

5 strategies for small businesses to excel in B2B relationship building

Positive relationships are at the core of any successful company. However, unlike business-to-consumer (B2C) interactions, business-to-business (B2B) customer relationships can have far more depth and impact because they are truly partnerships. And when these relationships are successful, the benefits flow outward and improve the reputation and standing of the entire company.

Temps de lecture : minute

25 May 2024

Small businesses must take proactive and creative steps to establish and maintain effective B2B relationships. The following five strategies will help establish your small business as an exceptional B2B brand.

• Personalise communications

Personalised communications are critical for all customers; in fact, research shows that over 70% of customers today expect personalised communications and get frustrated when they are not. In addition to preventing customer frustrations, personalisation can help improve sales and revitalise customer experiences in B2B transactions.

However, effective B2B personalisation requires you to go beyond basic user demographics. Personalised content should also align with your customer's role and field. This means it's critical to assess parameters like

their function in the company and what industry they serve. But to organise this detailed level of data, you'll need cutting-edge tools, such as machine learning and artificial intelligence.

• Automate B2B marketing with machine learning

One of the best ways to improve productivity is to automate your marketing strategy to make it more compelling. You can use a type of artificial intelligence called machine learning, which quickly processes and analyses data. Though it can be used in different ways depending on your industry, applying machine learning in your organisation can help with determining business needs, as well as sifting through and drawing insights from large amounts of data. Analysing your data can help your team in creating personalised interactions, and the more data provided, the better the accuracy of the output. This efficiency saves your company and your team time and money.

AI tools can also help coordinate your sales, customer service, and marketing teams so that they can use insights gathered from machine learning more effectively. Tools like Hubspot use AI to bring leads through the funnel from marketing to sales to customer success. A great customer relationships management tool helps to organise and maintain B2B relationships for their duration.

• Networking to build B2B relationships

Automating these mundane and tedious tasks also gives your marketing team more time to focus on building B2B relationships through

networking. They can develop compelling partnerships, campaigns, and events to engage your B2B customers. Opportunities include participating in trade shows, conferences, business chambers, professional organisations, online B2B platforms, and social media.

Networking can be considered a type of collaboration. It involves sharing your expertise while learning from others to create a truly professional alliance benefitting both partners. Wise leaders participate in a mix of industry events, virtual opportunities, and social media. Strategic networking helps you find brands and partners that complement your mission as you improve brand visibility.

• Embrace influencer marketing

You may think of influencer marketing as a B2C marketing strategy, but it has a role in B2B marketing as well. You can even adapt B2C strategies to boost your B2B influencer marketing efforts.

While both types of consumers usually come to the buying table with research done beforehand, the stakes are much higher for B2B investors. It requires more than just expertise. Prospects must have an in-depth understanding of the long-term ROI of doing business with your company.

Compared to B2C influencers, skilled B2B influencers in your industry help you go beyond establishing brand awareness, allowing prospects to understand the value of partnering with your company. You can engage B2B influencers for product reviews, affiliate marketing, or social media takeovers. To take it a step further and demonstrate your expertise in your industry, you can even collaborate with an influencer to create a white paper, co-host a webinar, or develop a product together.

• Improve B2B relationships with skill sharing

That said, influencer marketing can be tricky for small businesses. If it isn't an option for you, you can *partner with other new businesses to support each with skill sharing*. As a small business or a startup, you may not have the ability to run effective B2B marketing campaigns. Skill sharing allows you to collaborate with others to trade off skills.

To build a collaborative partnership, you need to understand your company's goals as well as what skills your company can offer to a non-competing brand. Be prepared to compromise if you don't find exactly what you need to build an effective partnership. Some ways to collaborate include cross-promoting on social media, writing guest posts, and attending networking events.

Building a stronger connection with your B2B relationships helps you better serve your clients. These strategies benefit your company by reducing costs while improving customer satisfaction. And that provides you with even more beneficial partnerships, as satisfied B2B customers refer others, allowing your small business to scale to new heights.