentage of people feeling under-appreciated throughout my career, and numerous businesses finding it challenging to not only reward staff and retain their clients – but to stand out from their competitors. I believe, quite simply, that people want to do business and work for companies that recognise and value them.

My forte is helping passionate organisations develop lasting connections by creating ‘Wow Moments’ that people remember. This book provides profound insights into how to build a better business. There is a powerful intersection between building loyalty and recognising people with ‘Wow Moments’. However, most businesses simply don’t understand this – they are time-poor, concentrating only on the bottom line, and they don’t realise that the overall business can improve merely by adding some focus to saying “thank you” to customers and staff.

Our business climate is evolving rapidly and what was successful in the past does not necessarily work today. The days of golf and

liquid lunches are over - they're expensive, one-offs and not overly effective in this new world. And anyway, no one has the time!

Relationships, careers, and family life leave us time-poor, frazzled and more inclined to forget to say “thank you”. While general courtesy and a simple smile can go a long way, you can do more to meet - and exceed - customer expectations and boost your business in the process. Throughout this guide, we will address the emotional and commercial reality of consumer buying patterns, and how the precision of your data can give you guidance on where to focus your efforts.

You can achieve better results for your business, and it's easier than you might think!

Do you quantify your existing assets? If I asked you about your business's turnover and profitability, would you be able to provide me with your profit and loss statements and your quarterly tax statement? These are standard commercial reports that are necessary to understand how your business is performing. If I asked you to identify who your best customers are, could you do that? Could you back up the answer with quantitative data? As a small-business owner, this is one of the most fundamental questions you face. Once you understand who your customer is, you are better able to build loyalty through recognition and personalised gifts, which make your customer feel like the individual they are.

Companies today struggle to understand how loyal their customers are in this increasingly competitive and commoditised market.

I run a business and lead a multi-million dollar organisation and we are dedicated to understanding exactly who our true clients are and how we can leverage these relationships for revenue growth. As you read this book, you will gain insights via a step-by-step guide on how to leverage your existing assets. My aim is to help you build a platform for analysing the revenue your clients produce and to understand the importance of the ‘vital few and trivial many.’ We will uncover how to build stronger, more connected moments with your current clients than you previously had. This ongoing engagement will lead to more repeat business, increased word of mouth, happier staff and consequently, more money.

In this book, we’ll talk about how to discover what your clients think of you - and why they buy from you. Do you currently know how happy your clients are with your product or service? If so, is this based on your opinion or have you asked the question? Early in my career, I learned the importance of understanding what clients think about you and your company’s service standards. What is their overall perception of your business? What is most valuable to your clients? What improvement, if any, would they like to see? By having the answers to these questions, you are more able to meet market expectations and remain relevant in an ever-changing economic climate.

Let me tell you about a time that really brought home the phrase “knowledge is power” for me. I commenced work with an organisation, and suddenly their revenue started to decline, rapidly. As you can imagine, this was quite concerning for me as the individual responsible for delivering the revenue targets. My first

response was: why is this decline happening now? I decided that I needed to drill down on the reasons why this was happening and see if there were any trends that I could identify. I quickly collated a very comprehensive survey which I distributed to the market. I also went to visit our valued clients to obtain their feedback, and the results provided a lot of clarity about the business's relevance in the marketplace. It became evident that the company's relevance had actually been declining over a long period of time; however, it went unnoticed until a thorough analysis of the forward revenue forecast occurred. Once I identified the serious impact this had on the business, I gathered even more data to gain a more detailed perspective on the situation. It became apparent to me that a major shift in buying patterns was affecting how the industry and consumers purchased - we were now operating in a dynamic and commoditised space. From that knowledge, we could work out a plan of action to combat the shift in how our products were purchased.

The lesson I learned through this process is that you must understand your relevance to the market to continue to prosper. It is imperative that you review this at a minimum of every six to twelve months to avoid any financial impact to your business - there is no room for complacency in this economic climate.

In my business, Gift Wrapped Up, we have a process where we follow up every customer with a personalised email - how was your experience, and do you have any feedback that will assist us in evolving to meet your expectations? We want to know what our clients think about us, so we can improve and continue to receive repeat customers and referrals.

Another vital question in this review process is: do you understand why your target market uses your competitors? It's essential for you to understand what your competitors do well. By having a comprehensive knowledge of this, you have not only identified an opportunity to grow market share, but also gained an understanding of what sets your competitors apart and makes them unique. You can then use this information to your competitive advantage. My goal in this book is to give you an insider's view into how priceless this intelligence is and how simple it is to ask questions. I'll explain how the more questions you ask, the more accurate you can become in capturing increased market share.

The next step in our process is to learn how to keep your existing customers happy and gain their commitment. By using basic customer psychology, you can increase your business's revenue by focusing on something as simple as saying “thank you”. With so many parents in the workforce or running successful businesses, you also need to consider the power of connecting with your clients' or staff's kids. Giving a gift or performing a gesture for a client's (or a co-worker's) child goes beyond recognising that person for their contribution to your business; it forms a connection on an emotional level, which in turn builds loyalty – the kind of loyalty that is hard to break.

Another asset your business has is the valuable employee. People make a business, and high staff turnover reduces productivity and increases costs. Numerous businesses neglect to reward their staff, and research confirms that a large percentage of employees feel under-appreciated. Through this step-by-step guide, you'll be

reminded of the value and the cost-effectiveness of recognising your staff every once in a while. If you look after your staff, they will look after your clients, who look after the bottom line, which in turn looks after shareholders. Gathering the right people around you will benefit your business immeasurably, and a focus on ensuring staff feel happy and valued is imperative. In this book, we'll review some very high profile businesses that have successfully focused on engaging employees and hiring suitable people.

Do your employees create relationships or are they order takers? We'll consider the fact that these days, people don't just buy a service or a product - they buy the experience. One of the big factors in people deciding to make a purchase is the emotions they feel in relation to a product, so it's important to identify how your business can create value by designing meaningful experiences that people remember. Apple is a master of this; it is the foundation of their success. There are many technology companies out there, but what makes Apple unique is the culture and experiences they create for the customers who interact with their products.

In the final chapter, we will visit the social media phenomenon. Social media is vital to your business today, and it's important your business understands the basics of using this tool to increase customer engagement and craft more valuable experiences. A lot of people are confused by the role this tool plays in business. We will explain the basics of leveraging social media to engage with your clients. And I can tell you now - it's not an advertising tool! When things are going badly, it can be tempting to stick with

what you know – or what used to work in the past. Change can be scary, but I’ve always said that insanity is continuing to do the same thing and expecting a different result.

Don’t wait until it’s too late and someone else builds loyalty with your clients. What are you waiting for? Start implementing these fundamental strategies and experience the results!

Chapter One

THE VALUE OF CUSTOMER INTIMACY

What exactly is customer intimacy? It's basically business jargon for understanding your customer's preferences and habits so you can deliver what they want, when they want it and how they want it. So in today's globalised economy, how can you have an 'intimate relationship' with your customers or clients?

I believe customer intimacy is developed over time. It's not something that can just happen. Customer intimacy develops as we start to move through the engagement cycle. Here, we begin to understand our customer's needs and are able to create a product or service to fulfill that need.

For years, businesses have been debating the client vs. customer principal. You may think building customers into clients is a simple process, but actually this is not the case. I believe it's

important for any business to conduct a review of client intimacy and perceptions regularly to ensure all areas of your operation have an integrated customer service focus. And integration – or the alignment of your key goals – really is of fundamental importance. When all the elements we cover in this book are aligned, everyone in your business will be able to work toward the same objectives through a unified understanding of essential service deliverables, fundamental core values and client culture.

Sometimes we forget about the simple things. We need to bring it back to the basics by understanding our market and delivering on our clients’ needs. The aim here is to start off with customers and build up to converting them into clients. You don’t want people to buy from you only once because you simply have the products or services they want now. Understanding the difference between clients and customers can really affect the way in which you and your team do business.

You’ll find throughout this book that we are focused on emotions, value and building lasting relationships. Client recognition also plays a big part in customer intimacy; we often forget to demonstrate that we actually value our clients’ business. I believe it’s invaluable for businesses to have a reward strategy for clients. Seemingly small gestures like saying “thank you” and sending your valued client a gift will help you build customer intimacy. You want clients who value the relationship they have with you and your products or services. You want your clients to rely on your knowledge or the products you offer. The value in customer intimacy is very much about building long-term relationships.

These clients will become loyal to you because their primary driver for purchasing is not based on price. By saying thank you, you are not only providing your clients with a valued product or service. You are also connecting with them emotionally and showing them you acknowledge their support.

“Feeling gratitude and not expressing it is like wrapping a present and not giving it.”

– William Arthur Ward

There are challenges to developing customer intimacy that require a shift in mind-set away from typical target markets and demographics. These areas still have merit, but focussing on collecting more personal information from your individual clients allows you to build firmer relationships. The change in mind-set is really about drilling down on distinctive data in contrast to grouping customers into general segments.

Trust – how does this affect your business? The basis of any long-term relationship is trust, and the only way to gain the trust of your clients, colleagues, employees and suppliers in business is to deliver on what you promise. One of the fastest ways to ruin your business is to over-promise and under-deliver. Later in this book, we take a look at the power of positive word of mouth, and we review the power of negative word of mouth too. Both are very powerful and prevalent in our current social media driven culture. The market and the stakeholders connected to your business all have long memories, so don't disappoint them - focus on building trust and delivering on your promises. Your business can only succeed with this formula.

“Trust is like the air we breathe, when it’s present no one really notices, but when it’s absent, everybody notices.” – Warren Buffett

Warren Buffett is clearly a very successful man. The quote from him given above confirms the age-old theory that when you deliver on your promises, clients don’t really notice. However, when you under-deliver, clients suddenly become very aware of your shortfalls - and what’s more, they tell everyone. We now live in a world where social media and review sites are acting as the strongest form of marketing (word of mouth). These tools provide more scope for your clients to express their praise for your business, but also allows them to vent their disappointments more publicly too. Further into the book, we cover examples of how clients reward businesses that genuinely inspire trust and conversely, how broad an impact disappointing the masses can have on your business.

Have you ever thought about who owns your brand? Would it surprise you if I said your clients do? Perception is reality and your clients can either be your greatest ally, or they can be your biggest headache. Ultimately, the choice is yours. Do you want a thriving enterprise or do you want an organisation that struggles? For anyone who owns a business, I would think the answer is obvious.

The globalisation of business, and in particular, the access to information on the internet, has had a really significant impact on the interactions we have with our clients. For one thing, the increased number of touch points means they are in contact with us much more often. Technology has changed, and the marketplace

has changed. I remember only eight years ago; customer intimacy was all about having excellent call centre support, great customer service and a high-quality sales force. Are any of these really relevant today? Well, with so many more touch points, it's difficult to ensure each client will receive the level of care, knowledge and experience you want them to. In the past, sales teams managed client relations. While there still is an element of sales based relations, there is also brand interaction with a large number of people who don't physically see or talk to your sales team.

One of the biggest challenges I believe we all face in business is remaining relevant in a marketplace which is evolving at a rapid rate. How do we continue to build upon our client intimacy when one-on-one interactions are becoming less common? There are some fundamental elements required to guarantee that your business will remain relevant. We cover all of these areas in detail as you progress through the book, but to summarise: "Knowledge is Power".

We outline the importance of:

- collecting data that provides us with knowledge about our clients' expectations
- collecting data on our clients' needs, wants, buying patterns, experiences and behaviours
- understanding what our clients are drawn to, and why

Customer intimacy is the most important factor for success in an erratic economy. By mastering these fundamental principles, your business has the potential to grow at a substantial rate.

Once we understand our clients’ needs, wants, behaviours and expectations in detail, we can deliver a solution to their requirements and start to build client intimacy and trust. We then need to ensure we do the following:

- Ensure our product/service matches our clients’ needs and expectations
- Ensure our operations processes are focused on the emotional aspects of “why” the clients buy in order to ultimately not just meet, but exceed, their expectations
- Innovate to ensure our products and services offer a point of difference, and that we are considering the implications of the future
- Communicate our message clearly. I encourage you to deliver the message with an emotional focus on the feelings your clients will experience

Innovation is also very important in today’s marketplace. A prime example of this is Kodak. Steven J Sasson invented the digital camera in 1969 while being employed by Kodak. Unfortunately today a failure to continue to innovate has seen Kodak lose mass market share to Canon and Nikon. When we lose sight of the marketplace around us and what our customers want, we lose our edge.

I want to give you an example of an experience I had relating to customer intimacy, which remains with me to this day. I have travelled frequently over the years, and I’ve also worked in a hotel, so I understand how they operate. I did not necessarily have loyalty

to any particular hotel chain - when travelling for business it all came down to convenience and cost.

One day, I checked into a hotel with a group of other people I was travelling with and I provided my luggage to the concierge. I then proceeded to the reception desk to check in. I was welcomed by a young lady who greeted me with, “Welcome back Miss Kennedy.” I was very surprised by this comment; however, I proceeded to check in and went up to my room.

Later, that evening, I met up with the group of people I was travelling with and everyone who had stayed at the hotel before had received the same greeting. I was very intrigued as to their strategy for making their repeat guests feel important. Upon enquiry, it was explained to me that the concierge had actually asked me for my name and whether I had stayed at the hotel before. I had said yes, and he then communicated to the receptionist via a system similar to instant messenger that I was, in fact, Miss Kennedy, a repeat client. It was a personal greeting and something I remembered. I now have a perception that this hotel group is personable, and I choose to stay with them where possible.

The check-in was not the only touch point that made me feel welcome and like an important guest. The friendly experience extended across every aspect of the hotel, from housekeeping to the restaurant. It is now obvious to me that the hotel placed a great deal of importance on their core values and delivering on their clients’ emotional needs and expectations. It’s a basic human instinct to respond well when your emotional needs are met, or you are made to feel important.

In summary, developing a strong emotional connection between your clients and your business can increase your sales revenue, increase customer loyalty, build client intimacy and provide you with the opportunity to put a price on your products or services.

In your business, you have two positions to choose from. You can either offer your products or services based on a discounted price with little or no emotional association, or you can offer an authentic, connective client experience that has the ‘WOW’ factor. The choice is yours.

“People ask me why it’s so hard to trust people, and I ask them why it is so hard to keep a promise.” – Anonymous

The value of customer intimacy