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What would you rather have, loyal customers or successful customers? Which group would be more *valuable* to your company? These questions are meant to point out that *loyal* customers aren't necessarily *valuable* ones because *loyalty* usually means that customers buy from you when they buy - no matter how little.

Now, only successful customers can be valuable in every sense of the word. For example, customers who have success in generating revenue and profits make them financially *valuable*, which is attractive to potential and existing suppliers; or they are so successful they buy enough from your company to be classified as a *valuable* revenue source; or because they are successful in their industry, your company's relationship with them creates marketing and branding *value*, whether it's through general association or overt publicity on the customer's part; or customers become *valuable* consulting partners because they successfully (and accurately) gather industry and market condition information. Notice that all of these *valuable* things are only something *successful* customers can provide.

So, the real goal isn't how to make customers loyal, but to *help* them become *successful* and therefore, *valuable*. How can this be done?

First of all, any business' definition of success is influenced by, for example, where a company is in their business "life cycle(s)," the diversity of their customer base, the age and mixture of their products, the realism of their monetary and sales goals, and their *total* ability to execute strategies. More importantly, business success is influenced by the "details" of the afore mentioned items that, for the most part, are "hidden" from those who are not "inside" the company – things like decision making processes, hiring needs, and special, unmet requirements.

This means that if you are going to help customers create success, you have to proactively uncover *deep knowledge* about their businesses – knowledge based on information that goes beyond your products and related services – in order to find the criteria they use to define success, what they are doing to create the success and, more importantly, what's keeping them from achieving higher success because they cannot see the obstacles due to the "forest and trees" syndrome.

Using this deep knowledge, your company can help create your customers' success in two important ways:

First, by supplying, or helping find, solutions – unique or otherwise – to their needs, wants and issues that were found during the discovery process: Needs, wants and issues that are obscure in nature; those put into context because bits of related information were finally uncovered; those customers fail to mention because they're so basic a solution they are expected to be provided; those customers demand because they can in today's economy.

Second, by creating a *link* between the benefits you offer, the activities you perform and the *results* customers work for. This is important because customers don't buy products and services; they buy *results* promised by the benefits your company offers and the *results* each activity your company performs to make the promise a reality. Making this link requires your company's leaders and staff to discover the positive and adverse *impact* your company's benefits and activities have on their results.

The only satisfaction customers really want is valuable success. The ultimate experience customers want is valuable success. And the only loyalty that matters to customers is that developed by relationships that provide valuable success. So, all the work your company does to create satisfaction, positive experiences and loyalty should have only one purpose in mind – creating successful, valuable customers. It's the definitive reason they do business with you.