



12 ANGLER RETENTION TIPS

1. WE MISS YOU MARKETING

Losing a few customers here and there is part of running a business, but by not attempting to win back lapsed customers, businesses are missing out on an important revenue-making opportunity.

In addition, acquiring a new customer is usually more expensive than getting an already-acquired customer to repurchase. Sometimes it just takes an invitation to spark renewed activity.

Reach out to customers you haven't seen in a while, and offer them an incentive like a discount on their next purchases.

2. IF YOU STOCK IT, THEY WILL COME

There's no better way to get someone hooked on fishing than by hooking them up with a lot of fish, but knowing where to have a successful day on the water can be challenging.

Be sure to understand what motivates your different customer segments. Casual, social anglers are motivated to go fishing because it's a fun group activity. They want to have a good time on the water and catch a lot of fish.

Fish stocking programs are designed to increase catch ratios and are often conducted in easy-to-access waterways. That's a win-win for the angler and for you, the expert, who told them

about such a terrific opportunity.

Partner with your local fish and wildlife agency to obtain their fish stocking schedule. Promote this to the community, especially those who are new to the sport.

3. SURVEY SAYS...

So... how effective are those introduction to fishing events you've been doing? Are people walking away with a new favorite hobby? Did they rush to gear up for a summer full of fishing? Did they tell their friends how much fun they had? If you don't ask, you'll never know.

A follow-up participant survey is an effortless way to get feedback and understand if your programs are achieving their goals. You want to know if they learned the skills to go fishing on their own, could pick out and purchase their own gear, and if they actually went fishing once, twice or however many times over the next few months - hopefully several!

The key to surveying starts with collecting the right contact information up front. When participants register for your event, require an email address for further communications.

4. ASK ANGLERS TO MENTOR

Most people learn to fish from a friend or family member, which shortens the learning curve and

lowers the intimidation factor. Trying to grow your customer base? Leverage your current and lapsed customers:

- Ask your current customers to mentor newcomers
- Ask those you haven't seen in a while to get back into fishing by incentivizing participation with a special discount.

Use your current customers to lure those who have lapsed from fishing back into the sport... and into your store. If you have a customer database, send a message to those who have lapsed letting them know about all the fun they've been missing. Use incentives or offers if needed. It doesn't have to be something valuable. People love free stuff!

5. LAPSED ANGLER LICENSE PURCHASE REMINDER

Reactivating lapsed anglers is vital to growing participation in fishing. This audience has already shown interest in fishing; they might just need a quick reminder to get back into it. Retailers can easily remind customers to purchase their license at checkout.

Create a "Get Your License" message or reminder for your lapsed customers to remind them of all the fishing fun they're missing out on, and incentivize them to make a purchase from your business.

6. EMAIL, EMAIL, EMAIL!

The most efficient and cost-effective way to stay in touch is via email. A 2019 study from the Direct Marketing Association shows for every \$1 you spend on email marketing, you can expect an average return of \$42!

Require an email address for everything – a license purchase, an event registration, customer transactions, etc. Use your email

list to inspire participation, communicate news and information, educational resources and promotions.

7. EDUCATION IS THE KEY TO SUCCESS

Two of the main barriers to fishing participation are not knowing how to get started or where to go. Providing "how to" and "where to" education will help newcomers learn best practices and help your company gain a more loyal base.

Utilize free resources to help educate your customers and improve their on-the-water experience. A great place to start is the Resource Center at RBFF.org. Here you can find instructions to embed the TakeMeFishing.org Places to Fish & Boat Map on your website, along with shareable blogs, infographics and how-to videos.

Help your customers learn how to fish and where to go fishing by incorporating educational content on your website, on your social channels and in your newsletter.

8. FOCUS ON FAMILIES

Younger generations (Millennials and Gen Z) are extremely family-focused, with children being a major factor in which activities the family does. To bring new customers into your business, and keep them coming back, consider hosting some family-focused workshops and demonstrations.

At a retail shop, park, or community center, host family-oriented events that teach fishing skills and development. For example:

- Craft Your Own Adventure - Teach kids how to make their own rod and demonstrate basic skills.
- Daughters on the Water - Create entry-level fishing instruction and experiences for moms and daughters in your local community.

- Whole Summer in a Day - Provide a full immersive tutorial on fishing regardless of age or skill set... A learn-it-all style boot camp!

- Collect email addresses from your attendees, and follow up after the event with a newsletter or coupon.

9. BE AN EXPERT

It doesn't matter what segment of the industry you represent: manufacturer, retailer, guide, or wildlife agency, anglers look to you for the best information and guidance; from everything to the latest gear to the latest bite.

Don't forget to share other important information anglers need, like the need to buy a license. Remind them what their license purchase accomplishes when it comes to conservation of our resources. Most anglers don't even know that their license fees go directly back into our waterways.

Work with your local fish and wildlife agency on the how-to and where-to information in your area. They have fishing access maps, events, and stocking schedules that you don't have to make yourself. Just share them.

10. LINK TO FISHING LICENSE INFORMATION

A fishing license is an essential piece of fishing "equipment", but if you're new to the sport you may not realize you need one, or be aware of all the different options. Help your customers learn the ropes and position yourself as an expert-- ask them if they have their fishing license, and if not, point them to one of the great online resources available. These include sites like TakeMeFishing.org or your state fish and wildlife agency license purchase page.

Include a fishing license purchase link on your website and in any other outreach to

customers (newsletter, social media, etc.). If you're a retailer, ask your customer if they have their license at checkout.

11. CREATIVE CUSTOMER LOYALTY PROGRAM

Most customer loyalty programs are tied to sales—tally up a certain amount of purchases and you get something free or at an extra discount. Why not make yours about experiences? Have customers earn points for mentoring a beginner, buying a fishing license, or volunteering at an event. Pick activities that make for better fishing in your area or bring new people to the sport.

Looking to build your social media following? Develop rewards based on your customers' activity online. Gear reviews, fishing reports, or a brag board—every time they post to your social media page or share your posts they earn points toward exclusive discounts.

12. FOLLOW UP & CHECK IN

Following up with your customers is important for retention and business growth. Even a simple "checking in" message can help you solidify relationships and make customers for life.

Keep a customer database with as much information as you can obtain (email, phone, mailing address) and follow up regularly to provide education and information, and to make your customer feel valued. For example:

- After kids attend a fishing clinic, send their family a blank map of their state's lakes. They can color in where they fish.
- Send those that have attended an event a quarterly update with all things fishing in their area (new opportunities to learn, who caught what, seasonal tips, specials in your store, etc.).