

An open notebook with lined pages and a dark cup of coffee are placed on a dark wooden table. A large white circle with a double border is centered over the notebook, containing the main title text.

**35 Ways to
get more repeat
and referral
business**

*How to build more
business from your existing
customers*

Contents – Click to Jump to Chapter

- 1 Introduction3
- 2. The Meat and Potatoes – 35 Tips.....5
 - 1. Create a database6
 - 2. Start a newsletter (email newsletter)8
 - 3. Call your customers 10
 - 4. Offer a “refer a friend” program..... 11
 - 5. Leverage a CRM program (Customer Relationship Management) 13
 - 6. Connect with your customers on social media..... 16
 - 7. Identify your customers’ next likely purchase..... 17
 - 8. Provide outstanding customer service 19
 - 9. Create a website (and a blog) 19
 - 10. Give your customers thank you gifts23
 - 11. Create a loyalty program.....24
 - 12. Get more on-line reviews25
 - 13. Identify the “sneezers” who can spread the word for you..26
 - 14. Say Thank you...often/Send Thank you cards27
 - 15. Offer a discount towards the next purchase28
 - 16. Offer gift certificates28
 - 17. Send Happy Birthday/Happy Anniversary cards28
 - 18. Timed promotions29
 - 19. Thank you cards – Find lots of reasons to reach out.....29
 - 20. Tell stories...and help your customers better understand how they can refer you.....30
 - 21. Help your customers grow their business31
 - 22. Find your A+ customers and treat them like gold.....32

23. Think “Life Time Value” not just transactional value (do I have above?)	32
24. Offer Complementary products or services.....	33
25. Help your customers save money.....	33
26. Remind your customers about all the services you provide	34
27. Make your communication personal and personable	35
28. Test and measure.....	35
29. Exceed expectations by creating unexpected surprises.....	35
30. New Year’s cards.....	36
31. Time programs during the timing/seasons when customers are most likely to buy	37
32. Drop personal notes or emails (and personalize it!).....	38
33. Solve complaints	38
34. Reduce attrition.....	39
35. Create questionnaires/surveys/feedback	39
3. Summary	41
PRODUCTS YOU MAY LIKE:	42

1 Introduction



Purpose:

I wrote this e-book to help small business owners and start-ups to market their business better – both more effectively and efficiently.

After owning my local business for 9 years, and doing marketing for 12 years for 3 Fortune 500 companies, I wanted to share my knowledge. The hope is that this will save you time and money.

Many of these ideas will work for most businesses. But, of course, every business (and market) is different and so are the

skills and comfort areas of each reader. My hope is that you will find at least 5 helpful ideas here and that you will implement at least 1-2 of them right away.

There is a LOT of content here, so you may want to read this over several sittings. You may also want to implement your top 1-2 ideas now, and then return 2-3 months later to implement another 1 or 2.

Also, please keep this guide handy. It may serve you well during the “slower” seasons.

DISCLOSURE: Some of the links in this ebook may be affiliate links. That means that if you decide to purchase an item, I may get a small commission for that. Please note that I only recommend products I’ve used and recommend to my customers.

Disclaimers:

The information contained in this guide is for informational purposes only. These are my professional opinions and recommendations.

Users of this guide are advised to do their own due diligence when it comes to pricing (as pricing does change) and making decisions. By reading this guide, you agree that I and my company are not responsible for the success or failure of your marketing projects relating to any information presented in this guide.

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2. The Meat and Potatoes – 35 Tips

Most marketers know that it's almost always easier and more cost efficient to expand growth among existing customers vs finding new customers. In fact, many studies have shown that it is usually costs 6-8 times more to acquire a new customer vs selling to an existing customer.

We need to think more in terms of “lifetime value” of the customer, rather than the mere “transactional value” of their initial purchase. According to White House Office of Consumer Affairs, loyal customers can be worth 10x as much as their initial purchase. That's because they become repeat customers and can spread the word to their friends.

Your marketing is more efficient with current customers, they know you and trust you, and of course, your conversion rate is higher. One of my business colleagues states, “we have tons of business already in our current business.” So, let's start with what we already have.

For my flooring business, repeat and referral business was so important that I made it one of my core 3 strategies. Every year I tracked how I did with repeat customers and brainstormed more ways to improve this area.



As background, I owned my own [flooring business](#). I will be sharing some examples we used as well as what I've seen in previous businesses (I was a marketing director at Cadbury Schweppes, Revlon and Brand Manager at Procter & Gamble) and other small businesses.

So, let's get started. Here are 35 ways to grow your business with your existing customers.

1. Create a database



Your database can (and should be) your #1 asset. You should start this from Day 1...and if you haven't started one yet, start one today! And, you should be continually adding to it – each month, each week,

each day...whatever works for you.

While a CRM (Customer Relationship Management) tool is ideal (I use [ActiveCampaign](#)) even starting with a spread sheet on excel will do at the beginning.

Make sure you have the customer's name, phone # and email. I would consider adding columns (or tags) for other items such as address/location, birthday (you'll see why later) and classifications (e.g. have they bought? Are you trying to close them? Have they become a repeat customer already?, Value of the customer (A+, A, B, C, etc), Potential for them to refer you, or type of product/service they bought, etc. Choose whatever is relevant to you (and remember you can add more info later).

Once you have a database set up, it enables you to do a lot of marketing to your database (e.g. email marketing, direct mail, phone calls, texts, etc.). It also allows you to segment and prioritize your customers. So, you may want to market more to some groups more than others. Or, you may want to interact with different segments differently (e.g. send different messages, different offers, different frequencies.)

As I mentioned earlier, I'm using [ActiveCampaign](#) for my CRM program, and my only regret is that I didn't start sooner. In fact,

in retrospect, I should have started 4 years earlier. It has really helped grow my business allowing me to close more customers (so it has more than paid for itself), helped close them faster (so cash flow has been better), and has led to more repeat and referral business. Oh, and it's saved me time, too!

Why didn't I do it sooner? Honestly, I was afraid of the costs. (But, knowing what I know now, that was really stupid as it has more than paid for itself). And, as luck would have it, I stumbled onto [ActiveCampaign](#) and found it is one of the most efficient Customer Relationship Management tools out there.

If you have less than 500 contacts, it's just \$10 per month...and it is so easy to get more than \$10 of business in return. And, if you buy for the year, you save 15%. Within 2 weeks of using this, I saw an increase in my close rate and a shortened time frame on decisions. Oh, and you can test this for FREE for 2 weeks.

Click here for your [free trial of ActiveCampaign](#).

2. Start a newsletter (email newsletter)

Email marketing to your database is usually one of your most effective and efficient marketing vehicles. In fact, [Capterra found](#) that for every dollar spent on email marketing the return was \$44.25 of revenue. We find that the day our email newsletter goes out, we get calls and emails. Some of our

customers are now ready to purchase, some are ready for their next project and schedule appointments.

Newsletters are a wonderful way to stay in touch (and stay top of mind) with your customers. You really want these newsletters to provide value...so that your customers want to open them. If they are too salesy, you will turn your customers off – they will unsubscribe and/or not open the future ones.

It's okay to include a call to action or coupon at the end, but make sure you've delivered valuable information first.

When I first started my email newsletter in 2009, I used Constant Contact and loved it. It is easy to use and they also provide advice on how to strengthen your emails and your open rates.

You can start your free Constant Contact FREE trial here: [60 Days of Constant Contact's Essential Toolkit – FREE!](#)

Remember, not everyone needs to buy your product now, but chances are, they will have a need for you again in the future...you just don't know exactly when. So, if you are in

front of them once a month, you increase the possibility that they will contact you when they are ready.

Make sure that whatever you use is mobile responsive as more than half of all emails are now opened on mobile devices. Also, make sure there is an unsubscribe button so customers can voluntarily exit the program.

Also, if you have a client base that doesn't use email much, consider creating a paper version of your email newsletter and send it via snail mail to these customers.

3. Call your customers



Yes, actually reach out and touch somebody. It works! (And, I need to heed my own advice on this one). I know some realtors that call their database once every 3-4 months. Wow, that's dedication. These realtors

thrive on referral business.

Now, of course some of this depends on how many customers/clients you have. If you have thousands of

customers, this may not be possible. But, you could call a segment of them (e.g. you A+ customers or your A+ referral partners). Or, you could have one of your employees call them. Or you could hire a part-time person to do this. There are many ways.

Whatever you do, make sure that it's personal and genuine. Don't just call and say, "Do you know anyone who needs my services?" Instead, check in with them to see how they are doing. Share some advice or something valuable. You may at the end ask something like, "Who else do you know who needs my help?" Notice, the first question is closed ended question and can easily be dismissed with a "no" vs the 2nd question is open ended and keeps the conversation going.

If you try phone calls, you'll notice that they get easier over time as you get better and feel more at ease with the process. Even if you don't ask for a referral, you will find that sometimes you get one anyway.

4. Offer a "refer a friend" program

Incentivize your customers to refer you to their friends. This could be as simple as asking them to recommend you. You could also give them coupons to give to their friends, or you can offer your customers discounts towards their future purchases.

We offered our customers a \$50 gift certificate to dinner if one of their friends uses us for their flooring project. We then send them a gift certificate from Restaurant.com for \$50. Now, on Restaurant.com, that \$50 gift certificate only costs me \$20, so I've provided \$50 worth of value and it cost me a me \$20. And, they make it easy to send it online (no need for envelopes, stickers, etc and no postage. They will either mail it to your customer or email it – you choose. That small gift is well worth it as an average flooring job is around \$4,000.

Years ago, when Procter & Gamble launched Swiffer, they would include “Refer a friend” coupons in the starter kits. If I recall correctly, you would give your friend a \$3 coupon for the kit, and if they redeemed it, you would get \$1. This program really helped spread the word. Each package came with 3 coupons.

Many email services offer their users 1 free month if they invite a friend and they become a paying member.

There are many ways to implement this tactic. You just need to think through what works best for your business and your target customer.

Of course, you can mention your “refer a friend” program in your email newsletter, as well as many other places (e.g. send cards, on your website, etc.).

If you were around in the early 1980’s you may remember this classic [Faberge Shampoo Commercial](#). Yes, it’s Heather Locklear and 80’s style hair, but the marketing concept is dead on.

Think about how you can implement a “tell a friend” campaign, because your raving fans can often spread the word faster than you can.

5. Leverage a CRM program (Customer Relationship Management)

What is CRM? CRM Stands for Customer Relationship Management. What does it mean? In its simplest form, it means managing (and optimizing) customer relationships over the customer’s lifetime. **Over time, the idea is to maximize customer retention, and drive their growth and value.**

CRM systems, such as [ActiveCampaign](#), make it faster and easier to implement CRM. They allow you to automate systems, analyze and improve them, as well as integrate communication across many systems (e.g. email, text, calls, mail, social media,

etc.). These systems also allow you to classify customers differently based on their needs (see above).

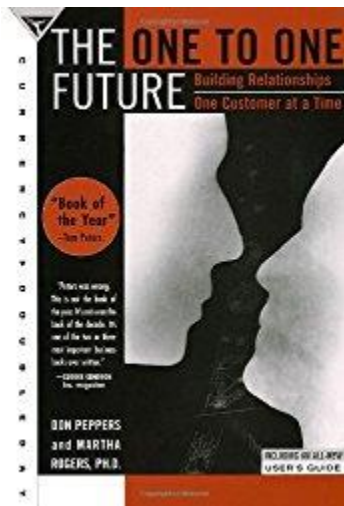
As an example, you can use a CRM program to create a stream of emails for customers that have signed up your website. These could provide useful information and establish your company's credibility and the ultimate goal may be for them to call you and set up an appointment.

Then, after you've met with them, you may send them another stream of emails with the goal being to close the sale.

Then, after the sale is closed, you may send them another stream that will give them useful tips on how to use the product better (or more often) so they are more satisfied with it. You may also include calls to action to upgrade their product, or buy complementary items or refer the product or service to their friends. The possibilities are endless.

Because you can segment customers (e.g. based on their needs or where they are in the product life-cycle), you can tailor the message. As an example, in my flooring business, the questions and needs from my hardwood customers are different than my carpet customers. By segmenting the emails or letter so that they are more appropriate for your customers' needs, you will be

more effective and relevant. In fact, according to Capterra, relevant segmented emails drive 18 times more revenue than broadcast email blasts.



One of my favorite books on using CRM (sometimes called One to One Marketing) is by Pepper and Rogers – The One to One Future. When it was first published in 1996, this book revolutionized marketing.

It's an easy read and chuck full of wonderful real life examples. You can apply these principles both on and offline.

There is also a companion book called Enterprise One to One. I have both of them on my book shelf. I think you'll enjoy these and have some real practical ideas that you can apply directly to your business.

6. Connect with your customers on social media



If you use social media, connect with your customers (or your best customers) on there as well. It's another touch point and opportunity to interact.

Now, whether or not, or how or how much you use social media is a whole blog post topic onto itself, so I'm not going to address that here. But, for whatever social media channels you are currently using for your business, reach out to your customers to connect. That could be facebook, [pinterest](#), twitter, LinkedIn, Google +, etc.

For me, I reach out to my customers once a month and see if they are on LinkedIn and if they are (and if they have a picture/appear to use it), I send them an invitation to connect. I just write a short personal note in there. Doing it once a month works well for me...I just look at all the new customers from the last month. It doesn't take me much time and I've systematized it so I do it the first week of each month.

LinkedIn is more a business site, so I feel comfortable doing connecting with my customers there. I generally do not reach out to people on Facebook as that's more of a personal site, but that's just me. And, what's right for me may be different than what's right for you.

Most people find it works most effective when you really concentrate on just 1-2 social media sites and really focus on them. So whichever is your focal point, be sure to reach out to your customers.

You may even ask some of your good friends or customers if you can post on their Facebook walls, or if they'd be willing to share you article, update or picture. For example, if you are a kitchen remodeler, you could take a picture of your customer's new kitchen and write something like, "How would you like to have a kitchen like this? We can do the same for you" and ask your customer to post on their wall (or if they'd like you to do it for them). Then, all their friends will see it.

7. Identify your customers' next likely purchase

Think through the customer's product life cycle. After they buy your product or service, what are their next likely needs? And, how can you help them with these?

For example, in my flooring business, I find that many who recently added hardwood floors (or refinished them) need to buy carpet runners for the steps or area rugs for the floors. So, there's an opportunity to mention that we do that, too. I can tell them in person during my appointment, or when we do our final walk through. I can leverage my [ActiveCampaign](#) CRM program to email them a series of articles on Carpet runners or offer them a discount on that next purchase.

If I were a realtor and helped someone find buy their first “starter” home, I'd be sure to be thinking ahead on what happens when their family expands and after they've saved more money, and they want to “trade up” and buy their dream home or the home in their desired neighborhood. I'd put together a long term campaign on how to stay in touch with them so that I'm their trusted advisor.



If I sold coffee machines, I'd be looking to figure out how to sell coffee with them, or some sort of partnership with a coffee place (maybe a way to even do a monthly direct delivery to my customers' homes. You get the idea. Think about the complementary items that go with you product or service and then figure out a way to help your customer fulfill their

next need.

8. Provide outstanding customer service

According to McKinsey, 70% of the buying experience is based on how the customer feels they are being treated. Make sure you put your customers first and deliver outstanding service. Analyze every step of the process (from initial phone call, email, entrance to the store all the way through the delivery and usage experience). Determine any opportunities for improvement.

Once you have the basics in place, figure out how you can go over and beyond their expectations. Surprise them with a special bonus of some sort.

9. Create a website (and a blog)

I have a [quick tutorial on this](#), but for now, let me just say that it's cost of entry to have a website. Your customers expect it, and if you don't yet have one, get with the program. It legitimizes your business, and it provides another way for your customers to find you (and contact you "after hours.")

Your website functions for you 24/7...and 365 days per year. A website can be a big business booster, especially when you have a blog, as it can help you bring in many new customers.

My main website for my business, [The Flooring Girl](#), brings in a lot of traffic (over 80,000 unique visitors per month), and yes, it generates leads for me while I sleep. The main way this works is that potential customers type in questions to google and my blog posts pop up.

But, here's the interesting thing. As my website has grown in popularity, I've found that a lot of my repeat customers have found my site and blog posts (even if they originally found me in another way). It does so much for me – it builds my credibility (so it's easier to close more jobs), it helps them realize the full breadth of work we do (so some of our carpeting customers may have forgotten that we do hardwood floors), and it gives them an easy place to link to when they are recommending us to their friends.

I've now had so many people (including past customers from 4-5 years ago) tell me how they googled flooring questions and found me everywhere, so as soon as they were ready for their next project, they called me.

While I think it's best to pay a professional to create/start your website, if you can't afford to do that yet (or you're afraid to spend the money now), you can definitely set up your own wordpress.org site for close to free.



You can read how to do this [here – How to quickly build a website for close to FREE](#). I will walk you through 3 simple steps to set up a website (or blog).

Start by getting a domain name. [You can buy an inexpensive domain name here.](#)

A website can be a huge asset and it can cost a lot less than you think, especially if you are willing to do a bit of the work yourself. You basically need to buy a domain name (may cost around \$1 to \$20/year) and hosting (around \$3-\$10/month = \$36 to \$120/year). So that comes out to around \$40-\$140/year which is not much at all!

For hosting, I recommend [bluehost](#). They are reliable and available 24/7. They have an easy 1 click install for wordpress and you can call them to help you get your site up and running quickly. They are also very low priced so a win win.



There is a starter plan available for \$3.95. You can read the full article on starting a wordpress site [here](#).

From there, you may want to invest in a website theme. The theme is basically the template or framework that sets the shell/color scheme for your site. This is a one time cost, and most themes cost between \$40-\$100. I highly recommend the [Genesis Framework](#) for Studio Press. This is simple to use and very well supported.

You also have the option of starting out with a free wordpress theme and then upgrading later. Or, you can pay a web designer to set this all up for you.

10. Give your customers thank you gifts

This is a simple and inexpensive way to say “thanks for your business.” It’s a great way to literally say “Thank you.” and it’s an investment in your future (as they will be more likely to think of you for their next purchase and refer their friends).

You don’t have to spend a lot...just make it thoughtful and/or relevant.

For example, we give our flooring customers a free floor cleaning product and cleaning care instructions. We want them to know how to care for and clean their floors, so that they last longer and they are more satisfied...and more likely to use us for another project (e.g. a carpet runner). We put our sticker (w/ our phone # and logo on it...so it reminds them of us, and they know how to get in touch with us easily.

We also give them a branded purple grocery bag that they can use at the super market. The idea is that through repeated exposure, we are more top of mind and easy for them to contact us.

This doesn’t cost us a lot, but if only a small fraction repeat or refer us, it more than pays for itself.

11. Create a loyalty program

You probably have seen these all over the place. Starbucks has their Star Rewards/Gold cards, Credit Cards have their points, Chop't Salad has their mobile app, Airlines have frequent flyer programs, Frozen Yogurt places have a punch card and you get a free one after 10 stamps. They are all the same concept...buy a certain item frequently and get a free one (or get credits towards something).

These programs or cards work well for places you may go to frequently (e.g. restaurants) and the idea is that you will go to their store **more often** (i.e. give a higher share of your trips to them). It's a smart concept and works well for items that you buy often. (They do not have much relevance for purchases you may make every 2-5+ years as the time period between purchase and gratification is too long).

Make sure your loyalty program is simple for customers to understand and simple for you to track.



Amazon developed a creative solution for their online store with Amazon Prime. They solved an issue of cart abandonment when

some weren't purchasing due to shipping costs, especially if they were only buying a few items. Now, for an annual fee of \$99, Amazon Prime members get FREE shipping no matter how large or small their shopping cart is! Their packages come faster, and they also offer special extra discounts to Amazon prime members on Prime Day as well as several other benefits.

Amazon found that Prime members spent much more than non-prime members (more than double the amount), so they offer a free 30 day trial to encourage more to join.

12. Get more on-line reviews



Whether you like it or not, online review matter more and more. It's even more of a reason to make sure you deliver high quality service. Assuming you do, and you have happy customers, this is a great opportunity for you. I know we've been getting more and more customers this way, especially over the last 3-4 years, and it keeps growing.

Think about all the review places that are relevant for your business. Here are some areas to consider:

- Yelp (works especially well for contractors and businesses that have stores)
- Angie's List (works especially well for contractors)

- Google Places (this can help you rank better on google, too and get higher placements on searches)
- Facebook Business Page
- LinkedIn
- Zillow (works especially well for real estate agents)
- Trulia (works especially well for real estate agents)
- Your website

You can read in depth article on this topic here – [10 ways to leverage on-line reviews for business growth](#).

But, here are some quick tips: 1) make sure your business is registered for these places. 2) ask your customers to write reviews (send a direct link on email so they know how/where to write the review, 3) be sure to send a thank you note afterwards (We send a \$5 gift certificate from Starbucks...but it's a surprise, not an incentive/bribe).

13. Identify the “sneezers” who can spread the word for you

One of my favorite (and first) ebooks I ever read was Seth Godin's [Idea Virus](#). (you can download the free copy from this link). I read it when it first came out in 2000, and it really opened my eyes.

In this ebook, Seth talks about “sneezers.” These are the ones that spread the word for you. They are your most loyal customers and advocates. They tell everybody they know when they find something they love. And, these people know a LOT of people...and people listen to what they have to say.

They can be your best referral source.

Find them and leverage them.

You can also buy Seth Godin’s updated book on this topic – The Super Idea Virus for more ideas. It’s just \$2.99 on Amazon and well worth it!

14. Say Thank you...often/Send Thank you cards

Yes, it’s so simple. Say thank you when you close a job or someone buys from you. Pick up the phone and say “Thanks.” Or, send out a Thank you card. It’s so simple...and so overlooked. Stand out from the crowd and be sincere!

15. Offer a discount towards the next purchase

Yes, think ahead to the next purchase and offer some sort of discount. You can include this in a thank you gift or a card, or your email newsletter, or in person.

16. Offer gift certificates

Provide gift certificates for your customers to give to their friends. This could be something that the customer buys as a gift (e.g. dinner to a restaurant or a massage, etc.) or it could even be a free gift certificate that your customers can give to their friends (e.g. \$10 off your first purchase at XYZ) or whatever the right amount is.

This will allow your favorite customers to help you out and spread the word for you. Third party endorsements are huge. Your customers will feel good because they are helping you AND they are helping their friend by recommending a great place and giving them a discount.

17. Send Happy Birthday/Happy Anniversary cards

It could be an actual Happy Birthday card (for their actual birthday) or it could be an anniversary of their purchase. For example, for our flooring customers, we send a “Happy Birthday to your floors” card. It’s fun and unexpected. Some realtors send an anniversary card to their buyers every year on the date that they closed on their house.

18. Timed promotions

Think about the key timeline in your product lifestyle and when people generally purchase...or should purchase. For example [Fred's Auto Repair in Briarcliff NY](#), sends out email reminders to their customers when it's time for their oil change. (It's timed for 3,000 miles or 3 months...and they also place a sticker on your windshield to remind you. They also send out timed reminders for you annual car inspection.

If you are a carpet cleaner, you should time your emails or cards for an annual carpet cleaning – 1 year from the date they cleaned (or perhaps 11.5 months). This is easiest to implement when you have a CRM program such as [ActiveCampaign](#).

You can also time things around people's birthday's. For example Starbucks and Panera Bread offer me free items during my birthday month. And, when I used to live in another city, my beauty parlor sent me a \$10 gift certificate for my hair during my birthday month.

19. Thank you cards – Find lots of reasons to reach out

I know it sounds old fashioned, but it works. It may work especially well now since so few people send mail...so it really

makes you stand out. Think about all the reasons to send out cards. I know a realtor who sends a “thanks for meeting with me” card after the listing appointment, and then another one after she secures the listing, and then one during each phase of the process.

I used sendoutcards.com for our cards. It makes it quick and easy, as we don’t need to worry about envelopes, stamps, printing, etc. It is also easy for me to have my assistant do some of these for me. We also send a “welcome to the neighborhood” card for our customers that move into new houses.

20. Tell stories...and help your customers better understand how they can refer you

A mortgage broker I know shares stories each day on his blog (and then he shares them on LinkedIn and Facebook) about how he has helped his clients. It could be how he found a creative solution for them to qualify for their loan, or how he coached them to save money/get better credit so they could afford their 1st home (or dream home), or how he rescued them from a big problem. Each day, he had a different story.

The stories are engaging and memorable. Without stating it, he is showing everybody how he is an everyday hero who helps his clients. At the same time, he demonstrates the breadth of work he does and helps his clients realize that there are many services

he offers...and helps them think about others that they can refer. His tagline is “Who else do you know who needs my help?”

As an example, each year, I lose some customers when they move away (as I can only service local customers). But, when I’m lucky, sometimes my customers give our contact info to the new buyers when they sell their home. (Now, if only I could figure out a systematic way to have my customers do this).

21. Help your customers grow their business

My favorite quote from Zig Ziglar is “You can have everything in life you want, if you will just help other people get what they want.” It makes sense. Similarly, BNI Founder, Dr. Ivan Misner, uses a philosophy of “Givers Gain®.” If I give you business you’ll give me business and we’ll both benefit as a result.

We often think about this concept when we are networking, but it’s also helpful to think about this with your customers, too. If you keep giving, in the long run, it will come back to you.



22. Find your A+ customers and treat them like gold

If you have a database, tag your A+ customers, so you can easily find them. Figure out how you

can treat them extra special (e.g. take them to lunch or coffee). Also look for the common characteristics of your A+ customers and see if you can figure out how to find more of them.

23. Think “Life Time Value” not just transactional value (do I have above?)

When you're in your business for the long-term, you begin to realize the importance of repeat customers and their lifetime value even more. Try to avoid short-term thinking of how much profit will result in this one transaction and shift towards the total lifetime value this customer provides. This can be result from repeat purchases, recommending you to their friends and relatives.

When you start thinking like this, you realize that your marketing will be more efficient over time. And, it starts to transform you thinking into determining who your gold start customers can be. E.g. If you are an insurance agent, you may find that realtors (or mortgage brokers) refer many clients to

you. So, if you market more to them, that should help you. And, if one of them makes an inquiry for their own insurance, remember that this is a golden opportunity for. (Remember the story of the goose that laid the golden eggs?).

24. Offer Complementary products or services.

Think about what other products or services are complementary to what you already offer and see if you can add them to your portfolio. For example, after customers add hardwood flooring, they often want area rugs and/or carpet runners to go with them.

25. Help your customers save money

This could be showing them a more efficient or lower priced/higher value option that you offer (especially if they are price sensitive). Show them how they can find economical solutions in other areas beyond your business (e.g. recommend a good and reasonably priced contractor, show them stores (or websites) that have more cost effective solutions. Answer their questions. Make helpful suggestions.

I love hearing from my customers that I'm a "wealth of information." They know I provide helpful advice and want to help them beyond the job at hand. Be that helpful resource. Encourage them to call you when they need

recommendations for complementary items. It will give you a change to help them as well as some of your referral partners.

26. Remind your customers about all the services you provide



There's nothing worse than to find out your customer went with someone else to do a 2nd job. Often, this is because they didn't realize that you did that type of work. For example, we install hardwood flooring, carpet/carpet runners, tile, laminate, vinyl, etc. But, I've found some of my carpet customers used someone else for hardwood flooring and vice versa simply because they didn't realize we did both. Shame on me.

There are many ways to solve this. First, during your first meeting, let the customer know all that you do. Second, create a card (or magnet) that shows what you do (or a magnet). You can share this with them at your first appointment or after you finish the first job. You can send them a card (or email with it). You can send them a card (or email) with it 6 months later (or a year later). Note: if you send it multiple times, make sure it's different and not spammy. Maybe send a card one time and an email another time.

Third, share stories about work you've done for different customers showing the breadth of work you do. This could be in your email newsletter, on Facebook or LinkedIn or Pinterest (or other social media).

27. Make your communication personal and personable

Whatever you do, make sure your communication is genuine and sounds both personal (meaning it's targeted to the individual) and personable (i.e. sounds like you and doesn't sound like a generic ad).

28. Test and measure

And, from there, improve. Determine the ROI (return on investment) and whether you should continue, expand or delete program elements.

29. Exceed expectations by creating unexpected surprises

This is a great way to create customer excitement and delight your customers. Give them something extra out of the blue.

Zappos is a master of this. They will often upgrade someone's delivery option so their shoes arrive sooner than expected (often, they are delivered next day). The customer is so impressed that they often mention this on Facebook and help spread the word.

One of the reasons that this is so powerful is that most companies don't even meet customer's expectations, let alone exceed them.

Consider how you can apply this to your business. Can you throw in a free complementary gift? Can you give them a free upgrade? Can you make deliver (or install) it sooner?

30. New Year's cards

Many people send holiday cards, but I'm not a big fan of this. First, you get lost in the clutter, second, you could get into offending some for religion, third, you are often sending when someone is the least likely to buy or call you (their mind is somewhere else – family, holiday, vacations).

Instead, I try to stand out by sending Happy New Year's cards. You stand out then, you are at the point when someone is starting their year off fresh, trying new habits, etc. And, you have the [recency effect](#)...people remember things better if you are more recent in their mind (vs. all those people that send Thanksgiving and holiday cards).

31. Time programs during the timing/seasons when customers are most likely to buy



Is your business seasonal? Are there certain times of the year when people buy more? If so, you definitely want to make sure your marketing is strong then. But, also look to see if there are other points of the year that you can leverage,

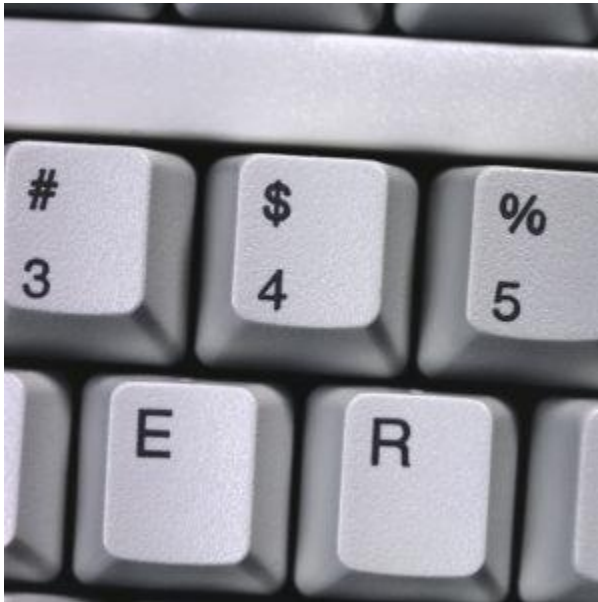
especially as you want to have a strong business year round.

For example, in the flooring business, we are very busy in spring, summer and fall, but slower during the cold months. Interestingly enough, 3-4 weeks after big storms or cold snaps, we get a lot of calls for damaged floors (from pipes freezing, floods, ice damming on roofs). This tends to happen after they've had the initial damage taken care of and they have received their insurance checks (or in process of getting estimates for insurance claims). So reaching out to customers who may have these issues, or insurance or restoration companies, can really help.

Think about how the weather can impact your business (in a positive way), think about how the holidays (including minor

holidays) can help your business (e.g. think about when we change our clocks and change our batteries at the same time), think about “creating” holidays (like Amazon created Amazon prime day for July...a month that is typically slower for them...they made it into a 2nd Black Friday. Think about tax free weeks (if your state has one). How can you leverage these for your business?

32. Drop personal notes or emails (and personalize it!)



Send a personal note (or email) to one of your customers – something that is specific to them. “I was just thinking of you, thought you might enjoy this...or “I just saw this and it made me think of you. This could be a new book, online article, movie, funny picture, etc. You could even take a picture on your cell phone and

text it to them.

33. Solve complaints

This is a challenging one. But, when you can turn an angry customer into a raving fan, you have a loyal and vocal advocate for life. So don't ignore the complainers. Understand the pain

point and alleviate it. Because when you can, they are worth their weight in gold.

34. Reduce attrition

Stop the leaky bucket. It's inevitable, you will lose some customers each year. Sometimes it's because they just are satisfied; sometimes it's because met a friend who offers the same service. Or sometimes, they move. It happens. And, you can't control some of this. But, the real question is how do you reduce the attrition (at least the part you can control).

Find out where your leak is...and try to plug it.

35. Create questionnaires/surveys/feedback

I love Mayor Koch's memorable line, "How am I doing?" This is such a powerful statement. It shows you care and it shows you listen. Your customers are full of information. Leverage it. They can give you instant feedback and advice on what's working and what needs to be improved.

They can also give you valuable insights as to what you can ADD to your business. What suggestions would they have for product lines or services you can add? What are their current wants and needs, after purchasing your services? What have they seen others do well.

Ask them!

It could be as simple as calling them and asking. Or, when they are in your store, ask them. Or send a feedback survey over email a day (or week) later. Or send a survey to all of your customers with a questionnaire. (Just make sure it's quick and easy to answer). You can even use a place like [survey monkey](#) to do this inexpensively or free. You can also add a free survey to your website.

Take the information to heart, learn and implement where it makes sense.

3. Summary



There you have it...35 Ways to increase your repeat and referral business. Growing repeat and referral business is one of the most efficient and effective marketing strategies.

Not all of these ideas will work for every business, but with some creativity, most can be adapted. You may already be doing some of these. My challenge to you is to take your top 2 favorites here and

implement.

Feel free to save this ebook and return, when you're ready for some additional inspiration (and maybe want to apply a 3rd or 4th idea).

As always, if you find this article value, I'd love it if you would socially share it.

Additional Free Resources:

- [How to start your own website – for close to free and in 15 minutes](#)
- [8 Insider Pinterest Tips to Drive Traffic to your website](#)
- [How to develop a strong marketing Plan](#)
- [10 Ways to leverage online reviews](#)
- [How I use hootsuite to save time on social media](#)

PRODUCTS YOU MAY LIKE:

- **[BLUEHOST](#)** (For website hosting) – Have you started your website yet? Check out this article to see how you can [quickly start your own website for close to free](#) (less than \$4/month). Get started today!
- **[ACTIVECAMPAIGN](#)** (For email marketing and CRM) – I should have done this years ago! But, I'm so glad that I finally took the plunge and invested in a CRM program. If you have a customers and if you are looking to improve your close rate and/or looking for more repeat/referral business, this is a MUST HAVE. Click here for your [free trial of ActiveCampaign](#).
- **[TAILWIND](#)** and **[BOARDBOOSTER](#)** (for Pinterest). Wow. These tools have already doubled the traffic I'm getting from Pinterest, and I'm just getting started. And, they are HUGE time savers. They both come with free trials. Here's the [free trial](#) for Tailwind. After that, it's just \$10/month for unlimited pins (if you by the annual plan). And, if you use my link, you'll get \$15 off your first month. Here's the [free trial](#) for

Boardbooster. After that, you can do a plan for as low as \$5/month. It's totally worth it when you think about how much time it saves you and how much more effective you'll be.

Useful Ebooks and courses (affiliate links)

- [How I grew my Facebook Fans from 2,000 to 100,000 in 5 months.](#) In this ebook, Brittany Ann explains her strategy on Facebook and how she sky rocketed to 100,000 fans. Wow.
- [BLOG TRAFFIC EBOOK – How I went from 17,000 to 350,000 page views in 9 months.](#) In this ebook, Lena shares 17 strategies she used to quickly boost her blog traffic. This will help accelerate the traffic to your website, regardless of niche and help you do it much faster.
- [Building a Framework – The Ultimate Blogging Handbook.](#) Abbie Lawson explains her approach for creating and growing a strong blog...and then monetizing it. She is a role model to so many as she took her hobby blog into an amazing business for her and her husband.
- [Making Sense of Affiliate Marketing](#) – This is the ultimate course in Affiliate Marketing. Learn from the Master. Michelle Schroeder-Gardner has been earning over \$50,000/month in affiliate marketing (and she has had many months earning over \$100,000/month all together. She shares her tips and secrets.

Michelle is very accessible for questions and you get to join her private facebook group where you can bounce ideas off of many other experts. Totally worth it.

Final words from Dynamo Debbie:

Congrats. You made it to the end! I hope you found this information helpful and I hope this will help you accelerate your business growth.

Choose the 1-2 tactics that you feel will have the largest return on your business. Then, return 2-3 months later and choose 1-2 more.

Go for it! You can make things happen!

Feel free to check out my blog at DynamoMarketers.com for additional information. You can also post comments or questions at the end of articles. I will do my best to get back to you quickly (but please understand that I run a full time business and I'm often on the road, so sometimes it takes me a bit of time to respond).

Thank you

Thank you to all my friends who have been telling me for years that I should start my own marketing company. You were right! I should have done this years ago.



Dynamo Debbie Gartner aka "The Flooring Girl"
Owner of Dynamo Marketers (DynamoMarketers.com)