



# The Ultimate Guide to Client Retention for Fitness Professionals

How to build client relationships that last



When you first started your fitness business, you had to acquire clients in order to build your brand and revenue. Then, over time, you worked to engage those clients and ensure they were getting value out of your services. Now, it's time to retain them. Remember how tough it was to build up that client base initially? Retaining them is easier and more profitable than going back to square one.

According to [Shopify](#), a retention strategy is how you maximize the profitability of each of your clients. A big part of maximizing that profitability? Not losing them as clients. Client loss, also known as customer churn, is natural to some extent—your clients' needs change, their budgets change, they move cities—but you want to work towards maximizing their lifecycle. As a fitness business that operates in an ongoing fashion, you should consider your churn rate on a monthly basis.

**IN THIS GUIDE, WE WE'LL PROVIDE TACTICS AND PRIORITIES FOR DEVELOPING A CUSTOMER RETENTION STRATEGY.**

We'll also discuss how retention impacts the fitness industry specifically, and remind you of the ABC Trainerize features that can help!

**SO LET'S DIVE IN!**

## Step 01 **Research**

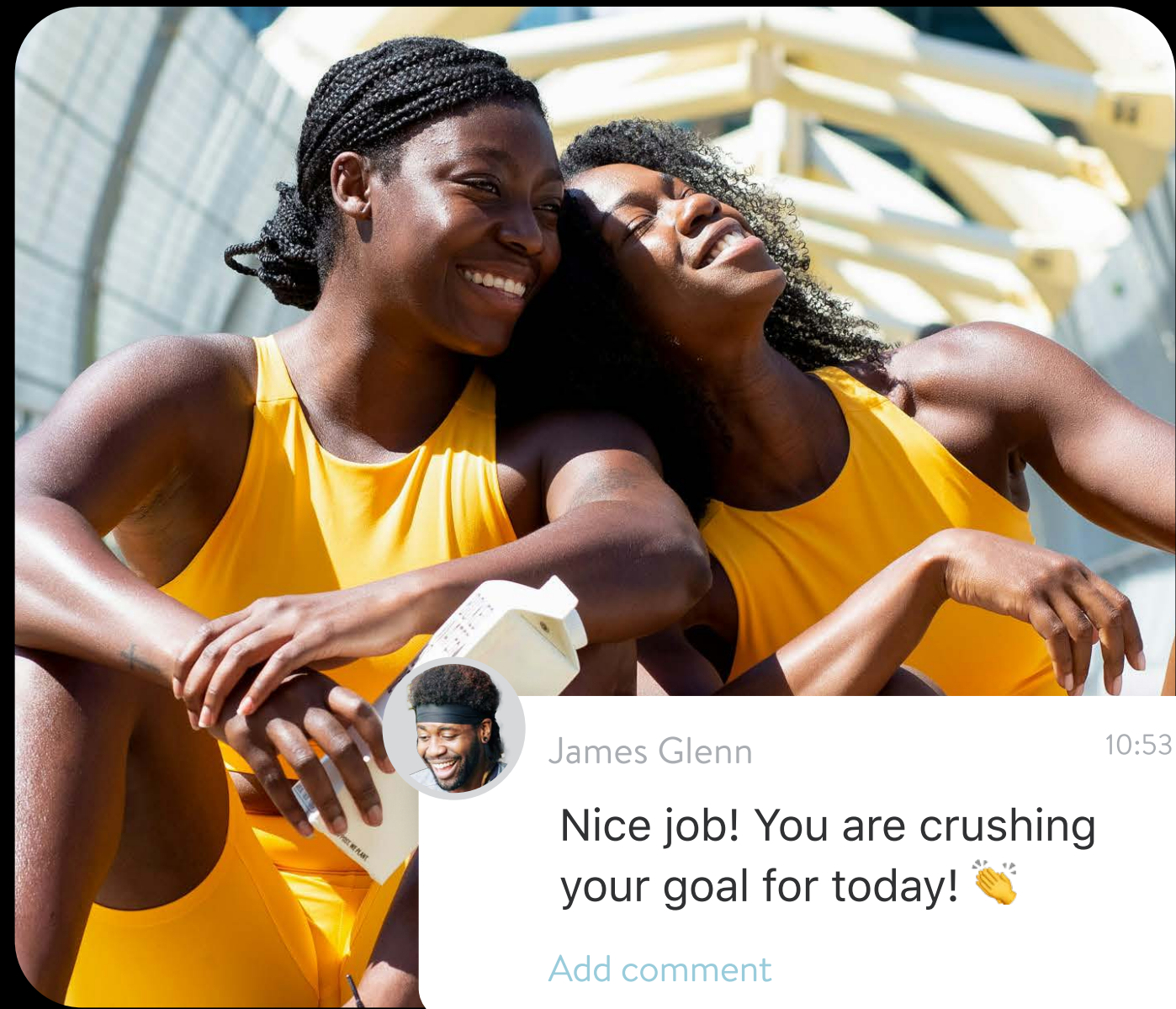
Learn to love crunching numbers as much as doing actual crunches.

### **1.1 KNOW YOUR CLIENTS**

Client retention starts at the very beginning of your customers' fitness journeys. Just like with any relationship, you need to get to know them! To start, use your consultation form during client onboarding to identify who your clients are. And not just their name, age, fitness level, and health considerations! Those items are important (especially the medical stuff!), but so are their goals, their experience with fitness in the past, and how they motivate themselves and prefer to be motivated by a trainer. Gather intel from your clients and let it inform their individual training plans.



But getting to know them doesn't stop there! Try creating a cadence of check-ins with each client. Not only will these check-ins develop your relationship and encourage communication, it'll also allow you, the trainer, to get feedback from clients before renewal time comes around. This way, you have time to improve their experience, as opposed to finding out too late.



Stay true to you and your niche! When you conduct a consultation with a potential new client, it's as much about you choosing them as it is about them choosing you! Stay focused and listen to your gut if you think someone isn't the right fit—you'll do them a favor and you'll keep your business focused.

## 1.2 DEFINE VALUE FOR YOUR CLIENTS

In a customer loyalty [survey](#), over half of respondents (55%) said that the product quality is the reason they stay loyal to a certain brand. Translate that statistic to the fitness industry, and it could mean that roughly half your clients care about training quality and fitness progress above everything else.

Talk about motivation for developing effective training plans! Discounts and freebies, top-notch customer service, and social media friendships are great (and we definitely recommend using those strategies to engage and retain your clients!) but without a good product, you've got nothing.

Which begs the question: how can you provide value to your clients if you don't know what that means to them? Answer: you can't. [Goal setting](#) is crucial, as is communicating those goals. Make sure you know what a win looks like to your clients, and be sure to remind them of those goals. Use the first 90 days of any client relationship to hone their fitness plan, your communication techniques, and the goals you've agreed on.

## 1.3 CAPTURE CHURN DATA

Ideally, the above techniques will significantly reduce the number of customers you lose each month. However, when you do inevitably lose customers, don't take it too personally! Use it as a learning opportunity. As much as possible, survey customers to find out why they decided to leave. In case this isn't possible, ideally you will have previously gathered some of their likes and dislikes of their program and your fitness business during regular check-ins, which can help you hypothesize what led them to leave your business.

## 1.4 LET KNOWLEDGE INFORM STRATEGY

With knowledge comes power. Take a look at your target demographics and [customer personas](#)—anything customer-related that you have developed when working on sales and marketing. Then, compare that data to the churn data you've gathered, as well as your current client data.

When you identify trends in lost clients, you have two options: you can either adjust your services to better serve the types of clients you've lost in the past, or you can adjust your sales efforts to align better with the types of clients you're retaining. By aligning your acquisition and retention strategies, you'll be equipped to pre-emptively engage and retain clients.

## Step 02 Foster

Engaging your clients is one essential strategy for retaining clients.

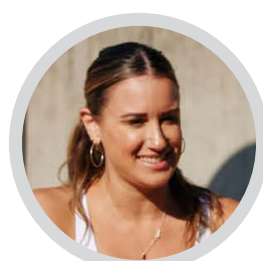
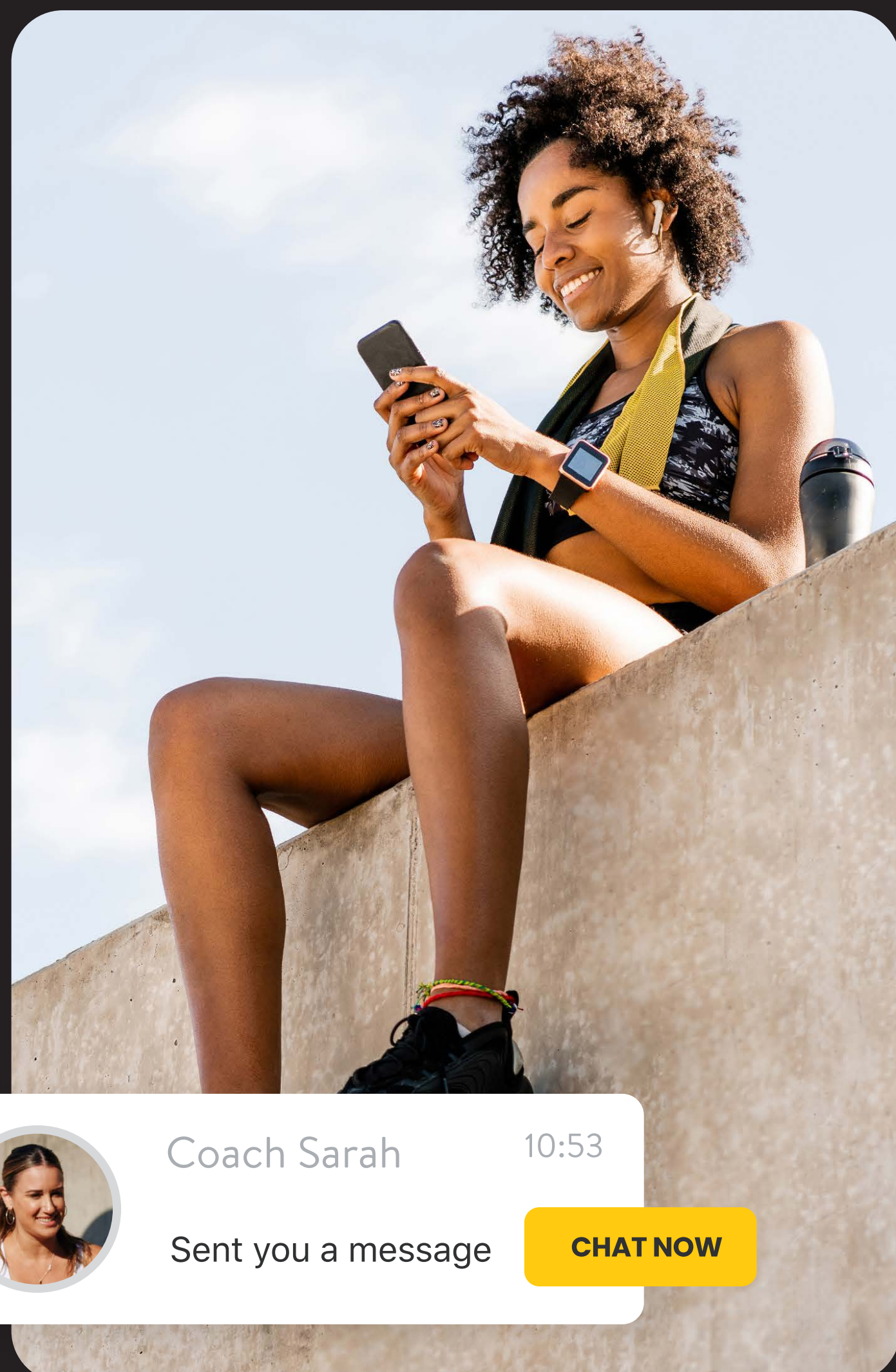
## 2.1 SHOW THE RECEIPTS

What's that phrase—the proof is in the pudding? How about the proof is in the customer testimonials? One of the best ways to retain clients is by showing them how your services have helped others. Acquiring testimonials is one sure tactic—start by asking your long-standing clients to provide a review of your services. Remember, the more specific the better! What were their goals, what was the process, and what was the outcome? Then, share the testimonial—on your website, on social media, through email marketing, and on an Instagram highlight.

If possible, you could even develop a full-length case study on one of your most successful clients. By demonstrating the impact of one client relationship, you could acquire new clients, but also deepen the trust of your existing clientele as well.

## 2.2 DEVELOP LOYALTY

A recent [study](#) shows that 90% of consumers believe themselves to be brand-loyal, and 37% of consumers define loyalty as having purchased from the same retailer five times. So how do you develop the kind of loyalty that results in repeat purchases? Start with showing appreciation for their (literal) sweat and tears, their commitment, and their communication. Tell them thank you, either by sending a message or by providing them with a gift or a handwritten card. Celebrating their wins will also help develop that loyalty in your customers—post a video or a photo on social media (with their permission, of course!) that publicizes their latest personal best.



Coach Sarah

10:53

Sent you a message

[CHAT NOW](#)

### PUT YOUR BEST FOOT FORWARD:



One of our own Product Education Specialists [shared her experience using video call sessions to build her business and develop brand loyalty](#). Take a look! But more importantly, notice the care and attention she shows to her clients. She's a key example of the value of building those client relationships honestly and authentically.

## 2.3 USE YOUR LANGUAGE

We borrowed this one from relationship experts. When you're dating someone new, it can be difficult to verbalize how you feel about the long-term potential of a relationship. The same is true for you and your fitness clients! So rather than gush at your clients about how much you care about them and want to continue the relationship (this can be a red flag for some people!), try talking about the future. It's a subtle way to communicate to your client that you believe in their progress and their ability to stick with it. Plus, it encourages them to identify and visualize accomplishing those long-term goals: "Great work! You'll be lifting 25lb weights by summer!"

## 2.4 OFFER VALUE ADDS

According to [research from Shopify](#), 32% of consumers say learning more about products and receiving proactive assistance from brands impacts their decision to repurchase. Sounds like a value-add, right? Your clients pay a price for a certain training plan, and within that training plan they receive a number of products or services. However, the value of that fitness plan is not what they pay—it's how much they perceive it to be worth. Adding value to your client packages allows you to proactively assist them and extend their relationship with your and your services, which will encourage repurchase.

So how do you add value for clients? You can do so through extra touchpoints, like sending random messages checking in or asking how their weekend was. Celebrating birthdays is a nice value-add as well! Also, sending articles or studies related to their training and your discussions is a good way to show you're paying attention and thinking of them beyond their allocated time slot with you and your fitness program. Encouraging a community through Instagram or ABC Trainerize or organizing special events are also ways to provide value beyond your regular plan. Even if you don't live in the same city as some of your clients, they may be interested in meeting up with other clients for a fun activity or workout—even virtually!

## Step 03 Sell

Use your tools to implement your marketing and sales funnel.

## 3.1 USE TECHNOLOGY FOR AWARENESS

Retaining your clients means keeping them as paying customers. So, of course, this guide had to talk about sales. A sales cycle is based on the length of contracts you establish with customers... so depending on the time commitment you sell initially, you could be working on a monthly, quarterly, or biannual sales cycle. Once you know how often you'll need clients to recommit to your training services, you can develop some automated top-of-the-funnel marketing. The top of the funnel prioritizes awareness, which means ensuring your clients know what service packages are available. Why explain the various packages over and over?

By automating a few drip campaigns for new clients, or for clients who are coming up on the end of their contract, you can save valuable time that can be better spent having one-on-one conversations about plans and progress. 30% of Shopify customers say learning about new services impacts their decision to re-purchase, so get that information in front of them to encourage retention.



#### NEED HELP WITH MARKETING?

Subscribe to the ABC Trainerize Fitness Business Blog for weekly tips from real fitness professionals and Team Trainerize!

### 3.2 CHAT ABOUT THE PLAN

The middle of the funnel is where clients know what services are available, and they're doing research (also known as evaluation) to ensure your business is the right one for them. The more you can prove your worth and your effectiveness as a trainer, the easier it will be to convince them to stick around. This is where your communication strategies will really pay off—your clients should already know how effective your plan has been, and should already feel that you have a positive relationship.

Providing information and simplifying the buying process for customers is proven to help them make purchasing decisions faster. Got a tough customer? Consider providing them with a more formal evaluation of their progress so far—a status report, if you will. Communicate authentically with your clients and be honest about their potential and the direction you see their training taking.

### 3.3 BOOST YOUR CLIENT BASE

At the bottom of the funnel is purchase: the sale. This stage can be done through a combination of automated and personal tactics, depending on the client. For some clients, they won't require much hand-holding. For others, they may need to be convinced. Luckily, with retention strategies, you've already made the sale once (or a few times!) before, so you should have a decent understanding of what makes decisions for each client. It could be one last one-on-one chat, or it could be an email encouraging them to click purchase. However it happens, when that client re-signs, it's a new opportunity to keep motivating and encouraging their fitness progress.



#### DON'T MISS A PAYMENT!

With the [Stripe Integrated Payments](#) add-on, your training programs become digital products that you can package, market, and sell across platforms.

Retaining your clients, no matter how time- and energy-consuming, will save you money. Minimizing customer churn is essential—it can cost 5-25 times more to acquire a new customer, than to retain an existing one. Not only that, but loyal customers spend more money with brands than disengaged customers, and they're much more likely to refer new clients to your business.

That's why retention, and developing a customer retention strategy, is so essential to your fitness business. You know the risks of the business of being a fitness professional: training is hard, so people quit. Fitness and physical health are closely linked to emotional and mental health, which can make it difficult to build momentum on a training plan. The market is saturated with a ton of competition, which means people will flit from gym to gym. Is there a "but" coming?

BUT... *you* know your clients. You started working with them for a reason, and you'll retain them now. You have the data, you've done the research, you know how to engage them and foster the relationship, and you know how to make the sale to increase revenue and encourage the longevity of your brand. The best part of a client retention strategy? Over time, you'll get better at retaining clients, who in turn become more loyal and more likely to become repeat customers again and again.

[START YOUR 30-DAY TRIAL](#)