

A Source of Revenue You May Be Neglecting- Your Past Clients

By Precision Marketing Group <http://www.precisionmarketinggroup.com>

Much of marketing is about laying a strong foundation for sales, bringing qualified leads to the door and staying connected and top of mind with existing customers. These goals can be achieved in a variety of ways, including:

- Messaging and branding
- Website optimization and search engine marketing
- Company newsletters and blogs
- Direct mail campaigns
- Telemarketing
- Advertising
- Social media efforts
- Speaking and publishing within your industry

But there is one group that often gets neglected in a company's marketing plan - the past or inactive clients. We have found that these people can be an outstanding source of business.

Why are your past or inactive clients so valuable?

They know you and, hopefully, like you.

They understand your products and services and the value you provide.

They have paid you money in the past - and they may just do it again!

Past Clients - Getting Them Back in the Fold

So how can you tap into this valuable source of business - those clients who may have faded away, who may not have your business top of mind?

Luckily, there is no rocket science here. But it does take time, and it requires an understanding of the fundamentals of marketing;

- having a clear message,
- staying visible, and
- making it as easy as possible for customers to engage with you.

Many of the same ways that you keep in touch with prospects and customers work with past clients. They include your newsletter or blog, social media, personal phone calls and emails, sending relevant articles and resources to let them know you were thinking of them, etc. The key to success is to have a process in place and to execute it.

3-Step Process for Re-Engaging Past Clients

1. **Identify them - and ask yourself if you want to reengage.**

Carve out some time to go through the Inactive Client files - ours are located conveniently in our Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system. If you use Act!, Salesforce or any other CRM system, it should be easy to locate your inactive clients. Once you've pulled them out, decide whether you want to make an effort to reengage them. While we all have clients we love working with, the reality is that there are some we don't - and we may simply be happy that they are gone. And that's OK.

2. **Create categories of how you want to reengage.** When we sat down to do this exercise, we created categories for inactive clients that we wanted to take to lunch, those who we wanted simply to make sure were on our newsletter list, and those we wanted to include in a direct mail campaign.

3. **Track your progress-** Make the commitment to revisit the Inactive list to see how you are doing. Have you taken those clients to lunch? Called the ones you said you would? Mapped out your direct mail campaign?

With this approach, you can make sure you are leveraging a potentially powerful source of new business.

From Active to Inactive Client - A Smooth Transition

Now that you've learned how to re-engage past customers you've lost touch with, you can take an important step to make sure you don't "lose" anyone again!

Make sure that you are transitioning your active clients to inactive clients in a strategic way, so they don't simply fade away and forget you. We call this "closing the loop" and we think it's so important that we'll be devoting a future newsletter entirely to that topic. For now, here are some things we recommend:

- Share the results you've achieved, ask for a testimonial.
When you wrap up a project or assignment, it's tempting to move quickly onto the next one. But taking the time to do a "debrief" with your client about what was accomplished can reap rewards by ending the engagement on a positive note. If your client is open to giving a testimonial, have someone call him or her for a quick interview and then draft some testimonials. These comments, once approved by the client, can be used in sales letters, in marketing materials, on your website and in customer stories.
- Make sure they subscribe to your newsletter and/or blog.
All prospects and definitely all current clients should be asked to become subscribers to your newsletter but if it hasn't happened, make sure it does before your project is over. We have re-engaged with several past clients in recent months, all because they have received an issue of our newsletter that compelled them to get in touch again.
- Connect to them on LinkedIn, have them follow you on Twitter, or ask them to become a fan through Facebook.
Social media outlets are keeping businesses connected round the clock, long after assignments have ended, so take advantage by making sure that clients are engaged with your firm at this level.

By transitioning active to inactive clients successfully and keeping past clients engaged in your business, you will be practicing "marketing that makes money!"

If you would like FREE business counseling, please contact the Lynn Area Chamber of Commerce staff at 781-592-2900 or info@LynnAreaChamber.com