



# Guide 3: How to Turn First-Time Customers into Regulars

Getting a first-time customer is important, but keeping that customer is what helps a small beverage business grow steadily. Across your interviews, one of the clearest patterns was this: people may first come because of a post, a product, or curiosity — but they usually come back because of the **experience, the service, and the sense of connection**. This fits Bubblr’s role as a practical guide built from real small business stories and useful lessons.

## Why this guide matters

A business can attract attention online, but repeat customers are what make growth more sustainable. Several interviewees emphasized that loyalty is not built by marketing alone. It is built when customers feel welcomed, understood, remembered, and satisfied enough to return. In many cases, the team, the atmosphere, and the overall experience mattered just as much as the drinks or food.



## Key idea

First-time customers usually come because something caught their attention.

Regulars stay because the business gives them a reason to return.

That reason can come from:

- good service
- a welcoming team
- a comfortable atmosphere
- trust and familiarity
- consistent quality
- a positive overall experience

## What the interviews revealed

### 1. Hospitality matters more than many owners realize

Eskina gave one of the clearest insights on this. They said coffee shops are not only selling food they are also selling hospitality. They explained that customers often come back not just for the drink, but because of how they were treated, how the experience felt, and whether they had a good time in the space.

## **2. Repeat customers often come back because of the team**

Benny and Cherie described repeat customers as part of a growing community. They said customers kept returning because of the staff and service team, and that the team got to know their regulars well enough to care for them personally.

## **3. Word of mouth can bring the right people**

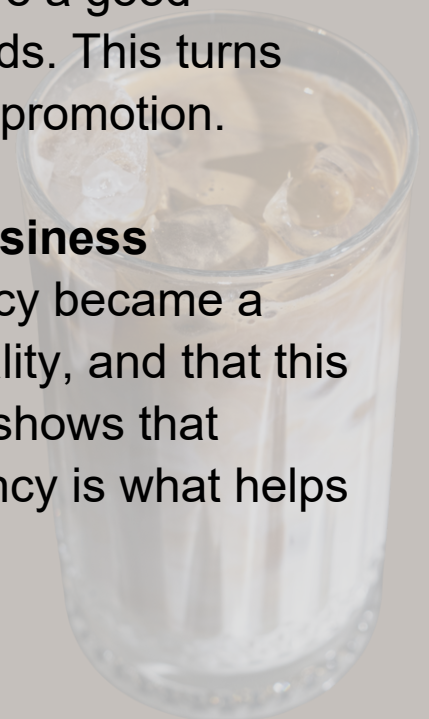
Spritz emphasized that word of mouth was their best form of growth because one satisfied customer would bring friends who were likely to appreciate the place as well. Their view was that growth is not only about getting more people it is also about attracting the right people who match the space and return to it.

## **4. Customers are part of the marketing**

Blueprint Cafe shared that the customers already inside the store are the biggest advertising a business can spend for. They also pointed out that when people have a good experience, they come back and bring friends. This turns customer experience into a form of organic promotion.

## **5. Consistency helps people trust the business**

Hangry SnackBar admitted that inconsistency became a problem at one point, especially in food quality, and that this pushed them to improve. Their experience shows that creativity can attract attention, but consistency is what helps turn people into repeat customers.



# **Practical lessons for small beverage businesses**

## **Treat service as part of the product**

Customers do not only remember what they drank or ate. They also remember how they were treated.

## **Help the team build rapport**

If the staff can remember returning customers, greet them well, and make them feel comfortable, loyalty becomes stronger.

## **Create an experience people want to repeat**

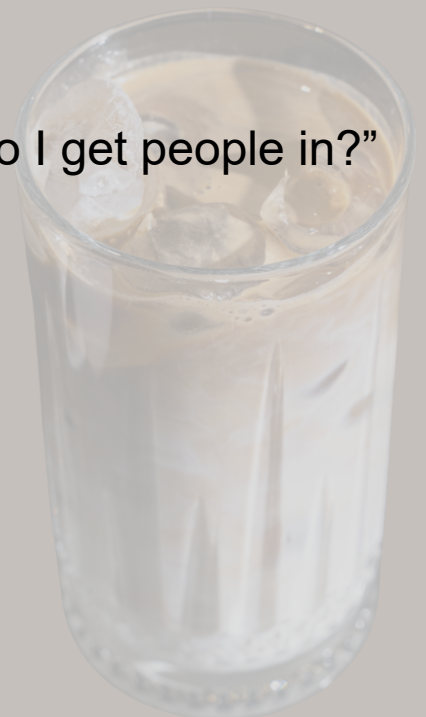
A customer may come once because of curiosity, but they return when the visit feels enjoyable, comfortable, or meaningful.

## **Protect consistency**

A friendly atmosphere helps, but repeat business is also built on reliable product quality and service.

## **Think beyond the first sale**

A good business does not only ask, “How do I get people in?” It also asks, “Why would they come back?”






## Quick action steps

1. Train your team to treat service as part of the business value.
2. Encourage staff to remember regular customers when possible.
3. Create a space that feels welcoming, not just visually attractive.
4. Keep product and service quality as consistent as possible.
5. Pay attention to what makes customers return, not just what makes them try you once.

## Practical reminder

The ideas and strategies in this guide are based on real interviews and case examples from small beverage businesses. They are intended to inform, guide, and inspire, but they do not guarantee the same results for every business. Outcomes may vary depending on your product, pricing, audience, location, consistency, operations, and execution.





## Closing takeaway

A first-time customer may come because of a product, a post, or a recommendation. A regular comes back because of trust, comfort, service, and experience. For small beverage businesses, long-term growth often happens when customers stop feeling like strangers and start feeling like they belong.

## References

- Bubblr Project Brief
- Eskina Interview Transcript
- Benny and Cherie Interview Transcript
- Spritz Interview Transcript
- Blueprint Cafe Interview Transcript
- Hangry Snackbar Interview Transcript

