

Introduction

Today, salespeople must be competent to get in the door in the first place, regardless of their relationships. This minor shift has created major confusion in relationship building.

Here are four best practices in developing personal relationships in today's business environment. I think you will see that it is not that confusing today – it is just a little different.

Source: <https://www.securityinfowatch.com/article/12430983/4-ways-to-develop-personal-relationships>

1. Ask for a favor.

I once had a customer who never returned phone calls or emails. We interacted frequently, but it was always on my point of contact's terms. No matter how much I tried to build a relationship, he never budged. I couldn't even get him to acknowledge the dozens of voicemails he ignored.

Then one day, I needed a reference, and he was the perfect candidate. So, like a million times before, I left him a voicemail; however, this time message was different: "This is Chris Peterson. I need a favor. Can you call me back, please?"

Guess what? Within 10 minutes he called me back: "Hi Chris, what's up? What do you need?"

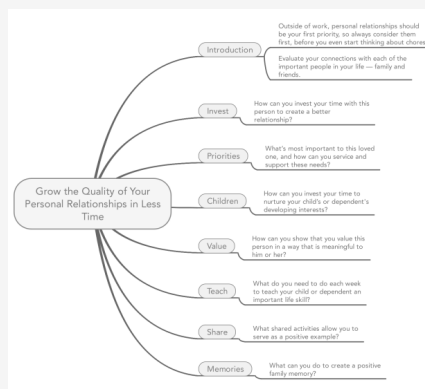
Not only did he serve as an excellent reference, but this was the beginning of us becoming friends. To that point, our relationship was unidirectional – I was a vendor doing everything he needed. I never gave him the opportunity to help me. I never gave him the chance to be my friend.

2. Do not talk about business when entertaining

A little more than 20 years ago, my sales manager made a peculiar statement. He said: "In the history of business, there has never been a contract signed on the golf course." I found his comment peculiar, because he always took customers golfing. Then he continued: "... but with four hours together on a golf cart, you build friendships that lead to contracts later."

The purpose of entertaining is for you and your customer to get to know each other. Although it is tempting to ask about the next step of a project, your job at that moment is to build a trusting friendship with your customer. If you must, wait until the very end of your entertaining to ask about business.

Grow Quality of Relationships



3. Send random messages

The Vice President of Sales for one of our first clients has moved into higher roles with two other companies since we initially worked together. Fortunately, he has brought Vector Firm with him to each of his stops.

As crazy as it sounds, I think this happened because of the random text messages I have sent him. He is a college football fan and has a unique sense of humor, so it is not hard for me to find relevant things to text him about. I will be sitting in a Hilton somewhere and send him a message about a comment I heard on SportsCenter, and then we will go back and forth like eighth graders.

Random brief text messages, emails or social media mentions take very little time for you to write or for your customer to read, but they can be the glue that holds your friendships together. Try it – make it relevant, brief and do not require a response.

4. Be the best professional possible

When it comes down to it, the easiest way to shift a business relationship to a friendship is to be the very best steward of service. Yep – do your job better than anyone else, and you will easily become friends with your customers.

