Symbioss
Transforming relationships, unlocking growth

Why clients stay when they see the value

Eight findings on making value visible, and four conclusions worth acting on.

WHAT THE RESEARCH SHOWS

01 Expansion follows satisfaction and quality

In over 2,000 B2B service contracts, upgrades turned on decision-maker satisfaction, service quality and price. Small quality gains moved the odds.

02 Service and personal contact set you apart

In research on gaining key supplier status, service support and personal interaction were the strongest differentiators. Price was the weakest of all.

03 Big spenders aren't your best advocates

The clients who buy most from you are probably not your best advocates. Spend and referral value are two different things, and need managing as such.

04 Referred clients refer others in turn

Referred clients go on to make 31–57% more referrals than others. Reminding them they arrived by referral lifts their likelihood of referring by 21%.

05 Commitment drives advocacy

In a study of 248 B2B clients of one agrichemical supplier, how committed a client felt drove their advocacy. Loyalty scheme membership did not.

06 Buyers do better with you alongside

Gartner finds B2B buyers 1.8 times more likely to complete a high-quality deal using supplier tools alongside a sales rep than buying on their own.

07 Most clients are indifferent, not loyal

Gallup finds only 29% of B2B clients fully engaged and 60% indifferent, with no particular allegiance and liable to switch if the opportunity arises.

08 Repeatable systems grow faster

Organisations running a genuine repeatable sales play system reported growth at 2.2 times the average rate. 82% say they have one; only 21% get full value.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOU

01 Good delivery won't necessarily win the next job

Being pleased with the work doesn't deliver the next job. The next piece is won by managing the client through the current one and being alongside them when they buy, which is a different activity from delivering well and needs its own time in the diary. Drawn from findings 2 and 6.

02 Keep the value visible between projects

Clients need to see the value while the work is going on, not assembled for them at a review six months later. The people who decide whether you're retained do so when you aren't there, and you won't know all of them well. So talk about the value you add as you deliver and put the results where they will see them without having to ask. Drawn from finding 7.

03 Earn advocacy, and then ask

Advocacy follows commitment, not good work alone, and it arrives on the client's timetable rather than yours. Build the commitment first. Then ask, and make the request specific and easy to act on, because your best advocates are often not your biggest spenders. Drawn from findings 3 and 5.

04 Systematise your approach to future work

Repeat work, additional work and advocacy each happen occasionally by luck but never reliably. Give each one a named owner and a method and be systematic about it. Drawn from findings 4 and 8.

Sources by finding 01 Bolton, Lemon & Verhoef, Journal of Marketing (2008) · 02 Ulaga & Eggert, Journal of Marketing (2006) · 03 Kumar, Petersen & Leone, Harvard Business Review (2007) · 04 Gershon & Jiang, Journal of Marketing Research (2024) · 05 Lacey & Morgan, Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing (2009) · 06 Gartner, The B2B Buying Journey (2022–23) · 07 Gallup, B2B Customers Are Indifferent · 08 Bain & Company, The B2B Growth Divide (2025), 1,263 executives. July 2026

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