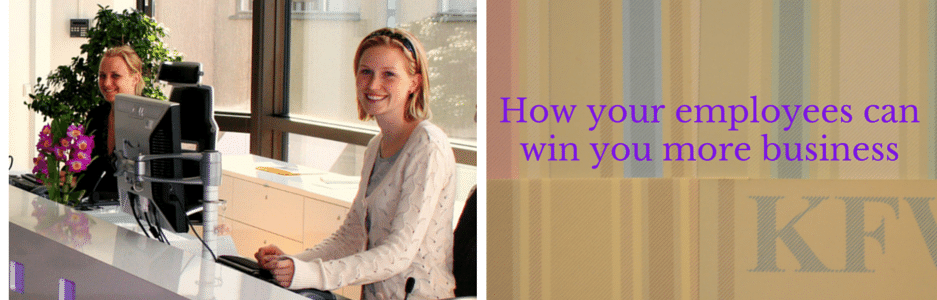
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Whether you’re a multinational corporation or a small business with a handful of employees, the way you communicate with the rest of the world tells a story about who you are. Get it right and your business can grow, get it wrong and you could be in trouble.

The need to market your business externally is obvious, but what about your employees? Are they up to speed with your vision for the company and the way that you’re presenting yourself to potential clients? If they aren’t, there’s a real chance that you could be losing customers.

**Presenting yourself well**

Am I exaggerating? Picture the scene: the phone rings and is answered by a receptionist. There is a potential client on the other end who wants to know if you offer a particular service. The receptionist hasn’t been briefed on services so guesses and puts them through to a department who might be able to help. It’s the wrong department. The person who answers the phone promises to get the right department to call back. A call back could result in a successful sale but the customer’s overall impression is going to be of a company that can’t answer a simple question, which doesn’t exactly inspire confidence. Yet it’s the kind of scenario that could easily be avoided by effective use of internal communications.

A departmental phone list with everyone’s name on it is a fine thing if the person calling knows who they want to speak to. If they don’t, a cheat sheet with a list of services by department with a contact name is very simple to produce and means that routine enquiries can be sent to the right person quickly.

**Keeping the company together**

If you’re a larger organisation with multiple departments or several offices, employees can often feel that they’re in their own departmental bubble and don’t know what other teams are working on or what’s happening in offices elsewhere. Briefing new staff properly is a good start but good internal communication ensures that their knowledge remains current. A monthly newsletter can go a long way to help employees feel that they’re part of something bigger. The benefit is increased if communication is a two way street and your staff can use the newsletter to shout about their own achievements.

This can be particularly important when times are hard. If employees feel that the lines of communication are open and they’re working towards a shared goal it can help to keep morale high and ensure that your staff remain positive in their interactions with customers.

**Knowledge is power**

In the scenario above, a sale was potentially lost through lack of knowledge. If all of your staff know what services are offered and who provides them, they can all give advice when enquiries come in, leaving potential clients with a positive impression. A newsletter is a good start, but how about having a ‘team of the month’ on your website and showcase what they offer? This can be used both in your external marketing and internally to ensure that staff are aware of any changes or new recruits.

If staff are well informed about events or initiatives they are more likely to participate. This can result in positive PR if you’re involved in local events or CSR activities and helping the local community.

Most importantly, good communication and product knowledge translates to sales. It’s a given that your sales team need product knowledge, but everyone else does too. Your existing clients are (hopefully) already impressed with you so the ability to cross sell can bring sales without the cost of marketing to new prospects.

In short, inclusivity = happy staff. Happy staff = happy customers and more sales!