

Brand Preference and Personal Loyalty

By Tom Reilly, author of Value-Added Selling (McGraw-Hill, 2010)

I like Dell computers. I ride Harley-Davidson motorcycles. I drink Michelob Ultra. I prefer these brands over others. Am I loyal to these brands? Not really. I prefer them over other brands, but loyalty is something I reserve for the people with whom I do business. So, why am I splitting hairs on this definition of loyalty? Personal loyalty can be a more powerful dynamic than brand preference.

Imagine that a company has been sold and a new team is put in place. Management and sales personnel are replaced. Policies change, a new culture emerges, and things feel different. The building is the same. The brands are the same. The inventory is the same. What has changed? The people.

As a customer, am I loyal to the building, the brands, the inventory, or is my loyalty more focused on the people? I argue that it is people who inspire loyalty. When I trust people, I know they have my back. They are looking out for me. They will protect me when things get dicey. I rely on the quality of good brands. I sleep better at night when there is adequate supply available. When I feel connected emotionally to a supplier, it is because of their people. Some business owners, managers, and marketing people do not like to discuss this because they feel it de-emphasizes the company's value to customers. I believe the opposite. Personal loyalty strengthens the overall brand.

In seminars, I ask salespeople, "If you left your company today, how many customers would follow you?" Absent a non-compete agreement or unique supply situation, that business will be at risk if the salesperson has performed well in his or her job. The salesperson who works diligently to promote brand and supplier preference coupled with deep and abiding personal loyalty enjoys a competitive advantage over those who rely solely on products and prices to get the business. If you left your company today, how much business would you take with you?

Author byline: Tom Reilly is a professional speaker and author of twelve books. Tom is literally the guy who wrote the book on *Value-Added Selling* (McGraw-Hill, 2010), the book that started the value selling revolution. For more information on Tom's presentations, training, and products, visit his website www.TomReillyTraining.com or call his office, 636-537-3360.

Follow us on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/tomreillyVAS>

Watch us on You Tube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0zvb4nw6_L4&feature=share