



The Client Journey
From Awareness to Completion
and Everything In Between

Dear Colleague,

Everywhere you turn, gurus of one type or another are telling you to increase conversions, “sell” more (whether through soft selling or traditional selling) and focus on increasing your profits.

There are ways to do that without alienating, steamrolling or hugging your clients to death.

And yet the “old” ways of doing business have significantly shifted in this new economy. To be successful, you need to focus on the client and HER needs.

Before we get into the “how’s”, I want to share a few definitions as used in this report:

Conversion = Turning “customers” into paying clients and, when done well, more customers become clients faster and with the least possible cost.

Clients = People who’ve purchased something from you at least once.

Customers = Leads or prospects. Individuals who have recently become aware of you/your website, maybe sent you an email, signed up for a free teleclass, etc., but have not yet purchased anything.

Extreme Client Care™ = Think of how you want to be treated and then go a step further in everything you do. Ensure that your clients walk away from EVERY contact with you feeling served.

Nurturing Sequence = Automatic follow-up with customer or client. Usually sent via email autoresponder.

The better your conversion, the lower your new client cost AND the better your client care, the less new clients you’ll need.

Translation: More profits.

While others refer to this process as the “sales process”, I call it “The Client Journey”.

A client goes on several journeys with you over time – today, we’ll be talking about the journey from “customer” (aka “lead” or “prospect”) to raving fan/client.

Ready? Let’s jump in. . .

Sandy

Sandra Martini
Founder, Extreme Client Care
and Team Sandy

The Client Journey

When you approach the sales process from the point of view of a “journey”, you’re inherently making several assumptions:

- All customers (leads) WILL become a client of some kind – service, program, product, etc. – at some point. This sets the intention up front.
- The customers will go on a journey WITH you. It’s not about selling to them, but rather going on a journey together.
 - The Journey begins when the customer first contacts us and we respond, whether through email, phone, nurturing sequence, etc.
- Every step of the Client Journey is infused with Extreme Client Care – we exist to be in service to our clients and, from that place, will be successful.
- My job, and that of my team, is to make every journey as fun, easy and comfortable as possible for as long as it lasts – whether 2 seconds, 2 weeks, 2 years...

The Customer’s 10-Step Journey to Becoming a Client

Whether you realize it or not, every customer (lead) goes through 10 distinct steps in becoming a client.

Let’s take a quick look at the steps and then we’ll break them down.

1. Attract and Connect
2. Ideal Client match?
3. Interest in solving problem?
4. Do you have THE solution?
5. ROI on solving the problem
6. Make an offer
7. Eliminate risk
8. Why now?
9. Actual purchase
10. Nurturing the relationship

ATTRACT and CONNECT

There are countless ways to attract and connect with customers – remember your goal here is to attract and connect, not sell (that comes later). Here’s a simple list of my favorites:

- ✓ Social Networking: Facebook, Twitter, Linked In, MySpace
- ✓ Opt-in/Soft Squeeze page on your website or landing page
- ✓ Offer a free report, audio series or other giveaway
- ✓ Your website
- ✓ Being a guest on others' teleseminars
- ✓ Hosting your own teleseminars
- ✓ Posting on your blog
- ✓ Commenting on others' blogs
- ✓ Direct mail
- ✓ Consistently sending out an ezine
- ✓ Posting videos on You Tube
- ✓ Article Marketing

While you could also invest in ezine advertising, pay per click, etc., I prefer doing the above types of activities to keep new client acquisition cost down while building a relationship with those who respond to my marketing.

I find I have a better, longer term relationship with clients when they seek me out as opposed to my finding them. It's the difference between "pull" (like a magnet) and "push" marketing.

What types of attraction and connection activities resonate with you? You want to choose at least 3, but no more than 5 to get started with and remember, it's the ordinary things that, when done consistently, bring extraordinary results.

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2.

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4.

5.

IDEAL CLIENT MATCH?

Not everyone who responds to your marketing is going to be an ideal client. And that's okay!

Everyone who visits your site/blog/etc, will be asking themselves (whether consciously or not) if you're good fit for them.

At this point, you want them to make the decision as quickly as possible. It will save you, and them, time and energy if they quickly determine that:

1. They want to know more or
2. They're not a good fit

The simplest ways you can do this without offering tons of free sessions and strategy sessions is:

1. Have "An Interview" with you on your site where you describe how you work, a description of your ideal clients, etc.
2. Show a list of your past and present clients with a note of "Who We Work With"
3. Have a list of Qualifying Questions on your site (see www.SandraMartini.com as an example).

With the above in place, one of three things will happen:

1. You'll be contacted for more info or they'll lurk on your ezine list soaking up info until they're ready (see "Interest in Solving Problem?" next)
2. They'll want to hire you
3. They'll leave your site and move on to someone else who's a better fit

Ideally, they'll choose either options 2 or 3. If you notice a lot of option 1's, it's time to revamp your site calls to action.

What's your ideal client profile? Remember to include as much SPECIFIC info as possible – is she married, single, children, a woman/man, what type of industry, what type of home, values, what's keeping her up at night...the list goes on. Be as detailed as you can and create a "person" who represents your ideal client (my ideal client is named "Mary"):

How will you qualify customers who visit your site so that you're not spending your time offering free consultations?

INTEREST IN SOLVING PROBLEM?

So many times we hear the question “what keeps your clients up at night” and while that’s a potent question and the answer usually creates a program or product, it’s important to adjust the question to the following:

“What keeps your clients up at night to the extent that they’re ready, willing and able to pay for a solution?”

Without all components of the above, a customer (lead) remains that and won’t transition over to becoming a paying client.

As you listen to your customers questions, complaints, gripes, etc., remember that every one of those contain a request. What’s the request and how can you be of service?

By answering that question with the proper products, programs and services, you’ll never lack for clients.

What’s the problem you’re going to solve?

SHOW YOU HAVE THE SOLUTION

Once you know what keeps them up at night to the extent that they’re ready, willing and able to pay for a solution, **SHOW** them that **YOU** have the solution.

This is where client case studies, testimonials, success stories and “before and after” transformations all come into play – while you can talk about how you have the solution

until your blue in the face, it's so much more effective to let your existing clients do it for you.

Your information pages (my phrase for "sales pages") are where you can showcase several of these success stories.

And if you've been incorporating Extreme Client Care™ into every customer and client touch, you'll have the raving fans to do it for you. 😊

Just starting out and you don't have any client testimonials yet? No worries, host a teleclass to show your credibility and expertise.

How are you going to solve the problem AND how are you going to show your customers you have the solution?

ROI (Return on Investment)

The eternal question, which your information pages need to answer, is "How will my life change once I solve my problem of X?"

Especially since your selling the solution to "X problem".

Will their productivity increase? Costs decrease? Energy increase? Weight decrease? Revenue increase?

WHAT specific benefit or benefits will they see as a result of purchasing and using your program, product or service?

Note that I said "purchasing and using" – this is where you want to be sure to SHOW your client how to USE your program, product or service. If they purchase and let it sit on the shelf, not only are they not seeing results, you're not creating a raving fan who will purchase from you again and again.

What's the Return on Investment for purchasing your program, product or service?

MAKE AN OFFER

You've taken your customer by the hand, welcomed them to your world. Built a relationship with them through your ezine and customer touches, shown them that you understand their problem AND have a solution for it with a great return on investment.

It's time to make the offer.

What specifically are you giving them (service, product, teleclass, program, bonuses, a forum, access to you, etc.) and for how much?

The offer should be on your information page, in your ezine, in a solo email, send a postcard – you don't want to beat your customers over the head with it, but you do want to ensure they've seen it.

What's your offer? Be as specific as possible.

ELIMINATE RISK

As part of your offer, what type of a guarantee can you provide? The better the guarantee, the lower the risk and the lower the risk (especially for first time purchasers), the more chance they'll buy.

Can you provide a 100%, 365-day guarantee? If so, do they need to DO anything, prove they used your product, open the package, etc.

Whatever you decide to offer as a guarantee, ensure that it's absolutely clear on what the terms are.

How can you eliminate risk? What's your guarantee? What does your client have to do to meet the terms of your guarantee?

WHY NOW?

Chances are your customer's had this issue for a while and they may have different fears or objections around purchasing something to solve it. So why should they purchase your solution now?

What incentives can you give them for solving their problem?

Incentives can include:

- ✓ **Bonuses – either from you or others**
 - 15-minute sessions
 - Special topic calls
 - Open Q&A calls

- ✓ **Limited-time offers**
 - Purchase one, get one free (works well for events, teleclasses)

- ✓ **Price incentives**
 - Early bird pricing

- ✓ **Make it easy to do business with you**
 - Accept all credit cards/paypal
 - Offer extended payment plans
 - Speak “their” language
 - Increase your site’s trust factors

The “why now”, in combination with a strong return on investment make it easy for your customer (lead) to become a client.

And the best Client Care you can offer them is to provide a solution which solves their problem.

What’s the incentive for your customer to purchase NOW as opposed to next month or next year?

ACTUAL PURCHASE

Once your customer becomes a client by purchasing your program, product or service, the ball's in YOUR court.

You want to ensure they received an immediate receipt and a “welcome” or “congratulations” email (I use www.ProfessionalOnlineShoppingCart.com to make this all automatic).

If your offer is a downloadable product, send your clients to a thank you page with the download on it and follow-up with an email with the same link and instructions on how to download. Your only goal here is to make things as simple as possible for your clients to use your product – after all, it's that use which creates results and the results which create raving fans!

The number 1 reason for returns is “buyer's remorse”, particularly for higher-priced programs and products. To avoid buyer's remorse, you'll want to nurture the client relationship starting immediately after purchase.

What are you going to do to eliminate buyer's remorse?

NURTURING THE RELATIONSHIP

Many business owners make the mistake of thinking the Journey has come to an end once the credit card charge goes through.

It's exactly the opposite.

This is where the next journey begins.

Knowing that most clients suffer buyer's remorse within 24 hours of purchasing, you want to reassure them that they've made a great decision.

Here are a few ways to do that in an Extreme Client Care™ fashion:

- ✓ If a program, give your clients a special email address to send questions/comments to.
- ✓ Send an email the day after purchase restating the benefits of the program, product, service and asking if they've seen X tip on page Y (if a product).
- ✓ If they purchased a hardcopy product from you, give them instant access to the first chapter so they get something *immediately*.
- ✓ Send a snail mail gift – whether a card or an actual goodie such as a book. Something they receive in their mailbox.

And, most importantly, don't let them sit *out there* wondering what's going on. Keep in regular contact with your clients, not just to promote or sell them something, but to offer them free reports, information, resources, etc.

Write at least 5 things you're going to do to continuously nurture your client relationships – and make as many as possible an automatic system to ensure success.

1.

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Doing the above will ensure that you create raving fans out of your clients!

About the Author

Sandra Martini, a leading small business expert, coach and author, uses her experience and successes to teach solopreneurs and small business owners smart, simple ways to work smarter through systems; increase their profits and have more freedom in and from their businesses.

Sandy regularly offers:

- ✓ E-courses
- ✓ personal coaching
- ✓ special reports
- ✓ FREE teleclasses
- ✓ FREE articles
- ✓ group coaching
- ✓ paid teleclasses
- ✓ E-books

....that help coaches, entrepreneurs and service professionals change the way they do business and truly turn their passions into profits. You can learn more about these great resources at www.SandraMartini.com.

For FREE how-to articles and tips to help you work smarter, not harder while increasing your profits AND to be notified of upcoming teleclasses and workshops, sign up for Sandra's weekly e-zine *The Martini Advantage* at www.SandraMartini.com.

Sandy's award-winning articles on strategic marketing, productivity and time management and small business systems have motivated readers worldwide and are published regularly on hundreds of sites on the Web.

Sandy now lives in beautiful rural Massachusetts with her husband Jerry, their three dogs and two cats and loves the freedom that her business allows!

You can reach her at Sandy@SandraMartini.com.

For free articles and resources, please visit www.SandraMartini.com

Please see the following for a few words from some of our incredible clients. . .

“Today I walked away from a strategy session with Sandy with a plan for a completely new stream of both income and marketing. I was blown away.”

"Sandy is a joy to work with and she's a master at getting down to business and delivering what she promises. I've been involved in several of her programs and she always impresses. Today I walked away from a strategy session with Sandy with a plan for a completely new stream of both income and marketing. I was blown away. In that short time, Sandy brought forward, not only a big innovative idea, but a systematic plan for realizing it. Sandy doesn't simply apply a "how to grow a business" formula to her clients, she hears what's unique about you and your business and uses her considerable smarts to help you create a practical plan that fits.

I have a lot of respect for Sandy. She's straightforward, savvy, and she knows what it takes to nurture and sustain a business. Most of all, she gives 110% to her clients 100% of the time"

Melissa McCreery, PhD, ACC
The Smart Woman's Overwhelm and Overeating Expert
<http://TooMuchOnHerPlate.com>



“Thanks to Sandy’s coaching and her team’s stellar help, I was able to create, launch and make money from a new product within 36 hours!”

“Sandra Martini has coached me through all the stages of a business start-up. And then -- through her Online Business Marketing & Management Team service -- her team actually provided the services that made everything possible. Thanks to Sandy’s coaching and her team’s stellar help, I was able to create, launch and make money from a new product within 36 hours!

I could not have launched my business without this help. Sandy helped me clarify my vision, map out each step, and understand what tasks needed to happen. I do the parts that are easy for me or that only I can do. Sandra's team looks after all the implementation. Recently, while I was on vacation, the business ran seamlessly without me because Sandy's team was making sure everything worked like clockwork.

My clients are treated with the same care and consideration that her staff treats me. All the tasks are done in the best possible way, making the best use of available technology, and in the most economical way possible. Sandy and her team are as passionate about wanting my business to succeed as I am. I get to make the best use of my time, energy and expertise, and leave the technical and administrative details to them. This is an arrangement made in heaven! Thanks!”

Bonnie Hutchinson
Soul Power Wisdom, Inc.
www.SoulPowerWisdom.com



"I'm always raving about Sandy to my business partner, who said, "well, she must be really great, because you're not easily impressed." I'm not, Sandy is and you'll be delighted if you work with her."

"Sandy's "Create Your Best Year Ever Program" was a fabulous way to get focused on my priorities to get results in 2010. She is one of very few coaches who brings the critical quantitative dimension to your planning which I appreciate from years of analytically-based consulting. And if you're not big on the numbers, she's actually done all the heavy lifting for you.

Her to-the-point advice on calls and in the forum will definitely accelerate your progress. And if you pay attention to how she runs everything, you'll get invaluable tips on how to offer top notch programs yourself.

I'm always raving about Sandy to my business partner, who said, "well, she must be really great, because you're not easily impressed." I'm not, Sandy is and you'll be delighted if you work with her."

Caryn Ginsberg
Priority Ventures Group
<http://www.priorityventures.com/>



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