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ADDING VALUE WITH STYLE

Kempenfelt takes a slick approach
to business in Newmarket

Perk Power



Client perks are great as long as they actually feel special.

by Rich Porayko

I'll admit it, I'm a lousy golfer. Total hacker. I have many strengths but golf is not one of them. With that said, you don't have to bend my arm to get me out of the office for a day on the links to sneak a cheeky cigarette* and a few drinky-poops.** That may sound simple but it goes a lot deeper. Say what you want but business happens on the golf course. My golf game may not be up to par however my social game makes up for it. Every professional salesperson knows that golf tournaments are a great place to network, build relationships and close deals. They are also a great opportunity to build awareness through sponsorships, check on the competition, hear industry chatter and support your local association.

Association tournaments are a no-brainer, however keep your ears open for customer events. It is very popular these days to have suppliers offset the cost of open houses and golf tournaments so offer to sponsor if you can send a rep or team.

Consider hosting your own tournament. Select your top customers and mix them in with sales reps and trusted employees. The beautiful thing about a company golf tournament is that it can be used for both customer and employee appreciation.

Keep the price low by going off-peak or to an executive course. Hit your suppliers up with requests for sponsorships, door prizes etc. and invite them to golf in the event. Building strong relationships with vendors reinforces your supply chain which can help prevent material shortages. The idea is win-win-win. What goes around, comes around.

You hate golf? I don't blame you. Terrible game. There are other ways to show your customers and employees that you appreciate them. This is a great time of year to Google the local ice cream delivery services in your area. For a reasonable rate, you can send an ice cream truck to jobsites and offices around your area. Don't forget your own team. Who doesn't enjoy an icy treat on a hot day?

If you plan on buying promotional gifts this season, or any season, do yourself a favour and don't go cheap. No one wants a crappy hat,

golf ball, first aid kit or measuring tape. Spend the extra money and go with the higher end or brand name product or don't get them at all. Money clips are popular and have longevity. Microfiber lens cleaners are low cost and handy for glasses, monitors and mobile device screens.

Business books that have had an influence on you or your company are another great way to not only say thanks but to explain core values behind your people and company. Make sure you write a personalized note in the front cover so your customer (and the people they may lend the book to) remembers who gave it to them.

Loyalty programs can be very effective ways of rewarding customers. Classic punch cards are very low cost and easy to implement on a limited scale, however they lack insight. There are a number of online digital loyalty punch card services on the web designed to get repeat sales and build strong relationships. The best part of going with a digital system is the app or online tool simplifies administration and allows you to track your success. If you can measure it, it can be improved.

Nothing beats a BBQ in the middle of summer but once the weather turns (oh yes, it will turn), depending on where you work, there are some excellent food trucks. Bring a truck or two by your shop and buy the company lunch. Or surprise a key customer with a meal.

Out of town or country customers? Coffee e-gift cards are an easy and inexpensive way to take a client out to say thank you without leaving the office.

Handwritten notes are also almost free and a nice touch. Important note: they work well with both internal and external customers.

Perhaps the most difficult yet effective method of practicing customer and employee appreciation, and the best way to grow your business, is by excelling at customer service every day. There is nothing more positive than working with a friendly, informed and empowered customer facing representative.

*Please don't tell my wife.

**Always plan a safe ride home. Until Uber comes to your area, I recommend designated driving services.