

Keys to Building Effective Business Relationships

Business Development Best Practices Series

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Everyone wants and values their business relationships, but how do you establish effective business relationships? Is it just about meeting people? You meet someone, talk, and you have a relationship. Seems easy, yet effective business relationships take dedication and commitment. The following are key to building effective business relationships.

1 Listen

At the initial meeting, listen to what they have to say. Sometimes when we meet someone, we are so busy introducing ourselves, our business and our purpose for the meeting, we don't really find out about the other person and their business. Take the time to get to know and hear them.

2 Follow Up to Meeting

Thank you are the two most powerful words in the English language and very under used. Write a thank you note or e-mail to the person with genuine appreciation for the time they gave you and reiterating what points were discussed in the meeting.

3 Do What You Say

If you say at the meeting you will provide a phone number, name, list or whatever it is, follow through and do it. Relationships are built on trust. Trust builds when you do what you say you will do.

4 Be Available

Reply and answer all your voicemails and e-mails. The next time that person calls or e-mails you, respond to their needs. If you don't have the answer, get it, or connect them to the right person with the answer. Even if you think the person will not be a customer or benefit you at this time, you don't know the future, people change jobs and/or start their own businesses, they may become a customer or partner for you in the future.

5 Be Honest

When you deal with the person, tell them the truth about delivery of services, mistakes made or promises not kept. It may not be what they want to hear, but they will respect you for being honest. Again, relationships are built on trust. Trust comes from honesty.

6 Care

People matter. Tasks can be shuffled, put off and forgotten, people can't.

This may sound simple, yet everyday it doesn't happen. Think about the best work relationships you have, you know these people are invested in you. You know they believe that your success is their success. You trust them and know they are committed to helping you. Building relationships doesn't require all kinds of special training, it just requires effort and sincerity.

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