



The Business Lab, Inc.  
 12402 Mile Drive  
 Houston TX 77065-1508  
 phone (281) 517-0998  
 fax (281) 517-0789  
[www.thebusinesslab.com](http://www.thebusinesslab.com)

## The Nine Steps To A Successful Relationship, Part III Steps Seven Through Nine

by Kathy Ellis, Business Lab Marketing Coach

Thank you to each of you who attended our Positively Outrageous Service Seminar last week. We had a pretty outrageous time and enjoyed the many valuable ideas T. Scott Gross shared with us. The next three steps in our Successful Relationship model are all about service. Last month we wrote about steps four through six in the nine steps to a successful relationship. In this article we will address steps seven, eight and nine and provide a better understanding on what to do from the instant your prospect becomes a buyer. The nine steps to building a successful relationship are:

1. From unaware to aware: a person sees your direct mail piece, newsletter, business card, advertisement, website; is contacted by your sales team; receives information about you from a friend/colleague or reads a story about your company.
2. From aware to curious: a person is touched/affected by the information in something you or your company might provide.
3. From curious to interested: a person discovers that something you provide may help them.
4. From interested to believing: a person begins to believe that you and your company are real and legitimate.
5. From believing to wanting: a person sees what you are doing/offering and wants to move forward.
6. From wanting to in-motion: a person responds to something you have offered and replies by phone, fax, E-mail, mail...a very BIG step!
7. From in-motion to buyer: a person believes/trusts you and wants the product/service your company provides and begins to pay you.
8. From buyer to satisfied customer: a person becomes a satisfied customer when their trust in you is rewarded.
9. From satisfied customer to advocate: a person receives more/better service/benefits than they expected and it occurs on many occasions...they begin to refer you to others.

***Step 7:** From in-motion to buyer: a person believes/trusts you and wants the product/service your company provides and begins to pay you.*

At this step, you may begin to think that your marketing job is over. However, this is actually where the marketing of your product/service is most important. This is the stage where your new customer really begins to judge your company. This is the *first impression* stage and how you care for your new customer during this step is critical.

When reviewing this "buying" step, ask yourself some of the following questions: What outrageous ("wow") service can you provide your new customer? How can we exceed their expectations? Is there an additional service to "gift" this new customer? What can you do in advance to exceed their expectation—i.e., prepare a summary of special interest items/news facing their industry; prepare a flow-chart of other potential areas they can use to grow their business; develop a spec ad/proposal/idea in advance of the meeting; etc.

***Step 8:** From buyer to satisfied customer: a person becomes a satisfied customer when their trust in you is rewarded.*

This is the on-going portion of the relationship with your customer. Attention to detail in the service you provide is critical. In this step you can never be satisfied with "just enough" and you must continue the personal touch you have always offered. During this step you begin to identify and implement value-added ways to continue this relationship. Practice extreme generosity with your customers. If you do, you will begin to expand the relationship beyond the initial reason they first contacted you and move toward becoming a part of their environment, a part of their company.

***Step 9:** From satisfied customer to advocate: a person receives more/better service/benefits than they expected and it occurs on many occasions...they begin to refer you to others.*

To achieve this next step, all you need to do is focus on performing step eight over and over again. If you do, your customers will turn into raving fans and you will begin to grow your business exponentially through referrals and reputation. Your customers will be saying/thinking/feeling—"I love what you do for me!" They will want to reward you and your company with additional business and they will consciously work at doing this.

Step nine is the magic of reciprocity that T. Scott Gross speaks about in his service philosophy. Do a little more for your customer than they expect and this will make them feel good because they feel you have put them first—do this and they will be eager to do it for you too. Give something or some service that is just the right size for the occasion...send a small gift, write a simple thank you note, call the customer to make certain they are happy, etc.

**More Information?** If you would like to learn more about the nine steps to building a successful relationship with your customers please send an E-mail to [ideas@thebusinesslab.com](mailto:ideas@thebusinesslab.com) or fax a note on your letterhead to 281-655-9365.

**Author's Note:** Kathy Ellis is a Marketing Coach and the owner of The Business Lab, a full service marketing and graphic design company. We specialize in relationship marketing programs including database marketing, company brochures, client newsletters and promotional marketing materials for our clients. We share with you our FREE newsletter to showcase powerful marketing tips, techniques and ideas to help you improve your business. The Business Lab is based in Houston, TX at 281-517-0998 or by e-Mail at [kathy@thebusinesslab.com](mailto:kathy@thebusinesslab.com)