

November 2021

There's NO Place Like Home



Gratitude for the Long Haul

November is traditionally when we focus on giving thanks. When I reflect on some of my blessings — the amazing, long-term friendships I hold that began in business; the books I've had the opportunity to write and/or co-author; and the successful businesses I've built — I honestly feel pretty dang lucky. But luck isn't the secret to my success. It's hard work, perseverance, and the countless people who have supported me through the years.

This month, I want to set the record straight regarding which professional relationships we should be most thankful for. A common statement in business is, "Nothing happens until someone sells something." This famous quote is attributed to quite a few people. Sales trainers and experts reference it often to demonstrate how important the role of a salesperson is.

There's definitely some truth to this statement. However, it implies we should be thankful that the salesperson did their job correctly without any consideration for the new customer's part of the journey. If there's nobody to buy, a sale is impossible. From this perspective, I think it would be more truthful to say, "Nothing really happens until a customer buys."



That's why the most important relationship of all is our relationship with our customers. Customers who believe you genuinely care about them are more likely to spend more, forgive on the

rare occasion it's necessary, and stay a heck of a lot longer than those who feel you merely think of them as "business as usual."

Pardon this throwback to "The Wizard of Oz," but there's a part where the Tin Man says, "I shall take the heart. For brains do not make one happy, and happiness is the best thing in the world."

There's usually a big brain behind every business, but to achieve success in the long term, we must have heart. That's why, this month, I'm sharing some unconventional ways to show our sincere appreciation.

It's common to thank customers for their purchases.

... And *that's* the exact reason we should thank them for other reasons, as well. Sincere gratitude opens up opportunities to separate ourselves from our competition, and that is priceless. Here are a few of my favorites:

1 Host celebrations or giveaways. One of our dental clients is celebrating their 10-year anniversary next month. They're inviting all their patients to an outdoor party, where there will be food trucks and entertainment. In fact, the owner's band is playing! That personal touch is a really impressive way to bond with their clients, say, "We really appreciate you," *and* provide an easy way for their clients to bring along other friends and family who may end up signing up for services down the road.

You don't have to be celebrating an anniversary to host an event. And I realize that in-person events can be a little tricky right now, anyway. So tap into your creativity! Hosting a virtual event or staggering invitation times should encourage attendance.

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2 Grant early-access or previews to new products. I don't know about you, but when I receive marketing messages about exclusive access or pricing because I'm a loyal customer, I feel special. I've been a supporter of quite a few local venues in Boise, and I get first-access pricing before tickets get released to the general public. Even though I *know* it's the psychology of sales, I still feel like an insider knowing I have access to something others don't yet.

3 Acknowledge the good and the bad feedback. Everybody is busy. When a customer takes the time to provide positive feedback, thanking them is a normal next step. But what about the complaints? That feedback is valuable in a different way because it can help drive improvements in products and services *when you act on it*. Those insights definitely drive more profits in the long run.

The truth is that avoiding constructive criticism could kill your business. There's a U.S. News and World Report study that found that a whopping 82% of customers leave because of a customer service issue, *not price*. But this is actually great news because it means you have an opportunity to salvage the relationship *if you take the time to establish one in the first place*.

4 Highlight customers' helpfulness. At Newsletter Pro, we co-create our newsletters. Our customers' speed of responsiveness, feedback, creative assets, and personal and professional experiences are the main ingredients for a successful final product.

When a customer goes out of their way to help with a project or is extremely responsive on a consistent basis, give them specific thanks. They'll appreciate it and most likely go even further on future projects.

5 Support their charities or community involvement. We are beyond blessed by the number of customers who actively give back to their communities. From time to time, we're asked to support an event or volunteer. This option is a bit more challenging than the others due to logistics, but sometimes, it's feasible, and we're able to participate. I cannot express how appreciative our clients are of our involvement, even though we chose to do it to show *our appreciation of them*.

6 Recognize and reward those who refer most. Referrals are the greatest compliment a customer can ever pay you. As I've stated before, *a buyer is not yet a customer*. A customer is not yet a *committed customer*. A committed customer is *not* yet an evangelical ambassador. Evangelical ambassadors refer significantly and frequently. They should be recognized and rewarded as such.

You can develop a formal program with rewards at each "level" of referring. But if you've established a strong relationship and communicate regularly with these folks, a fancy program may not be necessary.

At Newsletter Pro, we track our top referral sources but don't have an official program. Since we're in contact on a regular basis, we reward and recognize as needed. One of our evangelical ambassadors commented that we're her driving force. She refers regularly and significantly. When we heard she was overwhelmed by a family member's hospitalization on top of other challenging circumstances, it was the perfect time to show her some love.

We sent her a personalized waiting room survival kit loaded with a custom mug, snacks, word puzzles, and other items we hoped would provide some relief. Although it wasn't the first time, she was surprised and delighted.

The bottom line is that people do business with people they know, like, and trust. They refer for the same reasons. Show that you are trustworthy and that you value them, and customers will stick around for the long haul. It's a beautiful thing.

For prospects and customers, the path to purchase is long and winding. We can't afford to take a single customer for granted. Don't miss an opportunity to interact with them, including showing your sincere appreciation often and at length.

I want to close by saying a sincere thank you to *you*, the person reading this. Whether you're a client, a prospect, or a casual observer, I appreciate the space you've given this newsletter in your home and in your minds. Thank you for reading, for sharing, and for supporting us. It's because of you that we've been able to continue doing the things we love, and I could not be more grateful.

Wherever you gather this season, I hope you're surrounded by those you love most. For me, "There's no place like home."

-Shaun

P.S. The holiday season is coming up fast! If you're looking for a cause to support in your family or in your company, my nonprofit is prepared to start getting wish lists from local foster kids, starting the day after Thanksgiving. If you'd like to join in on Christmas shopping for these kids, email info@fosteringchristmas.org, and we'll put your name on the list to receive alerts. You can read more at FosteringChristmas.org.

5 Ways

To Thrill Your Customers During the Holidays

Retention is one of the most amazing benefits of having a print newsletter. It helps customers feel rewarded for their loyalty to your brand as they flip through each page and enjoy your dedication to offering them funny or heartfelt personal stories, valuable information, and overall, high-quality content.

But another amazing opportunity is coming up to boost your retention — the holidays!

While it's a good idea to try and excite your current customers often, the holidays present new possibilities for making your customers' lives a little easier as stress levels rise to an all-time high. If you're looking for a few ways to put a smile on your customers' faces, here are a few ideas.

No. 1: Get ready for the holiday rush as soon as possible.

As world-renowned author Greg McKeown says, slow is smooth, but smooth is fast. Take things slowly to iron out all the wrinkles in your process that could cause hang-ups in the busy season. When things go smoothly, things can go much faster.

A smooth business operation also gives your company a lot more room to delight your customers with every single interaction. Everyone expects other people to be stressed and busy during the holidays — why not surprise them with the opposite?

No. 2: Create compelling discounts.

Customers may be overwhelmed with emails, advertisements, and sales calls right now, but do you know what they're really looking for? A great deal. Nobody wants to miss out on the amazing discounts they can get during the holiday season, so you should inspire your customers to continue doing business with you.

Don't just give people 10% off their next order — focus on the value you're giving your customers. For example, consider offering them major bonus freebies instead of a discount. Make buying your product a total no-brainer.

Discounts plus free gifts with purchases isn't just a great way to delight customers; it reminds your customers why they love you.

No. 3: Don't forget to get personal.

Think about every amazing customer service experience you've had. Was it just about solving your issue? Or did you make a personal connection with the person serving you?

People are more capable of making instant connections than they think. Going above and beyond isn't about being invasive; instead, it's being compassionate toward your customers and expressing gratitude for them. Sometimes that means sending a small gift after a great customer interaction. Find ways to show appreciation for their engagement, support, and loyalty — it'll go a long way, and the holidays are a great time to do it.

No. 4: Go all out on your packaging.

According to a Dotcom Distribution packaging study, over 61% of online shoppers say that branded packaging makes them more excited about receiving or opening an item. About 44% admit that packaging reinforces whether a product is worth the cost!

Make your packaging the best first impression you can afford. Add personable messages or luxurious brand-themed detailing. People live very fast-paced lives, and they might not give you the time or money for a second impression.

No. 5: Don't be shy — tell 'em about the small print.

Refunds, exchange policies, and other services are often in small print and become difficult to find on company websites. It's the holiday season, and everyone's patience is probably worn thin, so do your customers a favor and put your return and services policies front and center. It'll give your customers a quick guide and immediate peace of mind, whether they're a buyer or a gift recipient.

You probably have a few personal experiences with companies that have made your holiday season easier or more fun. Let's pay it forward to our own customers in any way we can.

What's the Right Holiday Celebration for Your Office?

3 Ideas to Spark a Legendary Party

The office holiday party is the stuff of legend, but the landscape of work has changed, perhaps marking the end of more traditional celebrations. With remote work and the changing scope of employee culture, it can be difficult for companies to find that perfect middle ground between cheesy and boring to cap off the year in style.

This holiday season, keep the mood festive with these easy, affordable, and fun celebration ideas.

- 1. VOLUNTEER OR GIVE BACK:** Sparking holiday cheer through helping others is sure to be a hit. If your employees care about certain causes, band together to volunteer or raise funds for those organizations. You can also take part in local Giving Trees or contact animal, humanitarian, or hunger aide groups to create a partnership. A shared goal will make your team feel connected — and you could change some lives.



- 2. SWAP COOKIE SWAP:** There are few better seasons for food than the holidays! Lean into that by hosting a cookie — or some other

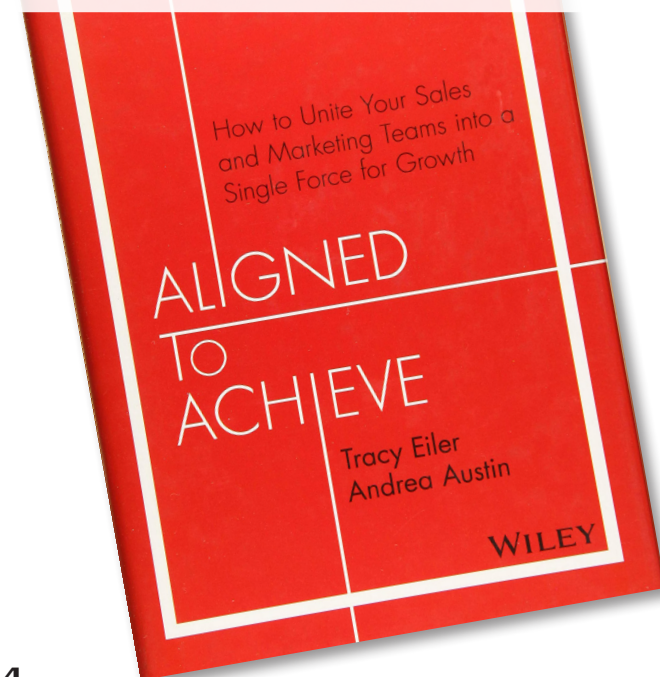
baked good — swap. Every person in the office bakes a few dozen cookies, brings them in, and everyone exchanges to create a new variety to take home at the end of the event. You could even turn this into a bake-off or potluck. Newsletter Pro has done our own version of this with a chili cook-off and a pie bake-off, and the results were very tasty!

- 3. DON'T DO THE TYPICAL HOLIDAYS:** If your company is busy during the holidays, if countless staff have vacations planned, or if it just doesn't make sense to host a big celebration, choose another holiday for your big event! Turn the first week of January into a celebration after the end of your busy season, or make Halloween, the Fourth of July, or Valentine's Day the big day for a party. More employees will have free schedules, and you can have fun with unique party ideas and themes!

Don't sweat the holiday party. Connect with your team and create an event that's sure to cap off 2021 perfectly.

Are Your Sales and Marketing Teams Really Working Together?

Read 'Aligned to Achieve' to Find Out



Is your team leaving money on the table without realizing it? Even for the most well-meaning marketing and sales employees, it's easy to do when you're stuck in your own bubble. How do you burst it in order to create team synchronization?

Luckily, the code has been cracked. If you want to know the secrets and techniques that have worked for dozens of business-to-business companies, you'll want to check out "Aligned to Achieve: How to Unite Your Sales and Marketing Teams into a Single Force for Growth," by Tracy Eiler and Andrea Austin.

In "Aligned to Achieve," you'll find smart, practical explanations, case studies, and tips to push your teams toward action rather than theory. It's written by sales and marketing executives who have made alignment work over and over again, with major contributions by industry thought leaders and other B2B executives to provide fresh insights and nuanced, actionable direction.

Yes, It Was Trendy — But Did It Work?

How to Harness 2021's B2B Marketing Trends in 2022

What do you think of when you hear the word "trend"? Depending on your age, it could be anything from big hair to avocado toast. The word itself has more definitions than you might think, including these four from Merriam Webster.

- 1. A prevailing tendency or inclination**
- 2. A general movement**
- 3. A current style or preference**
- 4. A line of development**

When people say something is "trendy" — like TikTok dances, '90s fashion, or podcast marketing — they usually mean the third definition. But trends aren't always fleeting. Sometimes, as you can see from definitions 1, 2, and 4, they're useful predictors of what's to come.

If something trendy is truly awesome, it sticks around and becomes part of the culture. At one time, people thought

cellphones, texting, and computers were just trendy, but decades later, they're still here because they made our lives better! Trends in marketing are the same way. Sometimes a fresh marketing strategy will pop up, everyone will try it, and it will disappear again. But if a marketing trend *works*, it sticks around and becomes a mainstay.

With that in mind, as you plan your B2B marketing strategy for 2022, you shouldn't throw out your 2021 playbook. The tactics you tried this year might not be on the 2022 trend lists that are starting to pop up on marketing websites, but that doesn't matter. The only thing that matters is this question: "Did it work for your business?" If the marketing strategy successfully boosted your revenue, brought you referrals, won back old clients, converted leads, or increased retention, roll it into your 2022 plan. Odds are it will keep working for you.



Not sure what we mean by 2021 B2B marketing trends? Here are just a few called out by B2B marketing expert Lee Odden.

1. Using Influencers

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, people are spending, on average, 30% more time on smartphone apps this year than they did in 2019. Early statistics lead to the 2021 trend of marketing through influencers

Truthfully, misalignment between sales and marketing is a problem as old as time. However, it's rarely addressed. That's mainly because, in the modern age, there's been a misunderstanding: Your customers aren't buying the way they used to.

Rather than contacting a seller as soon as they're interested in buying (in order to learn more information), customers research online. These days, sellers rarely help their customers through the full length of the buying journey.

That's why sales needs major help from marketing — specifically with content — in order to guide buyers through the process. The book's mantra drives this point home: "Sales can't do it alone, and marketing exists to make it easier." By aligning your teams, you can significantly increase profitability and even marketability.

To do this, Eiler and Austin walk you through proper sales and marketing alignment with these four lenses: leadership, culture, process, and technology. You'll find that your current problems may be self-inflicted, and by adjusting your process, you can achieve exponential potential for growth.

Find Us on Social Media!



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THE Good News

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God."

—Philippians 4:6

"And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him."

—Colossians 3:17



on Instagram and TikTok. A TopRank Marketing survey found most B2B marketers believe this strategy changes minds, improves the brand experience, and yields better campaign results.

2. Advertising on Podcasts

Apple Podcasts crossed the 1 million show mark in April 2021, and in 2020, 37% of Americans 12 and up listened to at least one podcast each month. This inspired a lot of ad spending, to the tune of \$800 million in 2020! These factors made podcast advertising a major trend in 2021, especially for B2B marketers aiming to reach a younger audience.

3. Automating Everything

COVID-19 forced us all to reevaluate how we spend our time, and it turns out many of us don't want to put those minutes toward sending texts and emails! Still, text and email marketing are both vital B2B channels. The trendy way to get the best of both worlds in 2021 was through automation. Within those messages, Odden called out a trend for a "greater focus on storytelling, personalization, and more informal content versus explicit sales offers."



4. Leveraging AI

The importance of AI for B2B marketing became crystal clear recently when a Salesforce study reported that 80% of business buyers expect the companies they reach out to to talk to them "in real time," regardless of the hour. This statistic highlights how important chatbots and other AI solutions are for customer conversion and inspired a 2021 trend.

5. Reaching Customers With Content

Content marketing through blog posts, email newsletters, and print newsletters was touted as a vital piece of every B2B brand's marketing puzzle this year. Statistics gathered by Convince & Convert found 71% of B2B respondents reviewed a blog during their buying journey, 65% of them prioritized credible content from industry influencers more than the previous year, and content marketing both cost 41% less than paid search and generated three times more leads per dollar than other channels. That ringing endorsement won it a slot as a 2021 trend.

All five of these B2B marketing strategies were hot in 2021, and we're willing to bet that if you tried them, at least one brought you results. In our experience, No. 5 is one such foolproof strategy that it has already gone from "current style" to "prevailing tendency" (to quote Merriam Webster). Our B2B print newsletter clients have been successfully generating referrals and reducing churn with their content since we opened our doors a decade ago.

If you've had a similar experience with one or more of the trends above, do yourself a favor and keep that strategy in place for 2022. Do the same with any other trends that worked for you, and you'll have a head start on next year's playbook.

Part of Apple's World
Why Apple's New
Advertisement Works

If you're a fan of Disney's "The Little Mermaid" — or your children had it on repeat while growing up — then you might feel an odd connection to Apple's latest advertising campaign. (You also might relate if you're a PC user who's vicariously watched Apple users pull out their sleek products.)

The new advertisement features a series of PC users singing "The Little Mermaid" classic song "Part of Your World." The advertisement calls out a standard laptop or desktop computer's "whositz," "whatsitz," "thingamabobs," and their "gadgets and gizmos," seemingly mocking other computer and laptop producers for their reliance on a tangle of cords, additional tools, and monitor setups. In the advertisement, PC users look at Apple users "in the wild" using Apple's new iPad Pro — admittedly with other accessories — wondering what it would be like to be free of their desks, traditional desktops, and laptops.



Apple computer and a PC. The advertisements were critically acclaimed and easily recognizable by consumers everywhere.

By playing around with this old method and using a classic Disney song, Apple has once again masterfully teased their competition while showcasing the various features of their new iPad Pro, even if it is a little flawed. After all, Apple showcases their own "whositz" and "whatsitz" by having users in the commercial use their iPads with a keyboard and the Apple Pencil.

Still, the dichotomy of PC versus Apple users is once again teased, while a song about a mermaid wishing she could walk on land calls into question all of the setup and machinery that go into using a PC. In the end, it makes viewers nostalgic while they possibly even consider, "Why do I need this thingamabob?"

And if Apple's new advertisement can do that, then its advertisers have done their jobs.

The debate about Apple versus PCs aside, Apple's new advertisement is a genius play on nostalgia while subtly calling out "the competition." It's a callback to earlier advertisements from Apple that pitted their laptop and computer systems against PCs by using two actors who portrayed an

Get Inspired



Resource of
the Month

One of the largest 2020 Wall Street success stories is Zoom Video. Thrown into a pandemic in early 2020, businesses scrambled to find other means of operation while employees socially distanced and worked remotely, keeping their operations alive. Zoom held things together for many corporations, hosting videoconferencing worldwide. With Zoom, team members can sit around the proverbial table and engage in meetings and strategy sessions.

Now, a new Zoom solution is on the market to empower B2B sales. ZoomInfo offers sales professionals the ability to engage active buyers in the area and find business opportunities. If you're anything like the vast majority, then lead scoring, territory planning, prospecting, and targeting the right group for marketing can be daunting. But ZoomInfo provides tons of data on prospects, which elevates every aspect of your company's marketing with only a few clicks of a button.

Make Room for ZoomInfo
Resource of the Month: ZoomInfo

This sounds convenient, right?

From a marketing standpoint, ZoomInfo helps you understand potential customers and target them while they browse your webpage in real time. This means that while possible clients are viewing what your company has to offer, you have the opportunity to act and capitalize on that right away. With ZoomInfo Chat, you can engage those prospects based on who they are with personalized data points. You have access to market intelligence that reveals what is happening within the company you are attempting to reach.

With ZoomInfo WebSights, you can easily identify those B2B visitors to your landing page. When someone views your website, ZoomInfo records the IP address of the visitor, then filters it through to provide a detailed profile and list of possible contacts to follow up with. Customer-facing teams can get right to work creating business opportunities.

With the ability to communicate right away with prospective clients, reveal your website visitors, and more, a solution like this makes marketing that much easier. ZoomInfo offers a free trial to see if the platform is right for you and your business. Visit ZoomInfo.com today to learn more.



zoominfo

Why Is Panera Bread So Good at Branding?

Their Pandemic Strategy and 2021 Upgrade

From the industry-wide hiring scarcity to the supply chain breakdown, running a restaurant during COVID-19 hasn't been easy. However, despite the odds stacked against it, Panera Bread, the bakery-cafe chain, has been a category leader during the pandemic. Here's how its quick decision-making has made a difference.

Quick Delivery and Even Quicker Strategies

Panera's quick but fresh food isn't the only thing great about it — its business also thinks and acts fast. When the pandemic broke out, the corporation responded within a couple weeks with a strategy.

First, it knew to take care of its employees. Panera offered its teams nationwide multiple perks, including two weeks of paid sick leave, free family meals once a week, an Emergency Relief Fund, and a hiring partnership with CVS and Walmart for over 35,000 furloughed Panera workers. Staff were also given access to Oprah Winfrey's virtual wellness program to encourage mental and physical wellness.

Second, Panera began to try new things that no other chain had. Most brands wouldn't dare attempt a brand extension during COVID-19, but Panera launched Panera Grocery in April 2020 so people ordering delivery could also order basics like fresh milk, bread, pasta, and more. During a time when grocery stores were constantly sold out, the service helped many people.

Last but certainly not least, Panera also launched its now-famous \$8.99 coffee subscription in February 2020. Despite coffee sales accounting for only 3% of Panera's total revenue up until that point, affordable coffee is enough to bring in more customers all day long, even during the pandemic.

Panera's New Feat: Upgrading in Style

Panera has recently announced it is redesigning its restaurants to inject "a little more character" into both its restaurants and digital experiences. "We are offering the best of both worlds with convenience via off-premise and digital channels while doubling down on dine-in," says Eduardo Luz, chief brand and concept officer.

The Next-Gen café will move bakery ovens to the front, allowing customers to get a full view and even chat with Panera bakers. They'll also be able to see and smell the trademark bread just as it comes out of the oven.

Of course, not all customers order inside the store nowadays — during the pandemic, over 85% of sales were made off-premise. That also brought a lot of new customers to the brand. To serve them as effectively as possible, the café adds a double drive-thru lane, with one lane just for picking up digital orders.

"As states begin to open up, we are seeing those new customers stick with us via off-premise while existing Panera guests return to dine-in," Luz says. "The Next-Gen café redesign allows us to meet the needs of all our guests with a warm dine-in environment, an enhanced digital experience, and more drive-through access for an increasingly off-premise world."

The Next-Gen drive-thru menu is fully digitized and identifies MyPanera Loyalty members, recalling past orders and birthdays, and it makes unique offers based on order history. Combining its loyalty program and personalization is intended to make the experience "uniquely Panera."

The very first Next-Gen café is opening this year in Ballwin, Missouri, and going forward, all new restaurants and remodels will follow the same design.

Overall, Panera's ability to brand itself ahead of the curve has been constantly impressive — and as much as we love the food, we're even more excited to see what the company has coming in 2022. It's certainly taught everyone to look forward to what Panera will do next.

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Resource of the Month:
ZoomInfo

