



8 Ideas To Strengthen Your Family-Owned Business

Article 8: Publicize Personal Customer Service -- One Company's Story

Customer service should be a hallmark of family-owned firms. Each generation of family workers should diligently work to maintain customer relationships and retain the next generation in your customer base.

Graphix Products Inc., a family-owned printing company in West Chicago, Ill., takes customer service seriously. Personal service should be part of your firm's foundation too, and you shouldn't be shy about publicizing it.

Graphix Products CEO Diane Tews and her three sons run the company, with plenty of quality help from their employees.

Last year, three employees passed the Certified Printing Service Specialist Examination. The only certification program of its kind, the program is designed to better equip employees to serve customers and become customer service leaders. The company was so proud of the employees' certifications that it issued a nationwide press release.

"Only a few hundred certified printing service specialists exist in all of North America, and we are so proud that three are part of our Graphix family," says Jason Tews, marketing director. "In a world of ever-decreasing customer service, where employees have little if any knowledge of company products and how to meet needs of clients, Graphix Products continues to make the customer its No. 1 priority."

The customer-centered strategy is working. The printing company, now in its 34th year, counts Motorola, Allstate and Kraft in its client base.

"Our customers tell us our success over the years is due largely to our service," says Diane Tews. "Many companies, especially in tight times, focus too much on the bottom line, only concerned about increasing revenue and decreasing costs.

"We know it has and always will be about the customer," Tews explains. "I like to think it's the mother in me that keeps me thinking about the people and the relationships we have. Our priority is to serve our customers and educate our people."

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