

## **For Immediate Release**

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### **Killing Your Competition with (Customer) Kindness: Five Core Principles for Turning Clients and Prospects into Raving Fans**

*In today's slow economy, there is no better advertisement for your business than a happy customer who can't help but sing your praises. Maribeth Kuzmeski explains five core marketing principles that can help you turn all of your customers into raving fans.*

**Hoboken, NJ** (August 2010)—Once upon a time customer service meant more than pressing 2 to wait (and wait and wait) for “the next available representative.” Companies valued those who bought their goods and services and went the proverbial extra mile to make them happy. Today we’re more likely to hear about a company that’s ripped off its customers—Dell’s deliberate selling of defective computers or any of the financial institutions’ shenanigans that left customers with huge losses while paying executives big bonuses—than one that regularly delights them.

Failing to make your customers happy is more than a shame, says Maribeth Kuzmeski. It’s slow-motion corporate suicide. If you want to make it in today’s crowded, recession-wracked market, you absolutely *must* create clients and customers who rave about your company the way they would their favorite sports team.

“Obviously, making raving fans out of your clients is easier said than done,” says Kuzmeski, author of the new book *...And the Clients Went Wild! How Savvy Professionals Win All the Business They Want* (Wiley, 2010, ISBN: 978-0-470-60176-1, \$24.95, [www.AndTheClientsWentWild.com](http://www.AndTheClientsWentWild.com)). “If it were easy, then corporate giants that have plenty of money to throw at such a concept would be overrun with happy customers.”

So what’s the big secret? Kuzmeski says that in order to truly get clients to “go wild” about your business, there must be an overriding and strong emotional connection—the same kind that we feel when we cheer for our favorite sports team, or support a cause that means something to us.

“You can get others to connect to your company, product, or service by emotionally energizing them through a passionate delivery of information,” she explains. “This is a true

differentiator, because so few people and businesses act with this kind of enthusiasm. Thus, when someone is exhibiting passion about something, we take notice.”

In ...*And the Clients Went Wild*, Kuzmeski lays out a blueprint for cultivating loyal clients and generating growing sales through a collection of principles and tactics that have proven successful for others. The idea is to trigger a strong emotional connection in the minds of prospects and clients—followed by a response that is so powerful that your loyal clients won’t be able to stop talking about you.

“Too many businesses get caught up in trying to find the ‘perfect’ clients,” says Kuzmeski. “The reality is you can’t *find* the perfect clients; you have to *create* them. You must give your clients reasons to keep coming back for more. You must connect with them so strongly that they cannot help themselves from telling their friends, family, and colleagues all about you.”

Kuzmeski backs up her assertions by presenting “case studies” of businesses that have effectively created a loyal following of passionate and vocal clients. She explains that these businesses have followed some, if not all, of the following five core marketing principles. By executing these principles, you can follow their lead. Read on for an overview:

**1st Principle: What Are YOU Doing That No One Else Is Doing?** In order to gain exposure, it helps to be or to offer something unique—or do something that no one else dares. It’s true that standing out from the crowd is probably the riskiest of the five principles. However, notes Kuzmeski, it may be equally risky to run a conservative, “under-the-radar” firm these days—you risk becoming an anachronism. While successful firms stick to their values, they also find ways to be *so* exciting that people don’t have a choice but to pay attention...and buy.

“Gaining exposure for your products and services today often requires a Herculean effort,” says Kuzmeski. “To cut through all the noise in your clients’ and potential clients’ daily lives, you have to step outside of the current norms and stand out. But in order to be noticed in a credible way, you must have a compelling reason for grabbing people’s attention. Your product, promotion, offer, staff, or culture—or something else about your business—must be unique in some way.”

**2nd Principle: Focus Your Marketing on Benefits, Results, and a Call to Action.** Another way to gain success is to ensure you are answering the question, *What’s really in it for me?* for your clients. Too many businesses accentuate the *features* of their products or services rather than the benefits—what your clients really care about. “Open 24 Hours” is a feature. Benefits are *value* statements about the features of a product or service, with an emphasis on what the customer *gets*. For example, a benefit might be that a product makes you look slimmer or saves lots of money on gas.

“Too many companies leave it up to their prospects to figure out the benefits of their products or services,” notes Kuzmeski. “Remember, you may be steeped in information about your products and services, but they aren’t. When you try to sell them on features alone, you’re asking the customer to do all the work—and she probably won’t. Bottom line: It’s in your best interest to draw a crystal clear picture of a product’s or service’s benefits for a prospective buyer.”

**3rd Principle: Go Viral!** A viral message is an idea, notion, or practice that’s transmitted from person to person through speech, gestures, the internet, email, or other media. It ignites and motivates people to move the message. Most viral marketing programs give away valuable products or services to attract attention—free benefits, information, software programs, or downloads. It’s essential that you do everything possible to make it easier for people to access information or material that may go viral.

“At my company, Red Zone Marketing, we recently decided to use free benefits to initiate a viral marketing message,” says Kuzmeski. “We began offering free downloads of products—such as workbooks, books, and guides—that we had previously sold. We could see the risk was paying off when my book *The Connectors: How the World’s Most Successful Businesspeople Build Relationships and Win Clients for Life* (Wiley, September 2009) was released.

“Because of our free offerings, we had access to countless people who were already familiar with our materials,” she adds. “Upon its release, the book began selling fast in bookstores and through online booksellers. We had already built some level of trust with potential readers and were able to capitalize on the viral travel of some of our free products to sell the newest tool we had available. This truly is an effective way of marketing and selling: proving your worth, earning followers, and continuing to provide value that people come back for again and again.”

**4th Principle: Leverage Your Business Network for Incremental Growth.** It takes a plan, but using your network—business and otherwise—can be the miracle alternative to the typical grind of cold calls and prospecting. A productive business network is filled with respected, well-connected, influential people—called “Centers of Influence”—that share your target market and have a complementary rather than a competing service or product. You can capitalize on these connections by creating strategic alliances or by simply sharing your networks and making referrals.

“Don’t ever forget that your clients are probably the best source of leveraging in your business,” says Kuzmeski. “When customers are truly delighted about their experience with your product or service, they can become outspoken promoters for your company. This group of satisfied believers can be your most powerful marketing force to gain sales and increase your exposure and influence, and can serve as an entire force of unofficial—and unpaid—salespeople.”

**5th Principle: The Ability to Execute Is Critically Important to Your Game Plan.** In today’s fast-moving, completely networked world, superior execution is clearly driving success for business. Small business owners are great at adopting many new marketing ideas. What they are not so great at is finishing. The best marketing strategy is the one you can pull off completely.

“If a business chooses one particular approach—for instance, setting up a referral campaign—and carries out that one strategy until it’s executed fully and with precision, they are implementing the very best marketing strategy for them,” says Kuzmeski. “It is not the strategy as much as its execution that achieves desirable results.

“Many businesses give up too early on a particular approach when they don’t see immediate results,” she adds. “They then begin the long process of employing another strategy, followed by another, and so on. The real problem here occurs when companies try to execute a game plan that is focused on implementing outdated or poorly considered strategies.”

“Perhaps more than ever before people want to do business with those they feel they can trust,” says Kuzmeski. “They are attracted to businesses they feel will go out of their way to provide them the absolute best products or services available. And the absolute best way to elicit that trust in prospects is by having clients who cheer you on at every turn.

“It comforts people to know that someone they trust is doing business with you and loving it,” she adds. “Don’t waste another second waiting to develop a marketing plan that will influence your clients to go wild for you.”

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#### **About the Author:**

Maribeth Kuzmeski, MBA, is the author of five books, including *...And the Clients Went Wild! How Savvy Professionals Win All the Business They Want* (Wiley, 2010, ISBN: 978-0-470-60176-1, \$24.95, [www.AndTheClientsWentWild.com](http://www.AndTheClientsWentWild.com)) and *The Connectors: How the World’s Most Successful Businesspeople Build Relationships and Win Clients for Life* (Wiley, 2009). She is the founder of Red Zone Marketing, LLC, which consults with businesses from entrepreneurial firms to Fortune 500 corporations on strategic marketing planning and business growth. Maribeth has personally consulted with some of the world’s most successful CEOs, entrepreneurs, and professionals. An internationally recognized speaker, she shares the tactics that businesspeople use today to create more sustainable business relationships, sales, and marketing successes.

She is an international keynote speaker and regularly speaks to audiences on topics relating to business development, marketing, and sales strategies. She is also a member of Entrepreneurs’ Organization (EO) and is a regular media contributor appearing on Fox News, ABC News, WGN-TV, and in publications such as *The New York Times*, *BusinessWeek*, *Entrepreneur*, and *Forbes*.

Maribeth graduated with a degree in journalism from Syracuse University and has an MBA in marketing from The George Washington University. She lives in the Chicago, Illinois, area with her husband and two teenagers.

#### **About the Book:**

*...And the Clients Went Wild! How Savvy Professionals Win All the Business They Want* (Wiley, 2010, ISBN: 978-0-470-60176-1, \$24.95, [www.AndTheClientsWentWild.com](http://www.AndTheClientsWentWild.com)) is available at bookstores nationwide, major online booksellers, or directly from the publisher by calling 800-225-5945. In Canada, call 800-567-4797.

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