

15

WAYS TO BETTER
COMMUNICATE
WITH YOUR
TARGET
CUSTOMER



HANDOUT

SmallBiz Ladies 
Melinda Emerson

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15 WAYS TO BETTER COMMUNICATE WITH YOUR TARGET CUSTOMER



There are three main factors to consider when you want to communication with potential and existing customers:

- 1) Website Engagement
- 2) When to Communicate
- 3) How to Communicate

This handout is broken down into these three areas with five action items per section to make it easy to implement any changes in your business communications plan.

5 WAYS TO ENGAGE CUSTOMERS ON YOUR WEBSITE

The most valuable thing in your business is your list of potential or existing customers. If you are just starting out or re-launching your business, your website is one of the best places to capture the contact information of potential clients. The trick to this is making them an offer that is so enticing that they will be willing to give you their email address or sign up to hear from you regularly. Here's a tip: Give your best content away free. If your potential client receives something that is not quality from you at the beginning of the relationship, they will never pay you for your product or service.

1 Give away a free special report, book chapter or audio interview.

Use a pop-up window to invite them to download your content. This should be an article or summary of research that solves a problem for your target customer. Give away 1-3 chapters of your book or an audio interview with another expert in your industry. People learn all different ways. Audio interviews and/or podcasts are great options. I use several special reports in my business blog www.succeedasyourownboss.com including 44 Things To Do Before Going Into Business. People love checklists.

2 Invite visitors to subscribe to your blog and newsletter.

You should give them the option to sign-up to receive your weekly blog updates or your monthly newsletter. Post an archive of previous newsletters so that your customer can see how valuable the information is in each one.

3 Invite customers to connect with you using social media.

Ask them to like your fan page, follow you on Twitter, and connect with you on LinkedIn. Make the likes on your site are live and will take them directly to your specific social media profiles.

4 Offer free samples or a free gift.

Everybody loves free stuff. If you offer product samples, a 60-day free trial, or \$5-\$10 gift cards, people will sign up.

5 Use a contact form that gives them options.

Ask your potential customers how they want to be communicated with on your contact form. You need to know if your customers prefer email, regular mail, a phone call, text message or skype. You should also clarify the general topic of the discussion. i.e. a product sample, quote, free consultation, coaching, media interview?

5 REASONS WHEN TO CONTACT YOUR CUSTOMER

Once you have the proper systems in place to track your customer communications you must decide how you will stay in touch. Here are five reasons when it's appropriate to contact your customers. Don't ever contact your target customer without a good reason. Otherwise, you could be considered a spammer.

1 Send articles of interest

You can write original articles, repurpose blog posts, send links to helpful articles written by others. It doesn't really matter where the content comes from. You want to position yourself as an invaluable resource to your customers.

2 Coupons or discounts

One of the best ways to bring traffic to your store or website is to provide a coupon or discount, Consider a buy one/get one 50% off offer or an offer of free shipping.

3 New product launches or service offerings

Whenever your company has a new product or service offering make sure your customers know about it! Don't assume your customers know all of the ways they can do business with your company.

4 Website and social media updates

Let your customers know when you have improved your website or are launching on social media such as a Facebook Fan Page, LinkedIn, YouTube or Twitter profile.

5 Event invites

Everybody loves a party. Invite your customers to grand openings with free food and drinks. Think about a themed event or a holiday open house.

Now that you have some ideas on what to send your customers, let's examine the best ways to stay in contact.

5 WAYS HOW TO CONTACT YOUR CUSTOMER

Once you have a strong list, and quality content to send the final issue is how will you contact your customer. You must respect your customer's wishes and make use you have permission to contact them. You do not want to lose a relationship by not paying enough attention to your customer. Here are 5 Ways To Contact Your Customer.

1

Email

Email marketing can be done via e-newsletters which can be sent weekly, monthly or quarterly. You can also send broadcast emails that are sporadic concise announcements which inform the customer about one special thing. Auto-responders (which are specific email marketing messages that are written in advance and automatically go out to subscribers on certain days) can also be set up in an email marketing system.

2

Direct Mail

Letters, postcards, menus, and flyers are all forms of direct mail which can be targeted geographically by zip code to your target customers or mailed to your existing customer base.

3

SMS Text/Mobile

With your customers' permission you can contact them using text messages on their mobile phone. A good way to use this is to announce coupons, specials, or appointment reminders or openings.

4

Social Media

Social media marketing puts your rolodex on steroids. Using social media allows you to communicate with you entire database at one time depending on the method used. Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn are all great social media networking sites and a solid way to expand your prospects beyond your existing customers. Be sure that you understand the culture of each site before diving in to the conversations.

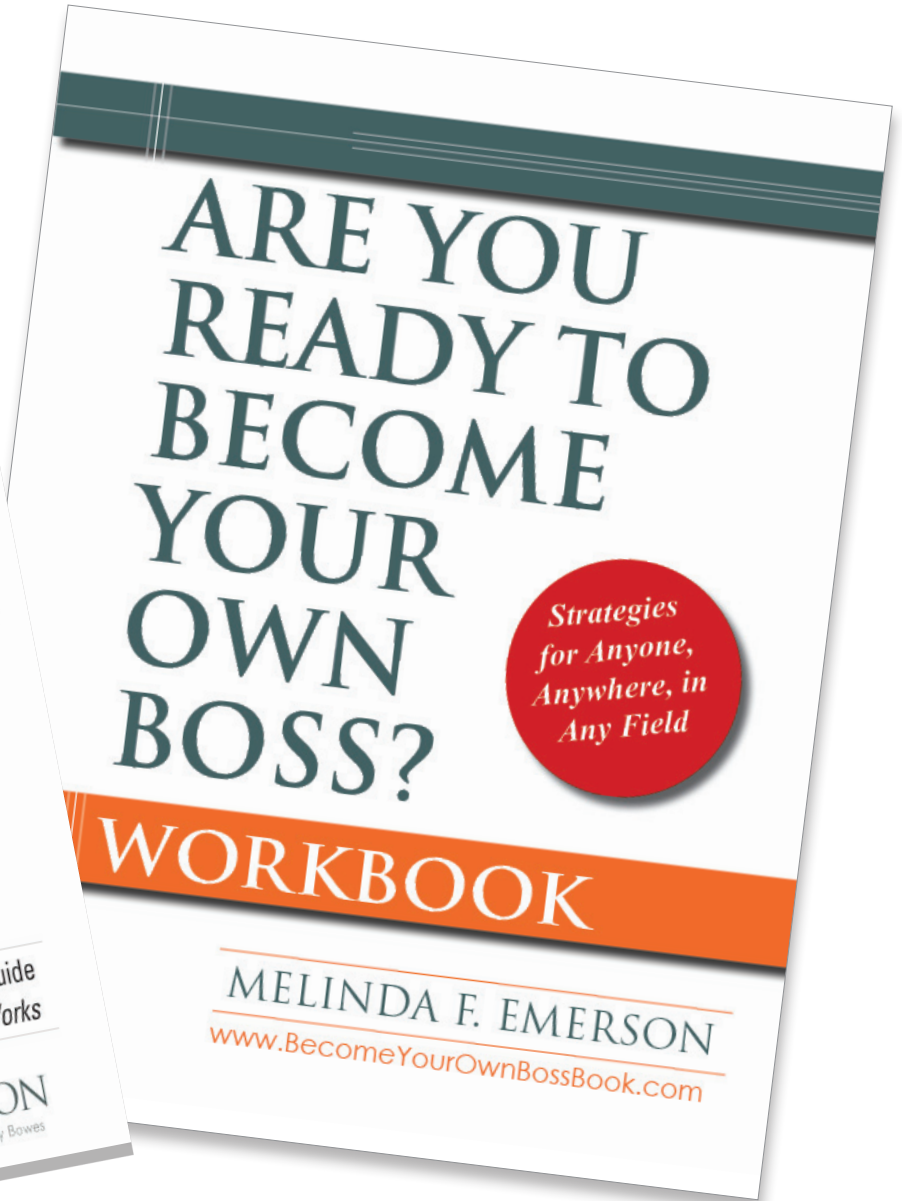
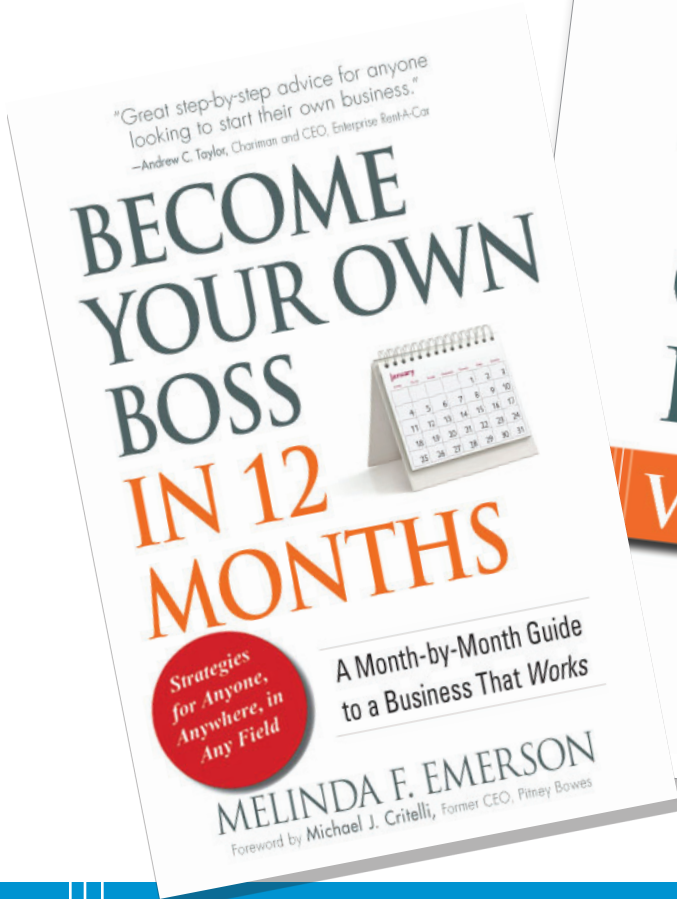
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Event Marketing

A great way to invite people to a grand opening, workshop, or holiday party is to send an invitation using evite.com or use eventbrite.com to conduct an event marketing campaign. These services allow users to create tickets, contact or name tag lists, and generate automatic reminder email messages to invited guests and registered attendees.

Take the time to nurture your relationships with your potential and existing customers. If you can position your company as the ultimate solution and stay in touch with regular reminders so your business will have customers for life.





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Melinda Emerson

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ABOUT MELINDA EMERSON

Melinda Emerson, known to many as SmallBizLady, is one of America's leading small business experts. She is an author, speaker and small business coach whose areas of expertise include small business start-up, business development and social media marketing. Melinda publishes a resource blog, www.succeedasyourownboss.com and hosts a weekly talk show on Twitter called #Smallbizchat for emerging entrepreneurs. Melinda has been featured in Fox News, MSNBC, NBC Nightly News and in The Washington Post, New York Times, USA Today, Fortune and Black Enterprise. Melinda is the author of the bestselling book "Become Your Own Boss in 12 months; A Month-by-Month Guide to a Business That Works." Forbes Magazine named her one Top 20 Women for Entrepreneurs to follow on Twitter. Melinda is a graduate of Virginia Tech.



I love to get feedback on whether the information I offer is helpful. Please email me at melinda@melindaemerson.com or better yet give me a recommendation on LinkedIn.

Remember, I'm always here as a resource. Let's explore how I can help you launch or grow your business.

To your success,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Melinda Emerson".

Melinda F. Emerson "Smallbizlady"

MFE Consulting, LLC

P.O. Box 280 • Drexel Hill, PA 19026 • 610-352-0680

Email: melinda@melindaemerson.com

Web: <http://www.succeedasyourownboss.com>

Book: www.becomeyourownbossbook.com

Twitter: <http://twitter.com/smallbizlady>

LinkedIn: <http://www.linkedin.com/in/melindaemerson>

Facebook: <http://facebook.com/smallbizlady>

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