

# Building Your Customer Base

Take part in local fairs or shows to meet new potential customers and showcase AP products.

Keep records of those who receive catalogs and always follow up with a phone call near order day.

Point out Hot Deals and specials in the catalog, either verbally or in a newsletter for your customers.

Give your customers an extra catalog and encourage them to give it to a friend. Offer a discount, bonus, or drawing for customers who refer their friends to you.

Get to know as much as you can about Alison's Pantry products.

Host a Tasting Party and encourage guests to bring a friend. People love to see and taste the products and often become lasting customers.

**From one AP Rep to another, here are some terrific tips to help you build your customer base...**

*"I have done vendor shows, and now will be doing a fair for 5 days. I had a banner made for my booth and business cards that I will apply magnetic tape to, for handouts.*



*This month I'm running a "Refer a Friend offer." For my approaching 1 yr. mark with AP, I have printed labels and affixed them to business cards saying if my ordering customer refers up to 3 friends that order from the August catalog they are eligible for up to \$15.00 off their purchase, and each friend gets \$5.00 off as well." I put an expiration date on the cards and a \$15.00 limit."*

—Melissa Forgey, Casper, WY

*I had told one of my customers who referred two new customers last month, that I would give her \$5 for every order she brought to me. She got \$10 last month and was very excited for the next month!*

—Marie Moore, UT

*One idea is to order 5 extra catalogs and give them to 5 prospective customers. If they don't want or need to order, I challenge them to give the catalog to someone who may need it, like someone with a large family that might benefit from buying in bulk. I have also given a 5% discount to customers whose friends order and give the friend a 5% discount as well.*

—Irene Weber, Rock Springs, WY



*I have always hand delivered all the catalogs to neighbors and friends. While handing out the catalogs I have a little notebook that I put their phone number in so I can call them when it's order week. I offer extra catalogs to people to share with friends or family members. If they choose to take an extra catalog I put a star by their name in my little notebook so I know to ask them when I call who they shared it with.*

*I verbally tell each customer of the Hot Deals or specials that I think they may be interested in. For instance, the Ghiradelli Dutch Process Cocoa that has a price increase coming up. I sold 12 of the 5 lb. bags for Catalog #7 just by letting people know.*

*Then a day or so before the order due date I start calling each person that I gave a catalog to and ask if there is anything they would like to order this month. If their reply is that they haven't had a chance to look yet, I ask if they'd like me to call back later that evening or the next day. I never let them get back to me because, let's face it, who remembers?*

—Christine Knopp, Spanish Fork, UT

*I send out e-mail reminders and make phone calls when the order is due. I am very available for ordering and for picking up orders. I believe in making the process as convenient as possible for the customers.*

—Amy Haugen, Beulah, ND

*Get to know as much as you can about the products. Encourage a new customer to contact an older customer to learn about a product they love. This works better than you just saying it's good. This may sound silly, but always smile when you're calling your customers!*

—Robin Manning, Bainville, MT

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# Maintaining Your Customer Base

Keep a paper record with each customer's name and contact information. Stay in contact by phone and with e-mails.

Use e-mail to inform about Hot Deals, new products, and catalog specials so customers feel "in the know" about AP products.

Give personal attention by recommending products that you know a customer will enjoy. Point out when their favorites go on sale.

Offer drawings for customers who order over 50 or 100.

Deliver catalogs early enough to provide customers time to peruse them.

Offer to split cases so even small households can enjoy buying quality products in bulk.

Offer samples on pick-up day.

From one AP Rep to another, here are some terrific tips to help you maintain your customers...

*I have found that I tend to get more orders from customers that I can e-mail to remind them, or text them a reminder on order day. When I didn't have as many e-mails and cell phone numbers, I didn't have as large of orders. And the customers, I believe, like the reminder without an interruption in their day for a call.*  
—DeAnne Carlson, Powell, WY



*I have a notebook that I keep each customer's name and phone number in. I also note the customers that order each month. Every month I call each customer to remind them the first of the order week. Those that are not home, I leave a message for and try to contact them the next day. Those that do not have the current catalog, I try and deliver them the catalog before the order week. If possible I try to contact everyone on my list, even if they didn't order last month or the month before. If they have not ordered for a couple of months, I just contact them asking if they would like to see the current catalog.*

*When I contact each customer, I try to remember items they have ordered previously so I can let them know if those items are on special, or about other specials that are in the current catalog. I always charge a delivery fee to each customer because I personally deliver their order. But, on any big orders I do not charge more than \$10.00 for delivery to that customer. Most of my customers have been long-time customers, and they have also helped to bring me more customers.*  
—Janet Dunn, Fairview, UT

*Some months I've offered a drawing for things like a case of steaks or a cheese-cake to people who refer someone who orders or if their personal order is over \$50.00.*

*Each month I set a goal of how big of an order I want to have. I sit down with my family and look through the catalog and see what we want to order ourselves. Then I make it a goal to have my commission pay for it and then some. I've never had to pay out-of-pocket for any of my orders, and my last order was about \$400. With my commission it's amazing what a deal I can get on trying so many new things that in turn I can let my customers know about (not to mention get hooked on and love myself.)*



*Being an Alison's Pantry Rep. has been a lot of fun. I get to talk to the people in my neighborhood each month, try lots of new things that I otherwise wouldn't have known about, and I have the privilege to work with so many great individuals at Alison's Pantry. I've never worked with such great people that truly care about their employees and have such gratitude for what each person has to add. And, that is a great attitude that I carry over into my efforts with my customers, and it really gets results!*  
—Christine Knopp, Spanish Fork, UT

*I have purchased Alison's Pantry Products for years. One of the things I loved about purchasing from Reps is the option to have it delivered. I always give my customers that option. Another thing that has really increased my orders each month is the option to divide a case of product with another customer. Many more customers will order. The orders may be small, but small is better than not ordering because a case is too much for some customers. (Fern also maintains a fantastic blog for her customers at: [www.fernskitchen.blogspot.com](http://www.fernskitchen.blogspot.com). An AP blog is a great way to keep customers informed.)*  
—Fern Goodwin, St. George, UT