

## **Build Relationships to Build Your Business**

People do business with people they like. Have you ever driven past a particular business establishment that was closer to you in physical proximity to do business with a similar business that was geographically out of your way? Chances are you've done this at some point, the question is why?

Smart business people know that people don't care how much you know until they know how much you care. Smart business people also know the secret to success is not simply in building more buildings, but in building relationships.

Building relationships is an area often overlooked in this crazy world of business. The prevailing school of thought among the typical business person one meets at a networking function is, "What can I get out of this relationship?" While that particular business strategy might work for the short run it will not have a lasting effect on your business. Building and valuing relationships in and of themselves will provide you a more fulfilling and more loyal customer base.

Upon starting my business several years ago, I remember receiving advice from a much-respected colleague; "Your goal should be to get into as many people's rolodex as you can." At the time this advice seemed not only plausible, but invaluable. Several years down the road I have now come to question that advice, which at one time was my rule of thumb! George C. Fraser, a prominent author and networking guru, sums it up best in his book, *Race for Success*, "It's not who you know, but who knows you and what it is that they know about you."

People find difficult to say “No” to someone they know and like, which can work in your favor, however one should never allow a relationship to stand in the way of a business decision, the key here is balance.

One of the questions I often hear is, “How do I get people to like me?” These are a few simple tips that will improve your ability to connect and communicate with people, thus leading to developing and building relationships. The first and foremost tool/skill to building and developing relationships is to smile.

The smile is the universal language of hello, it doesn’t need any translation and is understood by every culture the world over. It’s an amazing tool to have in your arsenal, because it’s the one tool that when used, elicits an immediate response. Try it. Smile at someone, anyone and see the results that you get.

Another skill you might want to work on is developing and/or perpetuating a positive attitude. People are unconsciously drawn to people with positive attitudes and positive energy. Speak positively; remember whatever you say to someone in the first five minutes after meeting them will color the other person’s perception of you.

Last, but by no means the least is do nice things for others. Send a card, just because. People feel good when they receive unsolicited gestures of kindness; the flip side of this is allowing others to do things for you. Many of us may have mastered the former, but struggle with the latter, remember it’s all about developing relationships!