

# Brew Your Business

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## 3 Tips to Improve Customer Engagement Brew Up Cash Flow in Your Coffee Shop

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*Coffee shop owners: Are you dreaming of the day when all your hard work – researching coffee farmers, perfecting roasts, and furnishing your shop – pays off, when you finally hit your sales goal for the month?*

*If you're looking for ways to brew up cash flow in your coffee business, it's time to learn how you can improve your customer engagement.*

**Kim Logsdon and Scott Couchenour, Coffee Business Strategists**, interviewed five coffee shop owners to understand how they've achieved success. This article gathers expert advice on ways to increase customer satisfaction in the coffee business. You'll learn how you can achieve greater profits by giving your customers a better experience.

## Make Customers Feel Welcomed, Not Excluded

One secret to encouraging customer engagement? Create a welcoming environment in your coffee shop. Avoid appearing pretentious or exclusive. If baristas look down their noses at intimidated customers who don't know the difference between a latte and an americano, that coffee shop deters those guests from returning. The business is closing its door on potential profits.



But if your staff greet customers with warmth and openness, your shop will feel welcoming and inclusive. Like visiting an old friend's home.

**Jacob Limmer, the owner of Cottonwood Coffee**, explained his approach:

*"We are always extremely focused on making sure that what we're doing is approachable and inclusive and welcoming [...]. We have a strong aversion to being pretentious and condescending and exclusive."*



Train your baristas to be friendly to all guests. Menus should display clear descriptions of the coffee, and staff should use common terms when speaking with customers. Minimize confusing jargon or overly complicated tasting notes.

If new customers feel comfortable asking questions and exploring the menu, they'll not only expand their palettes beyond their at-home coffee maker, but they'll also see that coffee shops aren't as scary as they expected.

## **Sell a Customer-Centric Experience**

Coffee shop owners can also increase customer engagement by offering a pleasurable experience.

You've put effort into sourcing high-quality coffee beans. You've perfected your roasting techniques. You know you're selling sensational coffee.

But buying a cup of coffee should feel exciting and comforting, not just transactional.



Customers choose your business, not just to pay for a drink, but to experience the atmosphere inside the store and receive a warm greeting from your employees. Customers choose the emotional connection your shop offers. Staff should interact with customers on a personal level, remember customers' names and favorite drinks, and even ask about their pets.



**Daniel Krenzer, the owner of Alamance Kaffee Werks,** gave this example:

*“Have offerings and seasonal menus that are unique to your area, and might be inspired by another area or another country or culture [...]. So you’re picking seasonal menu items that are interesting. And then that lends itself to having conversations of how it came to be or why it’s special or why you chose that menu offering.”*

What else can you do to create a customer-centric experience?

**Modcup Coffee owner, Travas Clifton,** engages with customers by asking questions and sharing interesting facts about coffee:

*“Making conversation [...] has always been a central component to what we do. I wanted it to [come] from a viewpoint of passion and wanting to share. And that’s part of the Modcup experience, really.”*

Selling unique roasts and engaging customers in conversation creates a compelling experience, so their visit to your coffee shop won’t be a forgettable transaction.





# Create Meaningful Connections

Get to know your customers.

Train your baristas to engage in conversation. Get in the habit of asking customers about their day, and understand what's happening in their lives.

**Bethani Wright, the owner of The Coffee Scoop**, explained how she gets to know her customers:

*"I love getting into people's lives, seeing how they're doing, relating to them, but also, they become repeat customers. So I become part of their life. And I know what's going on. And I have that conversation about how they're doing. And it's actually very sweet. So they appreciate that. All of my vendors appreciate that. But I'm very much part of being connected to these people, not just offering coffee."*



Even if your customers don't want to talk about their personal lives, they might be intrigued by the name of one of your blends. Offer stories about the farms where the beans were grown, and help customers connect to the sourcing of the coffee. Explain what you're doing to ensure the farmer can feed his family. Show the customer how their purchase helps secure a living wage for everyone along the supply chain.





**The owner of The Well Coffeehouse, Mike Lenda,** shares stories of the farmers with customers:

*“We like to say that coffee is from someone, not just from somewhere. And what we’re trying to do is continue to find ways to elevate the story of the farmer, the person at origin,[...] and find ways to connect that to customers in their experience.”*

Additionally, participate in community outreach events to increase awareness of your coffee shop. You’ll have a chance to demonstrate how your business strives to improve the community and make societal contributions.

Show your customers that you care.

## **Open the Door to Customer Engagement so You Can Achieve Stronger Cash Flow**

You’ve put your heart and soul into your roastery, and you know you create a fantastic cup of coffee. With these customer engagement tips, your coffee business will grow and your cash flow will be better than ever.

Customer engagement starts with creating a welcoming and inclusive environment in your coffee shop. Give new and returning customers a way to connect with you *and* your business.

When you offer a comforting experience and build meaningful connections with your customers, they’ll keep coming back to you – not just for your coffee, but also for the community.

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This article was Brewed Up By **Kim Logsdon** and **Scott Couchenour** of **The Business Lab**, an online community of coffee business owners who are learning from each other and building worldwide relationships together. JOIN TODAY by visiting <https://www.thebusinesslab.net/>

