



## NATIONAL

# Key strategies on how to retain customers

By: **Debora McLaughlin** | 12:01am EDT June 29, 2016

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Wondering how to keep up with shifting sands of consumer demands? Finding the previous market data isn't working as effectively with customers? Are you trying to keep up with trends? One change in lipstick preference by Kim Kardashian can affect an organization's entire revenue projections.

Facing these changes, what can you do?

Start by understanding why customers leave and then focus on keeping the customers you do have. Denise Graziano of Graziano Associates gathered the most recent facts:

### Why customers leave:

Customer is 4X more likely to buy from a competitor if the problem is service related vs. price or product related —*Bain and Company*

Customer service is featured in three of the top four reasons behind a great customer experience —*SDL Global CX Infographic*

Top customer service failures are service and process related, such as poor response times, employees not empowered to help, lack of employees training resulting in customers receiving inaccurate or conflicting information —*SDL Global CX Infographic*

Customers take into consideration Success (good outcome), Effort (ease of dealing with company), Emotion (how did they feel about interactions) —*2016 Temkin Experience Ratings*

Gartner reports that by 2016 89 percent of companies plan to compete primarily on the basis of the customer experience.

### Keeping the customers you have

To maintain an exceptional customer experience focus on the Gartner expressed needs of customers and make the following key areas exceptional: customer satisfaction (76 percent), quality of business processes (64 percent) and customer relationships (63 percent). Here are five tips to get started:

1. **Humanize the customer experience.** Walk in your consumer's shoes, literally. What is the buying experience like? How are you customers greeted? Is the website easy to navigate? How can you simplify the buying process? How can you maximize customer service, think "Zappos." How will you "deliver happiness?"
2. **Use Storytelling to create an experience and differentiate yourself from your competitors.** Who doesn't love a good story? How did the ideals of your founder create the values that still support your business? Do you have a business who's purpose results in



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greater good for all (Toms) or is there a family story to be told? If you have a service based company, let your customers tell your story.

3. **Build a culture that focuses on just a few key behaviors.** Instead of measuring sales and performance outcomes, focus on a few behaviors. Recognized employees who feel valued, value providing great customer service. Companies that focus on teaming build strengths in collaboration across functional groups. Holding the bar of outstanding in only a few categories will help your employees be motivated to align with the organizations goals and give their best in internal and external customer service.
4. **Decide where to divest in order to invest.** Walking away from products that no longer perform or have become cost averse will allow you to invest in technology, data research and the resource needed to response to customer needs.
5. **Define your brand beyond its logo and outward projections.** Get back in touch with your "why" and build the values and strategic plan to make that brand a reality. Build the brand with the future in mind, but don't do it alone. Invite customers to join focus groups and build it together.

To retain customers you don't have to do hundreds of tasks, just a few tasks, done well. ●

As a certified executive coach and CEO of The Renegade Leader Coaching and Consulting Group ([www.TheRenegadeLeader.com](http://www.TheRenegadeLeader.com)), Debora McLaughlin helps business leaders ignite their inner renegade leader to unleash their full potential, drive their visions and yield positive results, both in business and in life. Author of The Renegade Leader and Running in High Heels.

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