

Vinyl Fence *Tip*

Practical and Proven Ways to Sell More Vinyl Fences

From your friends at National Vinyl Products

How To Win Back Old Customers



How do you win back customers you have not heard from in years?

Most vinyl fence companies focus on getting new business from new customers they have never met. Or they spend their time trying to turn shoppers into buyers. While there is nothing wrong with these practices, you may be neglecting an even more profitable strategy: reaching out to previous customers.

It is less expensive to keep a customer than continually looking for new ones. Research published by the Harvard Business School, shows that even a 5% increase in customer retention can bring an increase in profit margins of 25 to 95%.

It is time to stop thinking of your fence customers as one-and-done transactions. There are many reasons a previous customer may need a new fence. They may have moved to a new home or business location that requires fencing. Or perhaps, these past customers now have kids or pets and therefore need more fencing than they once did. Or better yet, they can refer friends to you.

Do not let these valuable connections go to waste. Here are three things fence companies can take to reactivate past customers.

1. Examine customer sales history

Your first step is to review your past sales records on a regular basis. What type of fence did the customer buy? Was it for a home or business? Were there any special requests or needs for the job?

Encourage your sales team to ask questions and take careful notes each time they make a sale. For example, does that homeowner also own a business in town? This information will be key to your follow-up communications.

If you do not have one already, consider getting a customer relationship management CRM (tool) to help you keep track of these details. There are quite a few free options — such as Zoho CRM, HubSpot, and Freshsales— available to get you started.

2. Reach out regularly

There can be a fine line between over communicating and under-communicating. No one wants to get daily emails from the company they bought a fence from last year. However, your previous customers will appreciate hearing from you on a regular basis if you offer them valuable content.

Staying in touch with a previous customer should not be all about selling but more about caring. Let them know that you do not take their business for granted. Here are some ideas.

- Send out a monthly emailed newsletter that features information about your community as well as any company news. You could highlight your community service in this way or showcase local non-profits, for instance.
- Write a friendly snail mail letter on their “fence anniversary” beginning at six months and then on an annual basis. Personalize the letter with the customer’s name and any specifics about their fence and ask if it needs any cleaning or repairs.



- Spread the word about any new fence colors or fence products you have added to your line-up. Postcards are an inexpensive but effective way to get attention in this way. Postcards are difficult to ignore.
- Ask for a referral or a testimonial. People who are looking to buy a fence appreciate hearing from folks who have had their fence for a while — not just from people who just bought one. When you request a review, and you'll get a win-win. You will have a helpful post on your site, and you'll have had the opportunity to chat with a satisfied past customer.
- Take a survey. Send out a quick online survey to previous customers that asks them questions such as "How would you rate the quality of your fence? How often do you clean your fence? Has the fence met the needs for which it was intended?" These responses will not only give you valuable information, but they will give you an open door for follow-up.

3. Offer incentives

Everyone wants to feel appreciated, and one way to make your past customers feel that way is by offering them discounts on new fence purchases or services.

You could even consider creating a discount package with another contractor in your area. For example, a homeowner who is shopping for a new fence may also need a new garage door or a new roof. Networking with

these other local companies may prove to be invaluable for your business. You can help each other gain new business. But be careful about sharing your list!

Incentives can include a percentage discount, a free upgrade to a certain color fence, or a free spring cleaning. Decorative planters are another idea.

With just a little time and effort, your fencing company's past customers can turn into repeat customers. However, you do need to remain thoughtful about how often you contact customers.

Remember there is a fine line between keeping in touch and being annoying. If your messages are all about you, you are annoying. If your messages are all about them, then your customers will appreciate you contacting them.

When you successfully keep your company name in their minds, your past customers will not hesitate to contact you for their new fence or to recommend you to friends and family members. A satisfied customer can serve as a walking billboard for your fencing company.

By concentrating on retaining customers and encouraging their repeat business, you create long-lasting profitable relationships for your fencing company.

Do not waste this important opportunity: win back your old customers!



If you have questions about this newsletter or marketing in general, e-mail NVP's marketing expert: marketing@nvpfence.com.



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