



Business Loyalty[®]

Overview

I have been responsible for an organization's website for several years. Just recently I have been informed that they no longer required my services as they had found someone who had promised to do it better or for less or both—no reason was given. Of course I felt really hurt, but that's business – you either stay competitive or you are out! Or is it?

That raises the issue of **business loyalty!** What is it? Is it important? **For sure it is!**

Synergy

In the business community we depend on other businesses to provide services to support our business. Maybe it is the local printer who does our order forms, or the insurance broker who covers our insurance needs, or the service station who maintains our vehicles, and so on. We, in turn, provide services to other businesses. Even if you are a retail business, you provide traffic that is vital to the other businesses in the area. In reality we are talking about **synergy!**

When should the client switch?

When you have a business relationship with another company or organization, you have **invested time and resources** to get to know your client's business. You have their interests at heart. That is worth a lot! Why then would they want to switch to another company?

Well, one reason could be that you have **become complacent**. You have not stayed up to date with new technologies that might be more effective or less costly for your client. Or you are simply no longer providing responsive service – you have been taking the client for granted.

What if you are given a better offer?

You will always find someone who is prepared to do the work for less—should you switch? Maybe, probably not.

One way for newcomers to get into the business, is to undercut the competition, which is normal. The question is, is what the newcomer offers, sustainable? Another important question is, how much is the goodwill your regular supplier has invested in your organization worth? Will the newcomer also be prepared to go over and beyond to provide the service you need?

This is where business loyalty comes in. If you know that the company that you have been using, has been loyal to you, you should frankly discuss the situation with them. You owe that to them. If the new competition claims to offer a new technology, give your regular supplier the opportunity to offer the same new service or technology. Maybe they have not offered it before because you have not indicated an interest in new approaches.

So, after all that, you lose the contract!

Business loyalty works both ways. You have done all you could for the client over a period of time. A newcomer offers an apparently new or better service and your client switches, possibly even without consulting you. Well, you have to move on! The client clearly does not understand business loyalty, and you are better off no longer investing your time and resources with this client.

In business you will always have someone who offers what you do at apparently more favourable conditions. Your clients will be faced with that, and so will you. Be prepared to adapt if it appears that you have "fallen behind" and keep business loyalty in mind.