



Recently I went to buy groceries from the market looking for peas. Unfortunately I couldn't find any in my favourite kiosk. As I was talking the mama mboga (grocery lady) the lady in the next kiosk had overheard me asking for peas and she told me to check a kiosk behind where they were selling.

Nothing out of the ordinary about that even though she was not gaining anything from telling me where to buy the peas. All the while my usual mama mboga never said a word though she knew where I could get the peas and this struck me as odd. She didn't think I would change shops if I went to the other shop did she? Perhaps not, but the other mama mboga's action left an impression on me.

It made me thinking why would she volunteer information that would not make me buy from her yet I don't buy from her previously? As a matter of fact she knew I was a regular customer of her neighbour. After getting my peas from where she had directed me, I decided to actually buy from her the rest of my groceries.

Needless to say, since that day I am her customer and we have become very good friends. Why? a kind act without necessarily expecting any return turned me into a regular customer. Notice that the other mama mboga did not do anything wrong, no bad service or anything like that but the fact that she did not direct me to a kiosk where I could buy what she did not have while her neighbour did drew me to her competitor instead.

So what is the moral of the story? Your competitor is not necessarily a bad thing for your business. Your competition can be your best ally in getting long term and loyal customers. Referring customers to your competitor does not mean it will work against you but you will be showing the customer that you want what is best for them - getting what they want. You will also leave a lasting impression on them which will cause them to bring back repeat business to you - good karma.

Same case applies to helping out your competitor if they have a problem. I have a business

competitor who actually is my greatest asset in terms of helping me grow. We challenge each other in web development, share resources, links, name it. He brings me web hosting business while I help him in web design. Of course there is a limit to what you can do or share with your competition, for example strategies, trade secrets and so on.

*So would you help your competition or send clients their way if you did not have exactly what they were looking for? What has been your experiences with your competition? Let's hear it in the comments section below.*