



Trust is the Midas Touch



Most of you believe that the relationship with a client develops over time, and to some extent that's true. Prospects for the most part don't buy right away; they take time to see if they trust you, your product, and your company.

They have a multitude of choices in most cases, and switching to you from a current supplier means taking some mean risk, even if they're unhappy.

As it turns out, marketing and selling comes down to the experience a company has with you or another supplier and in a lot of cases it boils down to the trust issue. Even if they are miserably comfortable with company X, the prospect of making a change seems overwhelming in light of a chaotic workload that is the reality for most managers.

Sales professionals would tell you trust is built over a long-term relationship and that takes time. There is truth in that statement, but you can shorten the bandwidth in the initial meetings. Trust happens at a variety of levels, not just over time.

A closer look at the principles of trust show the critical path in the process:

- Self-interest – what's in it for me (you)
- Earned reliability – takes time to build
- Familiarity – show your humanity/bring a personal side to the connection
- Believability – be a straight shooter – be real

Each component brings a different slant to the relationship and the likelihood of conversion.

As a professional in the sales field, you should look for ways to help the client even if it doesn't line your pockets. Sometimes you need to offer other options that you may not be able to deliver. It shows them you're not just interested in your personal gain, but what's good for them. It boosts your believability (trust).

Your body language and unspoken signals can send the right signals as well. Occasions may arise where all it takes is a sympathetic glance, sincere smile or nod of acknowledgment to show your personal side. Learn to recognize when a client is disturbed, distracted or vehement about something and acknowledge it by asking. It shows you are real, personal and not just about you or the prospect of doing business with them. Think "Open Kimono", honest and transparent in your discussions.

If you don't know the answer to something or you're confused say so; honesty goes a long way in demonstrating sincerity and believability. We're all vulnerable and we can't have the answer to every single question. You should know your product "cold" and anticipate questions you'll be asked but be sure your answer rings true and pertains to their interests, not just you or your company.

Finally to shorten the earned reliability part of the equation, find little ways to demonstrate your zeal for delivering by completing shorter-term commitments. When you promise to send them data, samples or catalogues, send them FedEx the following day (or the same day with overnight delivery).

How you handle details speaks volumes on how you'll deliver on the big stuff.

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