

The Only Shop in the Marketplace

The best thing you can do for your business right now has nothing to do with new technology, economies of scale, or first-mover advantage.

It's something simpler.

It's something more dependable.

The single best thing you can do for your business is to build true customer loyalty, one customer at a time.

Everything changes when a customer becomes a loyalist. To the truly loyal customer, you are the only shop in the marketplace. All the other brands and all the other vendors don't even come into focus. Like someone in love, the loyal customer only has eyes for you.

Few businesses realize how valuable customer loyalty is, and even fewer know how to achieve it consistently. But a company of any size can build great wealth and stability through customer loyalty. Businesses with loyal customers grow faster than others when times are good, and they have the most breathing room when times are bad.

At its root, creating loyal customers is about taking the time to learn about your customers individually and then using simple systems to turn that knowledge into enduring business relationships. In doing so, you

turn your offering into much more than a commodity—you turn it into a personal relationship.

The primary threat to a business today is the perception by customers that all you offer is a replaceable, interchangeable commodity. This hazard stalks your every move: No matter how unbreachable your business's advantages may appear right now, whether they are advantages of technology, geography, or branding, eventually your business model *is* going to be knocked off. And, in this era of accelerating change, it will likely happen sooner than you think.

Escape this threat of commoditization by creating enduring, loyal, *human* relationships with customers. It's the surest way to escape market obsolescence.

The payoff is huge.

Learning to create loyal customers has made all the difference for the companies where Leonardo has been involved, including The Ritz-Carlton, BVLGARI, The Walt Disney Company, and the new hotel brands—Capella and Solis—that Leonardo heads up with his partners.

The principles that lead to loyal customers will work for you, too. They're simple, they're solid, and they're replicable. You needn't work in a luxury industry to apply them. Far from it.

As you'll learn, Micah used the principles of loyalty to transform a tiny manufacturing and entertainment services company he started in a single room in his basement, with financing that consisted of only a credit card, into a renowned and high-growth enterprise. His approach built his company, Oasis, into one of the top players in its field, as well as attracting attention in the business literature, including case studies in such places as *Success* magazine and Seth Godin's bestseller *Purple Cow*. Oasis catapulted to success because customers respond with loyalty when you treat them according to the principles and methods we will describe.

Since then, Leonardo and Micah have been able to lend their loyalty-based methodology to a great diversity of industries: from white shoe law firms to restaurants to banks to organic flower farms; from

tour operators to independent music labels to convention centers to hospitals. Loyalty pays off—measurably—for all of them.

The reward for using these principles isn't only financial. As you begin building customer loyalty, your pride in your profession, your integrity, and your ability to build positive relationships (at work, and even in your own home) will also bloom. This happens naturally, because the process of earning loyalty involves caring about your customers, respecting them, and thinking constantly about their needs. Spending this time being deeply attentive will tone your personality.

Building customer loyalty will require your hard work and thoughtfulness, but it is a refreshingly straightforward process. While so many aspects of business are out of your control—exchange rates, international tension, technological changes—the single most important process, creating loyal customers, obeys predictable, stable rules that can be mastered and then applied successfully for a lifetime.

We're pleased to help show the way.