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# What is this “Relationship Marketing?”

You may start to hear the new ‘buzz’ word - ‘Relationship Marketing’. This form of marketing has been around for over 30 years but has only recently been enthusiastically embraced. It was developed from direct response marketing campaigns conducted in the 1970’s and 1980’s that emphasises customer retention and satisfaction, rather than a dominant focus on ‘point of sale’ transactions.

Relationship marketing differs from other forms of marketing in that it recognises the long term value to the firm of keeping customers, as opposed to direct or “Intrusion” marketing, which focuses upon acquisition of new customers by targeting majority demographics based upon prospective client lists.

Relationship marketing has also migrated back into direct mail, allowing marketers to take advantage of the technological capabilities of digital, toner-based printing presses to produce unique, personalised pieces for each recipient that can personalise documents, cards etc. that results in a printed piece that (ideally) reflects the individual needs and preferences of each recipient, increasing the relevance of the piece and increasing the response rate.

Relationship marketing also has the power to bring

Prospects closer to the point of buying.

Successful relationship marketing techniques:

1. Plan, plan plan;
2. What combination of tools will you use (phone calls, cards, visits, etc.);
3. Know your customers and potential customers;
4. Develop a file of success stories or testimonials;
5. Develop a communication plan and campaign – know your messages and plan their release;
6. Conduct effective follow-up – plan and do it – analyse how can this be easily managed and monitored;
7. Invite contacts to events or hold your own;
8. Send newsletters, success stories, information valuable to your client.

There is no luck or magic to this - we create our own luck by good planning!

