
Building Great Business Relationships

If you're in a business relationship with someone (a client, vendor, or customer), how important is that relationship to you? Do you value the relationship? Do you want to nurture it?

A business relationship, like any relationship, is a two-way street. The expectations of both parties need to be clear and easily understandable. Applying the Golden Rule is also a good idea: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." That is a very powerful statement, and one I try to practice in my daily life, both in business and personal matters.



Good communication is key for any business relationship to grow and thrive. Even when conflicts surface (and they will), keeping the lines of communication open at all times is extremely important. Meet conflicts head-on, no matter how frightening they may seem at the time. The sooner the issues are out on the table and dealt with, the sooner you can get back on track, and back to business-as-usual. People don't expect perfection. They know that sometimes things go wrong. What they do expect, is for the issue to be addressed quickly and fairly. Many times a problem presents a perfect opportunity to develop a loyal customer.

Let people know you appreciate them. Thank you notes, cards, and e-mails are always a good idea, and they never go out of style. People love to be appreciated. If you are receiving great business or service from someone, always be sure to let them know. You will feel better for it, and so will your contacts!

Another great idea is to reach out and 'touch' your contacts on a regular basis. One way to do this is by sending them monthly newsletters. Another way is to be on the lookout for articles or information that would be valuable to them. Forward these to them with a brief personal note. This is a wonderful way to keep in touch, both to let them know you are thinking about them, and to remind them about you as well.



Remember, you get out of a great relationship what you put into it. In today's stress and activity based world, it is easy to think that you don't have time to show appreciation... or assume that people know they are appreciated. Make a commitment today that you won't fall into that trap!

Value those with whom you do business. Nurture your relationships, so they are always growing and prospering. Keep this up and you will always have a garden full of healthy, happy business contacts.

