

BUSINESS CIRCLE

4 Ways Your Virtual Business Can Build Customer Confidence and Credibility

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While being a virtual company may work seamlessly for you and your employees, it isn't always the case for your customers. How do you prove you are still real, valuable and credible when you remove the location factor? It can be tricky.

While doing business online is far more common now than when we started in 2008, most customers still have a "show me who you are" mentality when evaluating a business. So, if your business doesn't have a well-known physical address, will it fall to the wayside? Absolutely not. You just need to find more creative ways to earn your prospective customers' trust.

After five years of running a virtual business, here is what we have learned: Credibility must be earned and the best way is by delivering top-notch customer service while reinforcing your company brand, albeit virtually.

Related: [The One Question Successful Business Owners Always Ask Themselves](#)

Here are a few of the things we have done to attract and retain our customers:

1. Think of your website as your storefront.

Your website must be more than a page in a directory. It should look professional, be easy to navigate and familiarize newcomers with who you are and what you do. Virtual companies whose websites are homemade or unprofessional have zero chance of making it in a service-focused market. So, don't scrimp on this valuable online real estate. Use smart web tools with a reliable host, and keep it current on a daily basis. Invest your heart and soul into telling your story and telling it well. Use your employee photos, not just stock photos. Ensure your content is compelling, professional and error free.

Beyond the design and content of your site, let your prospects get to know the people in your company through pictures, bios and a splash of something personal to humanize them. This personal connection helps establish a relationship with potential customers, which is key to earning their business.

2. Ask and instruct your customers on how to do the talking for you.

Word of mouth matters in every industry, but as a virtual business, it's even more critical. Once you have served your customers well, ask them to share their experience on their social media. Do you post to social media on a regular basis? This is a perfect place to share testimonials to not only gain credibility but also expand your reach as people like and share your post with their friends.

Related: [Earn Customer Trust and the Rest Will Follow](#)

At our company, we email our customers asking them if they will follow us, retweet us and post on Facebook, as well as provide us with testimonials that we

often use on our website and in our own social posts. We also have a "Refer a Friend" program that rewards customers for sharing the good word about Greenback and bringing new customers to our "door."

3. Seek out opportunities to share how wonderful you are.

Is there an awards category in your line of work? Submit an entry. While some awards entries are detailed and can be time consuming, it is incredibly valuable to win awards and receive accolades from your peers or industry leaders.

Can't find any awards to apply for? Look to certifications as another means of credibility. While recognition through awards shows that your company is valued by other organizations, certifications show that you and your employees are continually working to improve your skill set to provide better service and expanded expertise to your customers.

4. Publicly remind your customers they made a smart choice.

As a virtual company, you will need more publicity than simply getting a pickup of your press release announcement. It is important for new and current customers to see your executives quoted in media coverage, because you are reminding them that working with your company was the right thing to do. Whether it is a major publication or a niche blog, being quoted with other major players (or instead of them), your leadership role cannot be denied. If you have a prospect who is concerned about your virtual business model, sharing link after link of press quotes showcasing your expertise or company features citing your virtual status is a terrific way to break down the wall.

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