



Kirsty Spraggon

# Opening a Relationship Not Closing a Sale

Contact Kirsty:  
Ph: +61 413 531 800  
[kirsty@kirstyspraggon.com.au](mailto:kirsty@kirstyspraggon.com.au)  
[www.kirstyspraggon.com.au](http://www.kirstyspraggon.com.au)

Excerpt from Chapter 3 of  
*Work As If You Own It*

## Work As If You Own It

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# 3

## Opening a Relationship Not Closing a Sale

In this chapter I will share with you what I have learned about the more sustainable long-term business benefits of focusing your energy on ‘opening a relationship’ as opposed to ‘closing a sale’.

The key here is to be open. It’s only in the last year that I have started to see the real importance of how I built my business. Through my most recent business reincarnation and the process of leaving one industry to start in another, I have been able to analyse how I do what I do when it comes to growing a business at warp speed.

What I do is build businesses one person at a time. For example, when I first moved to Sydney to publish this book and embark upon my speaking career, I only knew three people in the city. After just four short weeks I had over 200 people in my database. After twelve weeks it was over 600 people and by six months it was well over 1000 people. I achieved this through just getting myself out there, attending every type of relevant networking event and striking up conversations with new people wherever I went.

### **‘P’ stands for people not prospecting**

Most sales people dread prospecting for new clients and I was no exception. But I also knew that in order to be successful I needed to get over this hurdle and fast.

“You cannot shake hands with a clenched fist.”

—attributed to both Golda Meir and Indira Gandhi



If you find yourself struggling with this, I hope to share something I learned that should help: I decided early on never to focus on closing a sale. Rather, I focused all my energy on opening relationships with people instead. So for me the 'P' became a very positive symbol standing for People not Prospecting.

I found this to be a really powerful way to reframe what I needed to do to be successful - because the truth is that establishing great relationships with people is the fastest and most rewarding way to build your business.

### **Running a business where you focus on closing sales means:**

You make a sale → a transaction takes place → payment is received for the sale → BUT there is limited repeat or referral business and no ongoing connection or relationship is formed.

Whereas...

### **When you run your business by opening relationships:**

You have time for everyone → Word spreads quickly → family and friends start to use your services → AND before long you have customers for life with unlimited repeat & referral business flooding in.

I'm often asked whether one way is easier than the other. In the short-term it may appear that just closing a sale with someone who has an immediate need is more effective than investing extra time and energy in building rapport and opening a relationship. You may even feel that you would be better off financially just prospecting for those clients ready to use or buy your service or product today compared with nurturing relationships and dealing with those people who don't have an immediate need. However, did you realise that you could be missing out on 90% of your potential market?



This is because you would be limiting yourself to dealing only with the very small percentage of the market ready and willing to work with you today. Yet industry research strongly suggests that depending on your particular sales industry there is usually a 9-18 month incubation period from the first point of contact until the time when a new client actually purchases your product or service.

9-18 months. That means you would be missing out on a lot of business by only working with the 'right here, right now' prospects. Not only would you be making things a lot harder for yourself in the long run, but you would also be doing yourself out of all the extra repeat and referral business that would otherwise come your way effortlessly through clients feeling so well taken care of and appreciated.

If you choose to focus on closing sales you'll be forever on the 'one-off treadmill': even years down the track you won't be able to slow down or relax because you will have to be out there day after day working really hard to chase down the next piece of business.

Whereas, if you open relationships and invest the extra time building meaningful foundations from the outset you will find your business grows and takes on a life of its own in no time. Just like seeds scattered in the wind taking root and blossoming, referrals and repeat business will just start flowing in.

In the tough times this way of being in business takes on particular significance because you have a whole army of business ambassadors out there for you, advocating your service above any other because you go out of your way to look after them so well, even when there is no deal being made at the time.

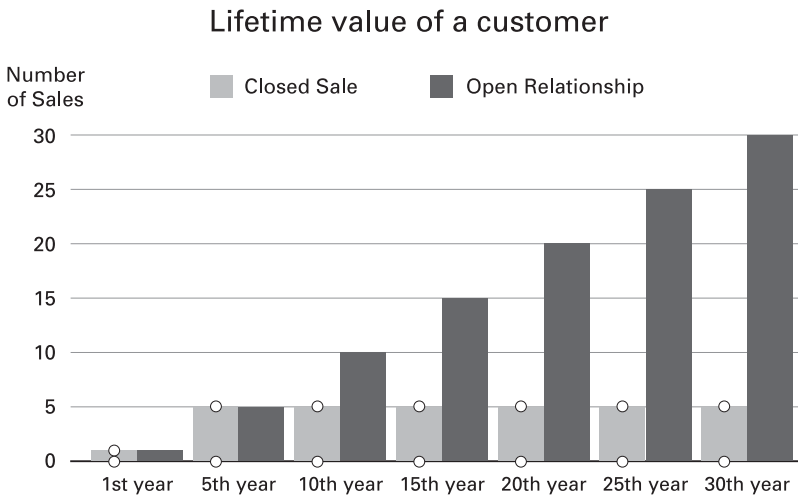
Contrast this to if your business is run on the hand-to-mouth principle of closing a sale. This approach makes you totally dependent on new clients and extremely vulnerable to market forces outside of your control. If economic conditions change or a new competitor enters the market you may well suddenly see your customer pool shrink or even disappear.



The only sure way to ride out economic ups and downs is to have planned ahead and built a stable database of loyal, repeat and referral clients because at the end of the day even if there are fewer customers out there, there are always some customers. It's your job to make sure that you are the person of choice in such times of increased pressure and competition.

## Lifetime value vs closing a one-off sale

The following model clearly illustrates the lifetime value of taking time to invest in nurturing relationships to create a loyal customer base for your business:



Personally, I don't think enough people look at the lifetime value of a client. This is particularly the case with sales people dealing in big-ticket items such as high-end vehicles and prestige homes. These people sometimes assume that their clients will only purchase one expensive car or luxury home every twenty years or so.

Not only is this a gross underestimation (in real estate I dealt with most of my private clients 2-3 times in less than five years - for developers it was more like 10-30 times) but it doesn't take in



the bigger picture of all the new people these people know...and the people those people know...and so on. So stop looking for the immediate sale and start opening relationships...for life.

The graph above illustrates the comparative number of sales you could expect if your clients were to use your service annually for thirty years. Calculate what a customer is worth to you per sale and look at the value over thirty years. Even if your repeat business were only to happen every five years instead of annually, you can see that there would still be a huge difference between closed sales compared with open relationship revenue. And remember: this model doesn't even take into account all of the extra people your open relationship clients will refer you to over the course of a lifetime.

## Why is referral business so important?

There is simply nothing better than a word of mouth referral as half your job is already done for you. For someone to recommend you they have to trust you, so the new contact already feels comfortable hearing your name suggested to him or her in this context. You can also increase your bond with potential clients by remembering to refer new business contacts to them. For example, if I met someone and they needed a great accountant or mortgage broker I would pass on the details of someone I trusted in my network. People generally appreciate you giving them a referral as it saves them time and ensures they are dealing with a professional.

Two important things then happen: 1) your relationship with the client goes up as they think "Wow, Kirsty recommended XYZ and that resulted in a really great deal for me / was of great assistance in saving me time and money"; 2) the person you referred appreciates your referral and you then have two people who want to return the favour and help you when they can.

It's important to forge relationships and network with like-minded professionals whom you feel happy to refer and whom



you can trust. I never recommend a product, person or service which I do not believe matches up to my own high standards of professionalism. When you refer someone always remember that it is a direct reflection on you.

## Open relationships are fun

I'll let you in on a secret: I remember feeling guilty at one point that I was making such huge sums of money with such minimal effort. I used to believe that success had to be hard. I thought I had to work my fingers to the bone to earn it. Now I realise that you can make the journey to success as difficult or as much fun as you choose it to be. Because of this I love my work and my days are filled with catch-ups, networking events and coffee meetings; and they call this work?

Meeting clients for breakfast, lunch and dinner, taking a genuine interest in their lives and chatting away having a wonderful time was pretty much all I did for a lot of the time. I was living the dream and over time many of my clients became great friends of mine. So I have learned that it really pays to ask yourself this: What kind of business do you want?

### What kind of business do you want?

**CLOSED** = trapped in a cycle of forever chasing new business without being able to take any time off to actually enjoy your success

OR

**OPEN** = repeat and referral-based business spreading like wildfire by word of mouth and business actually coming to find you - in good times and bad

The true test of this for me is that even now, four careers and businesses down the track, I still have many of the same open client relationships in my life from that time. It feels so wonderful



to continue evolving to even greater levels of personal and professional success with people I already know and trust.

## How to open long-term relationships

What do you need to do in order to open successful long-term relationships that translate into ongoing business and repeat / referral customers? It really just comes down to three things:

- 1. MEET UP**
- 2. CATCH UP**
- 3. FOLLOW UP**

It sounds pretty simple, doesn't it? Well...it is. The trouble is that most people just don't do it. Let's talk about how easy it can be if you just follow the process.

### 1. MEET UP

It all starts here. You need to get out there and meet as many people as possible if you are going to open enough relationships to build customers for life. This always has been and still is my core prospecting method (there's that 'P' word again). My business grew by 20-50% annually this way and by the third year it was made up of over 80% repeat and referral business. By the time I left the industry my business was well on its way to being 100% referral based.

Imagine how cost effective it is to get your business running at over 80% customer referrals. Positive word of mouth marketing is your biggest ally, especially in comparison to other forms of marketing, which can often cost a fortune and don't necessarily continue to grow over time.

As I said before, traditional prospecting methods were never my thing, although I did try them out first: listening to my Dad's 20-year old motivational CDs; attending sales conferences which promoted cold-calling; heading out for my first day's door-knocking with my 5-foot pint-sized mother as my security guard



driving me from house to house for about three hours until she was even more bored than I was. I don't remember it being particularly traumatic but neither was it terribly productive. I decided there had to be a better way that was more effective as well as a lot more fun.

Then I moved onto cold calling...but only after weeks of procrastination and avoidance for me to actually work up the courage to start. Once I began it was great and I did make some really good contacts. However, I was inconsistent with sticking to a call schedule because I wasn't enjoying being chained to the phone very much. This meant that I then spent way too much time beating myself up about this and feeling guilty. Don't get me wrong, this kind of approach is a numbers game and if you can force yourself to sit and make 500 odd cold-calls you will certainly get some good leads...but I have to say that it sucked the life out of me.

What's important here is that you experiment with different methods and find your own way, the way that works best for you. Keep going until you come up with enjoyable, practical solutions that allow you to love what you are doing as much as possible. This approach works because you will naturally want to do more of the things you enjoy and are good at. So if you are going to cold-call why not get a group together in the office and make it fun? Order in pizzas or have sweet treats as prizes for small successes throughout the day. It doesn't really matter how you do it so long as you are prioritising the act of opening relationships with new people (in other words, 'prospecting') as your number one activity. Done right, this means that your business will grow by itself later on but in the beginning you must help it grow.

"I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel."

—*Maya Angelou*

Remember that everyone is important, especially if they are not yet ready to buy this afternoon, this week, or even this year. Think of it this way: it is precisely these golden



opportunities that allow you to impress people by treating them as more than just a deal to be closed.

And because there can be anything between 9-18 months of incubation period from first point of contact to actual paying client, everyone is a future client. Meet as many people as you possibly can and open up and nurture new relationships everywhere you go.

## Meeting people: How to look inside your world

This section is about addressing a few useful questions to help you meet more people and open more relationships. Questions such as:

- who is in your world right now?
- what opportunities and connections already exist or can be easily created?
- why spend thousands of dollars on marketing when you can have conversations for free?

Start by looking around at the people you already know. They could be:

- family
- friends
- acquaintances
- friends-of-friends
- local business owners you see daily (think about your local coffee shop, newsagent, dry cleaner, mechanic and so on)
- other small business owners you encounter because they require your product or service at some stage

All you need to do is let them know what you do. And if you don't have several local businesses nearby make an effort to go a little further afield, find some and support them by making use of their services. The Law of Reciprocity is a wonderful thing and by going somewhere regularly you can get to know them and build rapport. They are more likely to want to help you increase



your business if you are already a regular customer supporting theirs.

Make sure that everybody knows what you do for a living; the goods and/or services you offer. Be humble and ask people to help you safe in the knowledge that you always do your best to help other people out, so in effect 'what goes around comes around' in the best possible way.

Maybe somebody you talk to every day knows someone who may need your expertise and if you make them aware of what you offer, they can pass on your details whenever a need arises. People usually enjoy helping one another out, especially in Australia where the idea of 'mateship' is so strong. After all, it's a good feeling to help somebody, isn't it? People also especially love to help out others who they already know and like, so don't be a stranger.

### **Meeting people: How to look at the world around you**

Now it's time to ask yourself about the other people in the world around you:

- who is in your office?
- who is in your current business?
- who are the people who form part of your previous business networks?
- who are your former colleagues from past jobs?

When I was in sales, I attributed 20% of my business referrals to the people within my own franchise office alone. These included property managers, agents in commercial, the accounts and administration girls and so on, all of whom would recommend me to their family and friends – as well as use my services themselves.

Since I had worked in the commercial management division before moving across to sales, I had built relationships with nearly everyone in the company. I didn't build those relationships to close a sale. It's important what your intention is in any new



relationship. You never know how a relationship can develop and what opportunities there may be in the future but your intention has to be to genuinely connect and open a relationship.

Take a genuine interest in people (rather than just trying to establish a contact in order to make a sale) and you will be amazed at how many people naturally warm to you and ask you to help them out when they need the goods or services you offer.

### **Donald Trump: Billionaire property tycoon and master networker**

Donald Trump is the king of self-promotion and a billionaire property tycoon.

It is said that Trump moved to Manhattan flat broke and charmed his way past the members' committee of an exclusive club. He made it his business to connect with as many influential people as he could get in front of.

These connections in high society New York were exactly what Trump needed to gain access to the power, money and influence he needed to create a niche market for himself among America's rich and famous.

Declared bankrupt in 1990, Trump rebuilt his fortune and went on to achieve even greater success. A master networker, he managed to climb all the way back from bankruptcy up to the top of his game again because of all the people he had made it his business to know.

In short: it's often not what you know, but who you know that counts the most.

### **Meeting people: How to go and play in their world**

Now it's time to ask yourself about even more people...perhaps the ones you wouldn't normally interact with as regularly, if at all:

- where is your target market's world?
- whereabouts do they all hang out?
- what's happening in their world?
- what do they like to do?

Maybe the people in your target market are studying, collecting their kids from playgroups, leading or participating in community



groups, going to bars, lunch meetings or various other industry's networking events?

By just putting yourself out there and being in the right place at the right time you will sometimes hear about opportunities

"80% of success is showing up."

—Woody Allen

you otherwise wouldn't have been exposed to. Have your radar on 24/7, tuning in for opportunities and connecting with people. I meet people in the weirdest places: shopping, fixing my car on the roadside, at

the pub – and even when on holidays on the other side of the country. Just be tuned in, build a connection, give them a business card (always have some with you) and then follow up (more about that in a minute).

Coming back to that 'incubation period' concept again, it might surprise you to know that I have often received calls two years after meeting someone. I know through experience that it pays to be meeting new people and opening up relationships everywhere you go.

### Networking is just focused socialising

Another way to meet people is to get more targeted about your networking. Networking can sound so strategic but I believe it is nothing more than focused socialising - and I love to socialise.

#### Tip : You may be sitting on a client goldmine

Recently when I went through all my business cards I was astounded at how many real contacts I had which could open doors into a specific area I needed. Sometimes we don't know what gold we already have and need to have a look. You might be surprised by who you already know.

The definition of a network is: 'an interconnected system of things or people' and everyone should create a strong network to support his or her business.

A good network should fill in the gaps where you yourself are perhaps not quite as strong and enhance and support your business. I was a member of BNI (Business Networking International) to which I would attribute approximately \$100-\$150k in referrals per annum: not bad for a weekly meeting.



Financial benefits aside, there were many valuable reasons for me being part of a networking group. I was educated by the various different businesses on things such as: tax accounting; financial planning; marketing and so on – areas which were not my natural strengths so this learning proved invaluable to me.

I made lifelong friends through BNI and we all became in effect a sales team for one another's businesses, like 'raving fans' spreading word-of-mouth referrals for each other.

Remember to dip your toe in enough different organisations to find groups that work best for you. The idea is to find people you are comfortable with and enjoy being around. You should also feel confident enough to recommend them and you want to build close reciprocal relationships with them.

### Networking for success

Carry spare cards with you at all times: it is the easiest way to be growing your business everywhere you go.

I find it staggering how many events I attend where people don't have their business cards on them...or else they have not brought enough with them and run out.

I have bundles of spare business cards in my handbag, wallet, jacket pocket, car, desk and everywhere else I can think of.

I even have hiding places with emergency supplies in different compartments of my handbag and I replenish all the little stockpiles weekly. I have won a lot of business through casual conversations turning into contact details being exchanged.

### Prioritise meeting people

It is so important to prioritise meeting people as an activity. I think many of us undervalue this, I know I did. Society teaches us it has to be hard to make money and we should expect to work our fingers to the bone – not true.

I have learned to consider my coffee meetings and networking events as me being 'hard at work' and include this in my weekly schedule as prospecting time. You don't have to be an extrovert



to network, you just need to find the people you like being with and attract more of them into your personal and professional life. Have you ever heard the saying, 'like attracts like'? Well I have found it to be very true. Some of the best things I have done to grow my business was to get involved in groups such as BNI, Rotary and SWAP as well as hobby clubs and sporting teams. Do what you love to do and combine the two – easy.

### Tips for networking and learning from conferences:

Attending a large conference can leave you feeling like you've just drunk from a fire hose so take the time to integrate what you have learned and who you have met into your business so the opportunities won't be lost. I generally set aside 4-8 hours to follow up after a conference. Particularly if it's a two day event and I have met over 100 people.

**Tip 1:** As I meet people and swap business cards I write a brief note about who they are or where I met them on the back of theirs to help jog my memory later.

**Tip 2:** When taking notes from speakers, have a list at the back page of your book where you write all the things you intend to implement into your business immediately and another one for things within the next year.

**Learning:** As soon as possible block 1-2 hours out for implementation time. If you took notes, get them out and review them. Go to your implementation list and diarise the activities and actions you intend to implement and when.

**Networking:** Gather all the business cards you collected and ask yourself who do you really want to connect with? Who could you partner with, learn from, or mentor? Who do you want to arrange a follow up meeting with? Answer these questions and then prioritise them. You will simply place some of the new people on your email list but others you may want to arrange a time to catch up with on a more in-depth basis.



## When the going gets tough, the tough get networking

In a tough market you can no longer rely on business just walking in the door and suddenly you may find yourself really having to work at it. You must network and hone your skills.

When markets toughen up the first thing people often stop doing is networking and marketing – which I think is just crazy. Meeting people is the foundation of your success in business. So never stop doing the basics: if anything, do more of them. It's a numbers game. Think about it this way: if everybody (in every industry) is 'tightening their belt' and not networking as much, imagine how popular you will be with potential clients just through still being there to take them out for a coffee or lunch from time to time.

Getting caught up in 'busy-ness' in the office will not grow your business - whereas continuing to open and nurture strong ongoing connections with people will. These are the 'raving fans' who will become your very own free marketing team and promote you through word-of-mouth far better (and more effectively) than any other form of marketing.

Now you understand the value and techniques of meeting people...what's the next step?

## 2. CATCH UP

Just meeting people is not enough to open a relationship: you need to catch up and follow up with them as well. Imagine how many mates you would have if you never actually took the time to catch up with them – not many. You also probably wouldn't know very much about them either; their likes and dislikes, where they hang out or how they like to spend their time.

### 'Help' don't 'sell'

It's important to take the time to catch up and connect with the people you meet and get to know them (not sell to them). At these early stages you're only just building the relationship so apart from making people aware of what you do in case they



need your service you should not be actively selling here. I know a lot of people have negative feelings about the words ‘sales’ and ‘selling’ so I would suggest you change the word in your mind from: ‘sell’ to ‘help’ – because for me, that is exactly what building your business is really all about and people can feel it when you’re genuine about having their best interests at heart.

### **Be real, be authentic and connect with people**

By opening a relationship - by being real, authentic and connecting with people rather than trying to sell them - you open up relationships and therefore business. I believe if you genuinely connect with them and be real, they will trust you. You cannot put a price on the infinite value of authenticity. It is said to be the new buzzword of the 21st century and with good reason: people are increasingly wanting to buy something real from someone genuine. This is why it is so important not to be preoccupied with closing sales at this stage: enjoy investing your time and energy in building rapport and getting to know people instead.

I was listening to bestselling American author, Seth Godin at a conference. He was sharing his tips about the need to “date” your prospects and become their friends. Seth went on to explain that as loyal advocates they could literally bring in hundreds of new prospects to our business.

### **The art of networking – and how NOT to do it**

There is definitely an art to getting to know people. I was at a networking event recently when an over exuberant woman rushed up to a small group of us just getting to know each other and bombarded us all with information about herself without taking any interest in anyone else. Then she shoved her business cards in our hands before running off to hand out more.

This kind of behaviour is a complete waste of time and does severe damage to your business reputation and credibility. You are better off handing out one business card courteously to someone you have made a genuine connection with than throwing out



a hundred in the general direction of people you haven't even taken the time to meet properly. They won't remember you – and if they do it will be for all the wrong reasons.

Be careful too, about offering unsolicited advice. I recently had an incident where I met a businessman who I arranged to catch up with afterwards. He sent me a five point agenda for our first meeting and started critiquing my business without being asked. Now how would that make you feel? I don't know about you but I was quite offended as I did not even know him yet, much less invite him to start pulling my business apart.

This sort of thing is so important to take on board in your initial dealings with a new client. If you don't spend time building rapport and being granted their permission to give advice then they will switch off and put up a wall before you even begin and that will be twice as hard to conquer afterwards. Nobody wants you to come straight in and tell them how great you are and what you think they should be doing uninvited – would you?

### **Give for the sake of giving**

I like to think of this as 'the Law of giving without expectation'. In other words: meeting, listening to and helping people for the sheer joy of doing so in everything you do. As 'fluffy' as this may sound, you cannot imagine a more powerful business strategy at work for you – really.

Zig Ziglar is one of the world's top motivational speakers. Affected early in life by his father's death, the young Ziglar learned great compassion for people early on in his life. He summed it up by famously saying "You can have everything in life that you want if you will just help enough other people get what they want."

I suggest you try giving because you want to without keeping score. Help others achieve what they want and be on hand to provide advice (when it is invited), share ideas and refer business contacts. You will find that your generosity of spirit is reciprocated tenfold.



### The law of reciprocity

- **to give and take mutually**
- **to return in kind or even in another kind or degree.**

Stephen Covey, author of *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* uses the phrase 'emotional bank account' to describe this principle of reciprocity and the corresponding credit-withdrawal process in relationships. Just like real bank accounts accumulate interest, 'emotional bank accounts' accumulate trust.

The idea is that – just as with a financial bank account - you should make deposits (i.e. help others) to put yourself 'in credit' before you make withdrawals (i.e. accept help from other people).

I have learned that whatever you give will come back to you many times over and often in completely unexpected ways. If you are only giving in order to get something back your intention 'sullies' the energy somehow and this universal exchange will not occur on the grand scale it otherwise could. It simply never works to operate from scarcity, and it is not possible to operate from a position of abundance (good) and scarcity (not so good) at the same time.

### The law of abundance

- **a more than plentiful quantity of something**
- **there is more than enough for everyone**

The Law of Abundance is one of the most beautiful laws. It says that there is more than enough of everything for everyone and that if we only believed this and acted as if it were true (as indeed, it actually is) then we would all share and benefit more than we can possibly imagine. The Law of Abundance says that there is:

- more than enough time
- more than enough money
- more than enough opportunity
- more than enough business and referrals
- more than enough food, water, care and love



So choose the one that is going to bring you more of the same: remember, 'like attracts like' so if abundance is what you want to attract more of, abundance is the place you need to start from. It keeps you focused, stops you behaving desperately and creates a certain magic quality or 'X-factor' about you that people will be drawn to.

In contrast with the principles above I read an article someone had posted on a website about their unsatisfactory customer service experience with an in-home salesman. The article illustrated the sort of traditional 'script' approach that a lot of sales people have historically been encouraged to use:

Apparently, a young couple casually considering getting some work done had called to get a quotation for some bathroom renovations. They thought the salesman would be in and out in 20 minutes and they would be able to have time to bath the kids afterwards.

The salesman shows up with not one but two briefcases. At this point they're already thinking, "this is bad, surely he's not going to show us enough stuff that would require two briefcases?"

They sit down and he draws their measurements out on a sheet of paper and the poor husband's getting ready for the quote thinking, "lay it on me". Then the salesman goes, "First let me tell you about our product..." and pulls out two huge binders. He opens the first one to the first page and then spends 45 minutes teaching them about bathrooms.

By this stage the kids need bathing so the husband suggests the agent continues presenting to his wife. The salesman refuses, claiming he requires both decision makers to be present and proceeds to make her watch a video instead while the husband baths the kids.

30 minutes later when he's finished the second binder comes out. The couple are thinking, "Kill us now"

Next the salesman treats them to some sample tiles and materials. By this time the couple's wondering when he's going to ask, "What will it take to get you into this bathroom tonight?" By now they have endured about 90 minutes of what can only be



described as torture. The salesman then says, "If you guys have about another hour, I can write up a quote for you."

I think the exchange got a bit heated at this point. They tell him NO they do NOT have another spare hour and that he'll need to come back - knowing full well that they will not be letting him back inside their home to waste their time again.

Now as funny as this story is, what's tragic is that many of us were taught to sell like this and many more are still writing books and training programs with this as the strategy. But people aren't stupid - they know when they're being sold to and it is cheesy and patronising to treat them like this. It is also what gives sales people a bad name.

For starters this couple were only 'casually considering' having the job done. The sales person should have found out what they actually needed and then given it to them. Nothing more, nothing less. If only he had clarified this the salesman would have known they were not ready for a two-hour pitch wasting everybody's time. Handled properly, this couple could have turned into customers later on after presenting to them at the appropriate time (on another visit) after building rapport.

When I first started out I worried about needing to know what to say and having to get the whole thing word perfect, which just made everything so much harder than it needed to be.

Ok, enough about what not to do...let's look at some of the things you can do to build rapport and just catch up in the initial stages of building a connection with people you've recently met. First and foremost, remember that it's not about you: it's all about them. To demonstrate this to your contacts, the three things you need to principally focus on are:

**Be there**

**Care**

**Share**

Do just these three simple things right and you really can't go wrong.



## Be there

Get out of your head. Don't think about selling or closing a deal. Genuinely be there; be 'present' and really listen. Don't just be sitting there waiting for your turn to speak or bombarding them with a pre-rehearsed sales spiel. Listen to the person's needs, ask relevant questions and then listen even more. Be available to answer all their questions and address all their concerns but don't outstay your welcome.

On the flip side, don't get so caught up in 'busy-ness' that you don't allow enough time to spend with potential clients. I got so 'busy' at one point that I was only allowing twenty minutes for a presentation when by right they should have taken an hour and a half minimum. Each presentation was worth \$10-30,000 to me and I quickly realised that I needed to take better care of how I handled the initial catch-up, even when the new contact was not ready to become a buyer or seller that day. I learned to make a real effort to be there and allow ample time to present, be helpful and offer advice. I always left my new contacts with a good taste in their mouth so that when they were ready, I was at the top of their list as someone good to deal with and I always got the call.

## Care

Don't ever get too busy to care; in all walks of life (personal and professional) few things go further than taking the time to demonstrate to someone that you genuinely care.

When I established my new business I was astounded by how many people flicked me a poorly thought out email quotation or rushed me on the phone, even with simple purchases like business cards or websites.

This initial period of contact before a client actually commits to buy is what determines whether they will use you or not and has the greatest impact on your conversion rate.

Often businesses mistakenly assume they don't have enough time to spend thoroughly quoting and pitching. They work on the back-to-front premise that they will only care about them



after they actually become a client...but with that attitude they might never become one.

Prioritise time to catch up and get to know people. Show them that you care about them before they even give you any business and always remember that it really should be all about them. Get to know people well enough to discover what their needs are. The Starbucks chain of coffee shops has a motto for their staff that explains it like this: 'Connect, Discover and Respond'.

Last year when I went looking for a new car I dealt with a lot of car salesmen. There was one in particular who stood out head and shoulders above the rest. He didn't try to pressure me or pitch to me. He invited me in for a coffee and asked relevant questions about what it was I was looking for and took the time to find out what was important to me about the car I would choose.

This salesman was the only one who cared enough to find out what my needs were. I didn't end up buying my car from him, but only because I decided on a different make and model which they did not sell. I did recommend him to three other people who were buying his brand of vehicle though so he ended up doing very well out of taking the time to care about me that day.

This is why it's so important to treat everyone to the same high standard and not focus on those you believe are the 'short easy instant sale'. By taking the time to connect with everyone and help them out with good advice - whether they buy from you or not - it's sure to help scatter those seeds that help your business grow from word of mouth.

And as quickly as great recommendations spread...remember that bad news about customer service spreads ten times as fast. If you neglect to take the time to care, are pushy, rude or throw a tantrum when you miss out on a deal, I guarantee that more people will get to hear about that than if you're neutral or fabulous. It pays to be very careful with your customers - or else you might find yourself on a customer disservice website one day and that would not be good.



## Share

There is a saying to suggest that, 'sharing is caring'. In terms of building your sales business, there are lots of ways to show your clients that you care about them through sharing; you can share an experience; share some valuable advice; share a piece of timely information; share a special moment; or share a memory.

Find as many different ways you can to connect and share something of value with your prospects. You may be surprised at how effective these creative rapport-building techniques can be for taking your business further, faster.

There were many times when my work was incredibly emotional. I had clients who were going to lose their homes through divorce or a change in financial circumstances. Sometimes it had come time for them to retire and downsize but they really struggled with letting go of a home with so many memories attached to it. On other occasions surviving relatives were faced with having to sell the estate of a deceased parent or other family member – possibly even their own childhood home and last physical connection to a happy shared past.

Now, even though you may think that few industries are dealing with such highly charged emotional products, I would argue that for me, buying my new car was a really big deal - and so was refining the artwork, business logos and other stationery for my new businesses. All of these transactions were very stressful experiences for me as I had never been through the process before and did not know what to expect.

I learned through the experience of being a customer wishing that the sales people in question were doing more to connect with me and help to put my mind at ease that there is always another way for you to be there, care and share in whatever's going on for a client.

Time and time again people tell me they remember this kind of extra effort and I guarantee that they will remain as loyal to you as any other 'real' relationship in their life once you have



opened up some genuine ways to connect and create memories of shared experience.

### **Being in sync**

Rapport is said to be one of the most important characteristics of unconscious human interaction. It means having a commonality of perspective; being 'in sync' and 'on the same wavelength' as the person with whom you are talking. Some important core elements of rapport include:

- Sympathy
- Understanding
- Emotion
- Trust
- Connection

Rapport stems from a person feeling that you care enough to understand their world. It is often said that people do business with people they like or who are like them. If you had the choice between someone like you (calm, effective, in control) or someone completely the opposite (overly loud, extreme high energy, unreliable) who would you feel more inclined to do business with and to trust? The person matching and mirroring your own personal style or the one completely disregarding it and doing their own thing?

Building rapport doesn't take long when it's done correctly and with integrity. What I mean by this is that I genuinely like people and the art of rapport building came naturally to me from a very young age.

My granddad is originally from Italy and speaks fairly poor English and my best friend immigrated to Australia from China when she was just eight years old. Because of this I think I automatically picked up on how to help people with whom I could not always converse fluently with to feel comfortable. I spoke more slowly and I learned how to 'mirror' and 'pace' their



tone. This is just one way of being sympathetic and understanding to people's needs so that they know you really care about them.

Underneath the superficial surface differences, we human beings are all so alike really. I find it really helps to remember this and think about how you would be feeling and what you would need to feel comfortable if you were in the other person's shoes.

## Cultivating empathy

It is said that great leaders possess natural empathy and this is certainly one of the greatest sales skills there is. Having empathy is really all about getting into the other person's state of mind and understanding their world.

Imagine for a moment how you would feel if you had just met someone and they were quoting on, say, finishing your basement. How would you feel if they took no time to establish rapport and started making assumptions about what your needs were, like the guy in the bathroom renovation story? It's so important when initially dealing with a new client that you spend time establishing rapport. Put simply: you need to get to know them before you ask them for anything – including business or referrals. Think of it as kind of like when you start dating.

## The art of pacing

The definition of pace is: 'to advance at a particular rate or tempo' and the art of pacing is described as: 'being as like your client as possible'.

As I said before, people do business with people they like... and people who are like them. There are a number of 'pacing' techniques you can use in order to be more like your clients, and 'mirroring' behaviours you can adopt to reflect that which feels safe and familiar back at them:

### BFO

- 1. You cannot ask for anything unless you're 'in rapport' and;**
- 2. You cannot be in rapport unless you have first 'paced' them.**



## Methods of pacing

### Basic

eye contact  
 interests / topics  
 facial expressions  
 body language /gestures  
 (mirroring)

### Subtle / More Advanced

attitude  
 energy (high / low)  
 language / vocabulary  
 breathing (speed / depth)  
 vocal (auditory range /  
 volume)

Some examples of how you might use some of these techniques in an initial meeting or rapport-building phase are:

- to find a common interest you can talk about;
- to allow and encourage the other person to speak about themselves (most people love to);
- to ask the other person about what is important to them (their values, goals, beliefs, ambitions, passions);
- to practice matching the other person's tone of voice, level of enthusiasm and volume to show you're 'in tune' with them;
- mirror (copy / reflect) the other person's physical posture or stance.

### Case study of a cold-call-turned-client:

The first property developer I won as a client came from a simple cold call, which I built on using rapport-building techniques over the telephone.

I picked up on the fact that this man was Italian. Now, so are my own family, but I only knew five words of Italian ...so I used them all.

It may seem like a really small thing but the care and attention I demonstrated in going out of my way to make a connection helped me start the process of building rapport so that the developer felt instinctively that we were alike in a fundamental way and that I was interested in understanding and appreciating his world.

Particularly (in this instance of cold-calling) the Italian connection gave me a 'short-cut' for being remembered when I called back and suddenly the call wasn't so 'cold' anymore; it was 'warm'.



Building great rapport really just comes down to being very aware of how people are 'being' (standing, talking, moving, gesturing) and using this information to get to know and connect with them on a more subtle level.

### Case study of visiting a building site:

When visiting my property developers on site, I would always try to match their down-to-earth casual manner.

I kept some spare work boots in the car that I would put on with my suit. This way I could get on site in the dirt and see what was going on.

Occasionally I would arrive on site around 'tea break' with some beer and pies, which showed I had taken an interest in their world. Somehow I don't think wholemeal sandwiches and orange juice would have gone down as well.

Often you will have as little as just 5-6 minutes to make a good first impression – and considering that 55% of how you're judged comes down to how you behave (body language) and not what you say, that is quite a lot of pressure to take on board. I knew I had to be able to slip quickly and subtly into mirroring and pacing many different types of people, from Doctors and Builders to Lawyers and Chefs; from Farmers and Fitness Instructors to Bankers and Retirees.

In those first few moments of connecting with a new person, what you're not saying is often even more important than what you are saying.

### Quick snapshot of a presentation

1. Build Rapport - if you're not in rapport don't ask for anything;
2. Listen and Be Present - not just waiting for your turn to talk;
3. Give Advice Freely – take time to genuinely care;
4. Take An Interest – by asking lots of relevant questions;
5. Understand Their Needs – and respond accordingly;
6. Speak To Their Values - so they understand 'why you';
7. Be Natural – not fake or scripted.



## Prepare to present

When it comes to pitching and quoting I have learned that it helps to think of your presentation as a ‘mini speech’.

Prepare your format and know the general structure of the key points you want to cover. The more often you deliver your presentation, the more comfortable you will become. The key is not to have the whole thing totally scripted, as this leaves no room for flexibility. You need to be able to adapt to each client and their individual needs but by having some questions prepared and being confident of the value that you add, you will feel more at ease when you are presenting.

## Practice really does make perfect

A colleague asked me to listen to his presentation. He sat me down and pitched to me for twenty minutes without even taking a breath or asking any questions about what I was interested in or looking for. By the time he remembered to ask me anything at all the moment had passed and I felt as if he didn’t really care about my needs: he just cared about the sale. He learned through practice, repetition and responding to feedback just how important it was to ask questions upfront and discover his client’s needs first, before he could possibly hope to respond appropriately.

### Check in to see if they’re checked out

Even during a successful presentation when you are doing everything right and following all the steps, you can still veer off course if you forget to check in with your audience to make sure that they are still following you.

It’s crucial to check in with clients during your presentation in order to make sure that you are both on the same page. Asking, “Does that make sense?” or “How do you feel about that?” are great ways to gauge their level of comfort and understanding so that you’re in touch with whereabouts in the sale process your client is.



Now we've had a really thorough look at the first two stages of how to open successful long-term relationships:

**1. MEET UP**

**2. CATCH UP**

Now it's time to explore the third and final element in this chapter – namely, to 'follow up'.

**3. FOLLOW UP**

I can't emphasise strongly enough how crucial this final stage is. During the course of my career I have encountered countless sales people who lay all the groundwork, dotting all the 'i's and crossing all the 't's...up until this very point and then they drop the ball and all their work goes to waste: what a shame. This section is designed to help you not be one of these people who throw it all away at the last moment by failing so spectacularly to follow through.

**Win them over**

Let's take a look at where you're at with your prospects by this stage:

- You've met them;
- You've caught up with them;
- And now you need to follow up.

Remember that not everyone you meet will have an immediate need for your goods or services right now - so you need to find a way to stay on your prospects' radar so that as and when they do need someone in your chosen field, you are the person who comes first to mind.

Through my experience in coaching and working with a lot of different types of people I notice there is a massive gap in understanding this area. A lot of people assume that it's enough to 'get on well' and have one or two 'successful meetings' with a



new contact to 'cement the relationship' and that they don't need to follow up at all.

They assume that their new client will call them as soon as they are ready to engage their product or service. Perhaps in a few rare instances this may be true - but for the most part those

### Case study of a terrible follow up

I would like to share with you my experience of being on the receiving end of very poor follow up:

I once booked into a health & beauty clinic for one of those \$5,000 miracle weight-loss programs. Yes, yes I can hear you laughing! Insane to believe the exaggerated claims, I now realise - but this story is not really about me.

Anyway, after twelve weeks at the clinic my 'miracle weight-loss program' was complete...and I received no further contact. The crazy thing was that if any of the consultants had bothered to follow up with me, I probably would have been silly enough to book another 12-week program.

Not only did the company in question fail to follow up, they had the cheek to make it worse by entering me onto their database. It is now two years later and I am still receiving Christmas cards and monthly newsletters forwarded on to me from the other side of the country.

What a complete and utter waste of time and money. What impression does this give? Would you ever be tempted to go back and give your business to a company that made you feel so unappreciated? I know I wouldn't.

The sad thing is that all they really had to do was make one genuine courtesy call at the end of my program to touch base with me. I would have been happy for them to stay in touch with me and may have even recommended them on to my network if they had taken the time to follow up.

As it is, the company never followed up and I have been left feeling unappreciated. A faceless number on a massive, meaningless mail-out database. This is a prime example of a company's biggest asset (their database) disintegrating into nothing more useful than a well thumbed, out of date and useless 'yellow pages' phone directory.



who do not follow up are creating a rod for their own back because they are not likely to hear from their potential new client again.

Usually what happens is that while sales person #1 has been resting on their laurels, ten of their hungriest competitors have probably been 'dating' the prospect, catching up with them and following up, making them feel special and making it clear to them that they actually want (and value) their business. Pick up the phone and follow up with your prospects...or risk them becoming someone else's client.

But the real question we need to address is: "Why didn't they call?" Here are some of the most common answers...

### **FEAR**

### **FORGETFULNESS / LAZINESS**

### **UNPROFESSIONALISM / DROPPING THE BALL**

### **FEAR**

#### **Sales person:**

- Tells themselves the customer doesn't want to hear from them;
- Assumes the customer 'would call me if they were keen';
- Thinks, 'I don't want to bother them until they're ready';

#### **While in the meantime:**

- 10 hungrier sales people are calling that prospect;
- Prospect assumes that as the sales person has not called they mustn't want their business / or are too busy;

#### **Overcome this by:**

- Realising that you can stay in touch with clients without 'bothering' them (you can ring to offer free advice; see how their honeymoon went; invite them out for coffee; let them know about a 'seasonal special'; give them an inside tip on what the market's doing etc); without it being considered harassment;
- Realising that this is where the rapport you established right back at the beginning will help you by making it easier to keep in touch now;



- Acknowledging that this is just an underlying negative self-belief in your own head telling you a story and work on changing it;
- Acknowledging any negative internal chatter and turning it around;
- Realising that you are ringing to nurture an open relationship, not ringing to pressure them into a sale;
- Understanding the difference between keeping in touch and being a stalker;
- You can learn to get the balance right by simply asking them what they need in the first place, eg:
  - “How often would you like me to keep in touch, every Monday or twice a month?”
  - “Would you like me to call back in 1-2 weeks time to see how things are going?”
  - “Would it be ok if I touched base with you in a couple of days / weeks / months to see how things are going?”
  - “Would you prefer me to stay in touch by phone or email?”

It really all depends on where they are in the sales process, from ‘casually considering’ to ‘ready right now’. Ask the right questions, listen to their answers and meet their needs: easy.

## **FORGETFULNESS / LAZINESS**

### **Sales person:**

- Tells themselves it is too early / too late / inconvenient / doesn’t feel right’ or puts the prospect in the ‘too hard basket’;
- Assumes the customer is the one who should ‘make all the moves’;
- Thinks, ‘I’ll do it tomorrow / next week / next month’ and then forgets to follow up;



**While in the meantime:**

- 20 far more energetic sales people are following up with their prospects and building rapport;
- Prospects assume the sales person is lazy / unreliable / not to be trusted;

**Overcome this by:**

- Prioritising your follow up calls and activities;
- Setting up a reliable database system (with diarised alarm reminders) so that you never forget to follow up;
- Still following up even if you have forgotten up till now;
- Not allowing yourself to fall into the trap of negative thinking, worrying that you've missed your chance and it's too late to call now;
- Placing real value and importance upon all the time and effort that you have already invested opening the relationship and moving things along to this point in time;
- Acknowledging that this is the culmination of all of your hard work in meeting up, catching up and (now) following up.

**UNPROFESSIONALISM / DROPPING THE BALL****Sales person:**

- Tells themselves that they are doing 'everything possible' to meet the client's needs and that it's not their fault that the prospect never picks up / won't return messages / seems to be getting impatient or bad tempered about the service;
- Assumes that they already know what 'best practice' means and doesn't bother to keep in touch with new developments / industry news / changes or updates in sales procedures;
- Thinks that they should be given the credit for anything that goes well but shirks responsibility for anything that goes wrong and is always looking for someone – to blame for things not working out.



**While in the meantime:**

- 30 far more professional sales people are servicing the clients, winning over their business, and increasing their own sales earnings by keeping up to date with prospects through the whole process from 'beginning to end';
- Prospect feels disappointed and let down and does not refer the first agent's unprofessional service on to anybody else.

**Overcome this by:**

- Making a firm decision right now to be professional in everything you do;
- Keeping up to date with what's going on with your prospects, your industry, your colleagues and your own sales processes;
- Investing the money to hire a personal assistant to help you stay focused on what you need to do – or, if you can't afford that yet, outsource some of the more straightforward / standardised tasks to a remote or overseas virtual assistant (just Google 'outsourcing' or 'virtual assistants' for details);
- Making absolutely certain that you are keeping your database up to date and not wasting hundreds of hours and thousands of dollars on marketing to the wrong people.

**Your most important asset – your database**

The most important asset you can have is your database. Over time you can build up the most amazing network of companies, contacts and clients but for some reason 'the D word' is almost as dreaded as 'the P word' (prospecting) and yet you cannot possibly hope to sustain long-term business growth without both of these two essential elements working efficiently. I think of it as achieving 'the S word'... \$uccess.

The simple equation to remember is: 'P word' + 'D word' = 'S word':



**P + D = \$\$\$ + Success**

Your PEOPLE (prospects) and your DATABASE are the two essential ingredients to achieving unparalleled success with sales revenue based on repeat and referral business. Master this simple equation and you will never be desperately chasing business down.

**It's totally automatic**

There are so many easy-to-use database computer programs available these days (many of them are free to download over the internet) that there really is no excuse for not having a database to die for. The only question is: how do you decide which one to use?

I think it depends on what stage you're at in your business and therefore the best you can comfortably afford. If you are just starting out for example, you can get by with using the basic software like Word, Excel and Outlook that come with most PCs .

I'm not what you'd call very into technology. I used a simple spreadsheet in Excel until I hired my first assistant who then transferred all my contacts into a more advanced software program which could do things like automatic mail-outs, personalised newsletters and so on (up until that point I was just keeping careful records and doing the rest such as envelope labels for mail-outs by hand).

You may be an IT whiz kid, in which case all this is a walk in the park - but if you're a bit scared of databases at the start, then you may want to use a simple hand written index card system.

My father was a successful salesman and he never used a computer. Times have certainly changed a lot since then (and the pace at which new technology gets released is increasing all the time) but even so, my dad just had a Filofax card system that worked brilliantly for him. He kept meticulous records though,



and would colour code his most important leads or contacts and diarise every single thing he needed to do. Every single client had their own record card and my father would make careful notes about every prospect's personal circumstance: children's names; spouse's profession; favourite sporting team; holiday destinations; ideal property and so on. These careful records made building and maintaining rapport so easy that my Dad enjoyed huge amounts of repeat and referral business.

### **Do it your way**

The important thing here is to actually have a database and keep it up to date. Whether it's my way, my Dad's way, your way or the highway (sorry, I couldn't resist), it really doesn't matter. Just find the best system for you and be sure that you are always keeping up to date with crucial information such as:

- name
- address (personal & professional)
- telephone numbers (personal & professional)
- email (and again – always have both in case one changes and you lose touch)
- prospect's potential need for your product or service
- any other relevant information (their occupation, whether you have worked with them before etc)

When it comes to the additional, more 'three dimensional' rapport-building information, some examples of things you might like to find out and keep a note of are:

- birthdays
- wedding anniversaries & other special occasions
- the names of any children or pets
- favourite sport or (even better) the specific sporting team that they support

I can hear you asking the obvious next question: "Why is all this information so important and what am I supposed to use it all



for?" Well...you can build genuine rapport and show you care, of course.

Once I knew this information about my contacts I used to put reminders in my diary to call on special occasions or send birthday cards. I would forward relevant newsletters, articles or book reviews if they happened to be about something I knew would be of interest to them. Or I would ask about how their anniversary party had gone at the weekend, which I sometimes knew about because I had already been invited.

Not only was this fun for me to do but it also fixed me in my contacts' mind as someone they wanted to hear from and I never once had to worry about 'bothering' them. And guess who was the first one to get a call when they or anyone else they knew needed my services? Yes, you guessed right: me.

### Using the three Rs to turn your database into your deadliest weapon

You can also turn your database into another 'D word'...your Deadliest Weapon by asking lots of relevant rapport-building questions every time you meet up, catch up and follow up (and keeping careful note of all the answers of course) you can build yourself an invaluable rapport-ready-resource at your fingertips. How great is that?

#### Turn your database into 'the three Rs' :

##### **R**apport **R**eady **R**esource

By making sure that you...

- Ring people up
- Remember to ask them questions
- Record their information in your Database

### Keeping it real by keeping it visible

Sometimes the danger with building such a comprehensive database is that when all that information is inside your computer on a software program instead of immediately visual it can get lost and just become an online version of the yellow pages directory.



So make sure that whatever system you choose, you have a structure around how you're actually going to use it. Some suggestions for keeping it real by keeping it visible could be:

- creating a colour printout of your 'Top 10' contacts every week and sticking it up in your line of sight;
- enter your top 50 to 100 contacts into your mobile phone to call when you're on the road;
- adding an icon link on your Desktop to take you straight through to your Database;
- setting your Database to automatically open when you start up your computer;
- making sure that any appointments for meet ups, catch ups and follow ups are entered into your diary (with alarms set if using an electronic system);

One of the major advantages of having an online system is that when your Database really starts to expand it will be a lot easier to let it remind you about where you should be rather than manually consulting it yourself. An integrated email service incorporated into your database will allow you to categorise your clients in several different ways and automatically address newsletters individually to your contacts. This enables you to touch base with a wider cross section of people than you would be able to by making phone calls, while still retaining the personal element of addressing them by name.

### **People connect with people NOT computers**

Don't fall into the trap of relying too heavily on technology to do your job for you, because at the end of the day people use technology...but they build relationships with people. Although it's great to send out emails and newsletters you should still be making the effort to come into direct personal contact with the people you meet, be it face to face or (at the very least) over the telephone. Too many people rely on just flicking impersonal



emails and then wonder why their business isn't growing and their customers aren't loyal.

### **Keep your records up to date**

Your client records should always be kept up to date. Let me ask you a question: how many times have you relocated, moved companies, switched phone numbers, or changed personal or professional email address over the last few years?

I have already moved three times in five years. I know that if I hadn't arranged for my postal service to forward my mail on to my new addresses it would never have reached me and would have all ended up straight in the bin. All those companies marketing to me would be oblivious to how much time, energy and money they would be wasting on sending me material that I'm not even receiving – let alone about to use their service.

### **Make staying in touch fun**

Now, I'm not one of those people who loves the idea of being stuck on the phone following up with all my past clients for hours on end - especially because my business was growing so big that the number of calls I had to make just to stay in touch, all year round sky rocketed from dozens to literally thousands.

When it got too big to handle I decided to find a new approach and I began to host an annual function for all my clients and contacts. This way I knew I would at least get to see them all face-to-face and it allowed me to do what I do best: have fun socialising. Hosting this event also gave me the perfect reason to contact everyone before and afterwards with a lovely subject to talk about: what a contrast to those horrible 'cold-calls' that most sales people dread making...and most prospects dread receiving.

I found that by creating a fabulous, fun and memorable event I was literally embodying my philosophy to: Be There, Care and Share. I was connecting with everyone on a much deeper level face to face than I could have done over the phone or by email,



and all the people who came felt as if I cared enough to share my success with them – making it in effect our shared success which was such a powerful way of cementing the relationships and taking them to another level.

### Some questions to ask yourself about your database

1. How many people do I have on my Database?
2. Are they the right people?
3. How many of them am I regularly sending out emails to and what value is this contact adding to their day?
4. Am I making the best use of the time, money & information invested in my Database?

When you ask yourself these questions, really take the time to assess your database system and the way it is working for you. For example, in answer to question 2, less is definitely more. I believe you are much better off having 100 great quality contacts that know you, want to hear from you and look forward to reading the things you send out to them, than 1000 or more who have no idea who you are or why you are sending them Christmas cards.

My advice is to ‘start as you mean to go on’ and get all this spot on, right from the very beginning. It’s getting easier every day to set up online office systems – and it’s definitely much easier to take the time to establish an effective way of working from the beginning than having to redo things later on. Adding one or two new contacts a day accurately into your database is much easier than trying to enter 150 of them all in one go later on. Not only will this be a time consuming and tedious task, but it will be much harder for you to remember useful notes to add in like, where you met, what you talked about and how you promised to follow up.



## Get some good habits

When I talk about 'systems' I am really referring to 'business habits'. Some of the good business habits you might want to adopt as part of your systems processes include:

- enter any new contacts into your database the same day you meet;
- never enter a new contact into your database without also diarising the next steps for catch up and follow up;
- categorise the people in your database in different ways: such as in order of importance or in terms of the service they require;
- place each client onto your systemised follow up calendar and
- every time you enter someone into your database, remember to also enter some relevant details about how you met them, who referred them, and a personal characteristic to help you recall them easily.

This last suggestion is so important. Trust me, you will thank yourself for taking the trouble to do this in a years time when your database is hundreds of thousands strong and someone rings you up out of the blue and says, "Hello my name is\_\_\_\_; remember me?"

Just imagine how impressive it will be for them if you are able to type their name into your computer while you say hello and then instantly refer to something unique and personal about the moment you met or ask after their spouse / kids / pet / holiday in detail because of the notes you made at the time. Now that's service.

## Make your database work for you – not against you

If you've been in business for a while now it's time to ask yourself some honest questions about what's working for you and what could do with some improvement. Above all be honest. At one stage I went through my whole database client by client...and in



doing so realised something very important: that I should have done it a year before.

I know it sounds boring which is why I think a lot of us avoid doing it for so long. However by letting it languish on the back burner it could actually be working against you as much as it is working for you. It could be costing you a small fortune to stay in contact with the wrong people...and you could be losing out on terrific opportunities with the right people who you're failing to follow up.

Once I actually started going through my database it probably only took me one full day to get it back on track and it was definitely a day well spent. Was it boring? Yes. But was it worth the time to have an effective database yielding nothing but top quality information.

If you're in the same boat and find yourself needing to go through and clean up your database to get it back on track once again, here's what I suggest you focus on:

- every single person in the database having a follow up action and reminder set;
- every single person categorised in order of importance, service requirements or other (you could even create your own hierarchical system for client information, such as: hot-warm-cold or diamond-platinum-gold-silver-bronze etc);
- empower yourself to delete people. Not every single person in your database should necessarily stay there;
- making sure at some point annually you're checking their details are up to date and stay current;
- every single person is placed on a systemised follow up calendar cycle with automatic alarms set if possible.

### **Database delegation**

If it feels too overwhelming, boring or technically challenging for you personally to take a day off to spend cleaning up your database, consider printing out your client list and clearly marking



the changes manually. That way you can hire a temporary data entry assistant to execute it all for you – but make sure you spot check their work or you'll only be storing up even more problems for yourself later on.

Another clever technique for avoiding the slippery slope back down into database mayhem is to keep everything on the right track by establishing some simple database guidelines that you adhere to the letter from now on. Type these up and stick them on the wall near the computer used for data entry: keep them real by making them visible.

### Database guidelines to staying in touch effectively

Now that your database is clean, current, spick and span, it's time to address the issue of how best to use it.

Make sure you have systems in place to manage what happens to your contacts once they become part of your database. You may find it helpful to consider the following questions:

1. how often should I stay in touch by posting or emailing something out?
2. how frequently should I be making follow up calls?
3. how many of these should I make sure are face-to-face as opposed to over the telephone?
4. how am I going to effectively get a handle on their needs without seeming pushy?
5. how can I make it fun and beneficial for my prospects to respond to a survey (as opposed to it just being useful for me)?
6. how often should I check that my client's contact details are up to date and how can I do this without it seeming intrusive, boring or unnecessary?
7. how can I make use of the information gathered in my database to best support my customers in their needs, interests or business growth?



Once you have completed the meet up, catch up and follow up process and a prospect has become a client...then what?

## Building customer loyalty through your database

### 7 Magic Questions to Ask Yourself...

1. How can I get the best ROI\* from my database?
2. How can my customers receive the best value from my database?
3. What quality controls can I put in place to ensure that only communications that add value are sent out to my contacts?
4. How many creative ways can I come up with to use the information in my database to stay top of mind with my customers?
5. What regular methods of correspondence do I want to automate through my database in order to help streamline my business processes?
6. How can I make giving feedback fun or beneficial for my customers so that they don't mind taking time out to give it to me?
7. What systems do I have in place to welcome feedback and deal promptly with any complaints, compliments or concerns?

\*ROI = 'return on investment' (of your time & your money etc)

## Woo them

This is like when you first meet a new love interest. You've just got their attention. They seem to be interested in you and so now you need to woo them a little to keep them interested and to be remembered. Here are a few tips on how you can make sure you are doing all the right things to keep their interest and help yourself stand out from the crowd:

- Do not assume they will become a customer for life. You really have to go 'above and beyond the call of duty' in order to be remembered.



- I once read a Xerox study that showed customers are 6 times more likely to use you if you rank 5 out of 5 (“excellent”) than 4 out of 5 (“good”). Sounds a bit harsh, I know; I mean come on, surely 4 out of 5 is pretty good? Well it’s not bad...but compared to “excellent” it seems like “pretty good” just doesn’t cut it anymore.

## How to be a 5 out of 5

Think about the last time you received outstanding customer service. Not just good or reasonable or satisfactory, but outstanding. Whether it was at a restaurant, the office, your mechanic or in a department store there will be some key top quality service components that stood out. Try to distinguish what they were. Name them. Write them down.

Some of the common answers people come up with include an appreciation of service that was:

- Cheerful (“nothing was too much trouble”)
- Helpful (“they went out of their way to help me”)
- Knowledgeable (“they either knew the answer or took the trouble to find out for me”)
- Personalised (“they remembered my name / my kids’ names”)
- Attentive (“they remembered what I ordered last time and suggested things I might like to try”)

Seems pretty simple, really. Well it is. What we’re talking about here is how much people like to be made to feel special – and all the ways you can do that which are easy and free. It does not cost you anything to put a system in place to remember and use your customers’ names, to be a friendly, helpful and knowledgeable expert in your field. It can be as simple as asking after their children or giving your customers a courtesy call to see how they are getting on with their new purchase.



What are some of the things you can implement in your business today in order to be delivering outstanding and memorable customer service? Well, I have learned to:

**Over-deliver** (do more than you say you will);

- **Exceed expectations** (by constantly changing / evolving / improving the ways in which you exceed expectations as your business and its process become more profitable and sophisticated);
- **Do the simple things well** (customer service has slipped so far these days that even simple things such as regular calls to keep in touch and see if they have any complaints or concerns can really surprise them and make them feel valued); Look at all the simple things you do in terms of your marketing promotions and think about how you can make simple gestures stand out. For example, we receive so many impersonal Christmas cards from corporates and contractors they become meaningless. Something as simple as sending a handwritten Mother's Day card or Easter card with a personal message would instead be memorable;
- **Be a bit old-fashioned** (in this modern age of text messages and emails, why not try something radical...and post a handwritten thank you card by snail mail. Most people only ever receive junk mail or bills by post nowadays (even birthday cards are often electronic now). I have found that a lot of people don't even realise how much they miss receiving something lovely in the post...until the day they get a totally unexpected handwritten thank you card through their letterbox and it makes them feel like a million dollars. I have carried out this simple old-fashioned act of appreciation for years and it is something that many other top performers swear by.



## If James Bond was a salesman... thank you cards would be one of his best secret weapons

**Joe Girard** was listed as the greatest car salesman in the world in the Guinness Book of World Records for 12 consecutive years. Joe would send out over 10,000 handwritten greeting cards a month. Joe would send every prospect 13 cards per year.

**Harvey MacKay** purchased a failing envelope company at age 26 that has grown to a \$100 million business. Mac Kay said, "Short, handwritten cards yield long-term results. Always send memorable cards which reminded you of that person and vice versa."

Master sales trainer **Tom Hopkins** was a millionaire by 27. Tom said, "Because I understood that building relationships is what selling is all about, I began early in my career to send thank you cards to people. I set a goal to send 10 handwritten thank you cards every single day. I became a thank you note fool. And guess what happened? By the end of my 3rd year in sales, my business was based on 100% referrals."

### When 'thank you' seems to be the hardest word...

It's important not to allow yourself to feel daunted in any way when it comes to writing thank you cards and notes. Just remember to be yourself and give the person you are addressing a little piece of you: a piece of your care and attention for those few short moments and the right words will come.

This isn't a writing competition: it isn't about how perfectly scripted or eloquent or well read you are; it's about showing your genuine appreciation for another person. As long as you keep it simple, friendly and heartfelt (without being over familiar, flippant or too brief) you can't go wrong.

Allow your personality to shine through. Remember, people work with people they like...and through being your true self you will naturally attract customers and contacts who enjoy being around your energy and whose business you therefore enjoy a whole lot more.

You can follow this advice whether you are sending a card, email, letter or invitation. Take a few moments to ensure that



it reflects your sense of fun, humour, personal style or some other part of your character (who you are). People connect with your personality so don't feel you need to hide who you are by mistaking overly stiff and stuffy for being professional – there is a difference. Being professional means following through and nurturing your business relationships, delivering on your company's promises, exceeding expectations and doing exactly what you say you will do either by the time (or before) that you say you will do it. Being professional is about being trustworthy, reliable and genuine...it doesn't mean you can't have fun.

I once sent all my clients an invitation to an event I was hosting and I put heaps of little coloured stars inside each envelope that would fall out on being opened. This was a cheeky reflection of who I am: thoughtful, fun and playful.

I also used to make myself stand out in my clients' minds by sending thoughtful thank you gifts after a sale was complete. I would always try to make these little presents as personalised to the individual as possible. Because I had already taken time to "Be There, Care and Share" I always already knew enough about them to pick out something personal I knew they'd really love. And these gifts needn't be huge or expensive to be effective. Some of the simple things I have done include:

- picking out my client's favourite wine (which elevates a simple thank you gesture up to being a truly outstanding one);
- sending cakes to a clients' office (which I found to be a fabulous way of marketing my business because everyone in the building got to enjoy the experience and they would talk about it and ask who I was and why I sent them etc);
- dropping into a building site where my client was hard at work with some meat pies and beers for the workers;
- having special hampers made up for clients who were pregnant or poorly with the flu containing everything they would need at that time;



- occasionally leaving some chocolates and a funny card on the kitchen bench thanking a client for having allowing me to present their property for the home open;
- making sure that if there ever was a time when I had no choice but to give a standard gift hamper for some reason, I would at least take the time to deliver it personally (sending something non-personalised by courier without a handwritten note attached is so impersonal it almost highlights the wrong things about your company and customer service)

### TOP TIPS for great gift giving

- make it personalised to show you care
- make them feel special by showing you understand their likes and dislikes
- deliver the gift in person when possible
- make it representative of you and your brand
- include your business cards / company branding in the wrapping paper

It's really all about being memorable for the right things in order to thrive and survive with happy, loyal customers through good times and the bad.

### Doing something special for your customers



**Your customers FEEL special**



**Your customers feel connected to you**



**This builds complete loyalty**



**and customers for life**

### Be genuine of intent

It's really important that you come from a place of genuine intent and that your sole reason is 'to give'. Do not give with your mind on what you will receive. Do not 'give to get'. I have watched hundreds of colleagues approach this from both angles and



through observing the outcomes I have learned that if you are giving in order to receive it just doesn't work because people can sense it. You must give from your heart and actually want to. I really love choosing a gift for someone and making it personal. I love that they love it. It is so simple to be memorable or to give outstanding service. Just change your attitude and choose to serve: the joy it gives you to care and be part of an experience and a shared memory is a wonderful added bonus and creates an energy and lightness in you that people really want to be around...which in turn cannot help but mean more business.

"All you need is love..."

—The Beatles

British band The Beatles said it best, and a few decades on I use this as a handy reminder of how important the after sale process is to retaining a customer for life. After all the work you have done to meet up, catch up and follow up you may assume that just because you have done a great job so far that you will be remembered forever. Unfortunately not. One of the number one reasons businesses lose customers is that their customers feel unappreciated. Not poorly serviced or overcharged (although these are also factors) but unappreciated.

It's suggested that up to 68% of customers will stop using your services or fail to return if they feel unappreciated. Yet so many people simply fail to stay in touch after the sale and end up losing everything in the future they have sown the seeds for. This post-sale period is your golden opportunity to make a lasting impression of quality. It's what you do when it's not expected, 'after you've been paid that they will remember the most.

### **Make after-sales service a marketing priority**

After-sales service should be at the top of your marketing budget and prospecting plan. It's so much easier and more cost effective to get repeat business than work twice as hard to win a new client from scratch so prioritise a budget towards contacting past clients each year.



The probability of selling to an existing customer is 60-70% compared with only a 5-20% probability that you will sell to a new prospect (source: marketing metrics). So you can see how insane it would be to not stay in touch after the sale to strengthen your existing relationships even further. From the sales agent's perspective it's crazy not to work this way when you consider the value of having a customer for life compared to a series of one-off sales. I call it working smart instead of hard. Plus we have all heard the statistics that it costs anywhere from five to eight times more to acquire a new customer than it does for you to keep an existing one going to become a lifetime customer. So given all of this, why wouldn't you stay in touch properly?

### **Don't dump your clients**

If you don't get in touch with a client after the sale, what message are you sending out? To them it might feel like when you first start dating. At first you are texting and emailing them all the time, every day (there is a lot of wooing going on!). They feel wanted and valued. They feel like you are really taking an interest in them, what they care about, their opinion, wants and needs. And then all of a sudden it stops. Just like that, out of the blue. No explanation, nothing! Hmmmmm. I'm sure you can imagine how they might be feeling.

You really need to make sure that you don't blow so hot and cold. You will do more damage than good by acting this way because your sudden silence will make everything that went before look insincere. Your customer will be left feeling unappreciated and possibly even 'used'. Not good. Remember that it's what you do **after** you have been paid that they will remember.

### **Make them feel appreciated**

Now here's the kicker: if you agree with me that we cannot assume that our customers will always return just because we serviced them once, then how can we ensure our relationships with them stay open? The answer is pretty simple: make sure



they feel appreciated. So in this section let's explore some of the ways that you can do just that.

People feel appreciated when you take the time to understand their needs and make an effort to get to know what's important to them, their likes and dislikes, listen to their opinions and learn what it is that makes them, them.

## How to ensure customers feel appreciated

1. Be CONSISTENT
2. Be RELIABLE
3. SHARE An Experience
4. Be GRATEFUL
5. SACK Bad Clients

### 1. Be CONSISTENT

The definition of being consistent is: 'constantly adhering to the same principles, course, form etc; not self-contradictory.' It's important that you always be consistent with your clients so that they know where they stand with you.

I had a recent customer experience myself where during the pre-sale phase I was wooed with all kinds of little gifts, but then once I was a client...nothing. No more calls, emails or gifts. Do you think I will be spending extra money with that company or becoming a raving fan for them and telling other people about their terrific treatment of me in future? Not likely.

When I first met this company though, it was a different story. I was raving about them! I probably would have spent a lot more money with them too but I was left feeling unappreciated by the way they 'dumped' me after winning my business. So be consistent and have a process in place for how often you activate your 'touch-points' with clients. This encompasses everything from the moment you meet them (and they first come into contact with you and your brand) right through until the day comes when you exit your business.



Touch-points can take the various form of phone calls, gifts, emails, visits, check-ups, meet ups, catch ups, follow ups, client servicing and events. The key is to be very clear on how and how often you are going to 'touch' your clients all the way through from initial contact to lifetime customer: because one of the most damaging mistakes you can make would be to allow meaningful contact and appreciation to end at the close of a sale.

Your customers need to feel that every time they deal with you there is a consistency to your brand. This means that you behave the same way after you closed the deal that you did when you were wooing them. Inconsistent behaviour leads to mistrust. Remember that you are your brand and how you behave and what you do is always representing your brand.

To help ensure your consistency establish an after-sale system and stick to it like glue! Diarise to call 1 day, 1 week and 1 month after the sale. In my experience, most people actively avoid these calls in case something was actually wrong, because they didn't want the hassle of addressing it. Well I did make the after sales calls and I learnt that 99% of the time everything was fine and the customer was thrilled to receive my call. On the odd occasion when something was wrong, they were so grateful I had called them rather than the other way around. They were thrilled that I cared enough to check they were happy and help fix any problems. The thing to remember here is: it really doesn't matter if the problem's not your responsibility. They're your client and that is all that should matter to you. For example, spending \$100 out of your own pocket to fix a faulty light could be worth thousands of dollars in potential referrals for you when word gets around about what awesome after sales service you provide.

## 2. Be RELIABLE

Simply put, this equates to one simple non-negotiable element:

'Deliver what you SAY you will  
in the WAY that you said that you would,  
by the TIME that you promised to deliver.'



### 3. SHARE an experience

The secret to creating a memorable experience to share with your customers is to make them feel something: make it experiential.

What sorts of experiences can you share and how? Well, a car sales professional offering test drives understands the value of this experience which is designed for both the seller and the customer to get excited together about the purchase of the car. My advice is to make it as fun and exciting as possible. If you're going on a test drive with a potential client, have some good tunes playing on the stereo, or you could even ask the client to choose the CD they like best from a selection loaded into the player.

One of the most exciting and emotionally-engaging 'life milestones' for people is buying a new home...and yet there are still sales people out there who leave the key at the office for their clients to pick up. Imagine what a difference it would make to the viewing if you were to meet them at the property and share in the excitement with them instead. And if this is the moment they are actually setting foot into a property they now own for the first time, then care enough to be there and share in their excitement by cracking open the champagne and celebrating with them.

Another way to provide your clients with a positive and memorable experience is through your packaging. If you have ever enjoyed the exquisite pleasure of receiving jewellery from Tiffany and Co. or unpacked any Apple Mac computer purchase, you will know how special it makes you feel to know someone cared enough to create a positive experience for you; to exceed your expectations of what something as simple as 'packaging' can feel like. In both these examples the packaging is as much an intrinsic experience of their brand as the products themselves.

I once took a series of photographs over a 12-month period for one of my developer clients working on site to illustrate the progress of the building process. I collated all of these into a gorgeous photo album, which I presented to him at the end of the project. Since he was an owner-builder he was especially



appreciative of having this memento of his work...and all it really took me was the time and effort to be thoughtful.

### Experiential thinking

There was a business on the Central Coast of NSW that got the whole community talking by purchasing a limousine as their new company car. The idea of this was twofold:

1. to create a visually high-impact reflection of how buying real estate is a massive experience...so why not celebrate this by making it a wonderfully luxurious one too?; and...
2. to create a reward system for past clients through offering them a unique experience to say thank you for their business and continued support.

### V.I.P experiences

Some of the unique personalised experiences I have shared with my V.I.P clients over the years include: taking one of my clients out for a day's V8 driving and exploring the wine region by luxury limo with another client who was passionate about wine. I choose each activity thoughtfully to suit each individual's interests and personality and created an experience that was memorable for each and far exceeded their expectations – which is a wonderful thing to accomplish.

### Face to face experiences

Another reason you want to share experiences with your clients is that it is said that once you have been face-to-face in a meaningful context, you don't need to be in contact for 3-6 months to remain top of mind.

This makes sense to me. It's just like relationships with family and friends: you don't need to call them every single day to know that you're there for one another. You know that you will catch up when you get the chance and in the meantime you remain friends. This is why physical (as opposed to online) networking is one of the fastest ways to build meaningful and long-lasting



connections for your business as you are seeing people face-to-face regularly.

My annual client functions allowed me to get face-to-face after the sale. I became friends with many of my clients and these events allowed me to get to know my clients on a more personal level.

Another reason for doing this was that I acknowledged the importance of continuing to follow up with clients, but I didn't like having to call every month to stay in touch. My solution was to call everyone three months before the event to personally invite them to attend, and again a while after the event to touch base and share stories of the fun we had.

On top of this planned contact detailed above, I would keep in general contact with my database throughout the year via email, cards, invitations and newsletters. In addition, I would see many of my clients again face-to-face at various networking and social events or group activities run by other organisations during the year.

#### 4. Be GRATEFUL

When someone passes you a referral or a lead, please, please do not forget to thank him or her. Being mindful of gratitude is

##### TOP TIP : Givers get

Never underestimate just how much givers get. I received literally hundreds of thousands of dollars in referrals each year.

Because I made a point of demonstrating my genuine appreciation, gratitude and thanks to everyone, the experience of this generosity of spirit stayed with my clients and my business was well on the way to being 100% referral by the time I left the industry as a result of my gratefulness.

one of the most important things you can do. I've lost count over the years of the number of people who've said that I'm the only person who has ever bothered to give them a thank you gift or taken the time to show my appreciation some other way for their referral. I find this fact incredible.



Aside from the fact that it's just plain rude, it doesn't make good business sense at all.

I believe it's important to be genuinely grateful when someone has gone to the time and effort to recommend your product or service and pass on a referral. Some of the ways I have thanked people in the past include:

- using my knowledge about them to find a bottle of their favourite wine or perfume as a token of my appreciation;
- sharing the fringe benefits of the referral with them;
- buying them an inexpensive but very specific personal gift I knew they'd love.

It's not how expensive the gift is that counts the most, but how thoughtful it is.

The absolute most important thing to remember here is that: you acknowledge the referral even if it doesn't end up becoming a closed piece of business. There are a hundred and one reasons why deals go ahead or fall through...and a hundred more as-yet unforeseen opportunities you cannot even fathom that might spiral off from this one referral.

What you are really saying here is, "Thank you for holding me in high enough regard to recommend me to someone else. I will look after them to the best of my ability and never take your faith in me for granted."

As long as you follow the guidelines above for how to keep the gift in line with the referral and how much to spend, you can't go wrong. Small gifts like a movie ticket or book voucher are just perfect for this.

## 5. SACK bad clients

Think about this for a second: If you really are your own boss, why on earth don't you just sack your bad clients? Not an easy question, but definitely one worth thinking about. There are some people out there who you just should not be dealing with.



You know the kind of people I mean: I call them vampires. They're the ones who suck the life right out of you; sap your energy; keep you up at night; increase your blood pressure; make you feel sick to your stomach every time you hear their name or think of having to call them.

Vampires are the ones whose values systems, work ethic and moral code do not match yours. No matter how hard you try to make it work, the truth is you're just too different and the energy you will waste in trying to force a round peg into a square hole would be far better invested in doing something more productive.

When you're starting out it can be very challenging to stand firm on this. I know it took me a while to understand this. There is so much temptation to bend over backwards trying to be all things to all people, especially if you've just checked your bank balance and are worried that you just really need the work.

It's also natural to want to service your clients well and exceed their expectations. This is all very admirable, but really only viable if you've also been discerning enough to select projects and people of high enough calibre to work with in the first place.

There's an old saying based on a quote by Abraham Lincoln which goes something like this; 'You can please some of the people all of the time, and all of the people some of the time, but you can never please all of the people all of the time.'

In my experience, agreeing to work with vampires can actually end up costing you money. By the time you have poured all your time and energy into the vampires who are never satisfied and don't respect your time enough to compensate you properly at the market rate, you may well find yourself too worn out to work with the people you really want to.

Give yourself permission to identify the vampires and sack the odd bad client in order to create the space to work with the people you really want to. Otherwise, if you really think about it, you've got all of the hard work and responsibility of 'being your own Boss' without giving yourself any of the advantages, freedoms or perks.



These days I make very conscious decisions about who I want to work with and who I don't. In staying true to myself in this way, I have found that I naturally attract people who I love doing business with. For example, if someone doesn't sit well intuitively with me when I'm networking then I don't let myself feel any pressure to take things further or agree to any further catch ups or follow ups. Nowadays my business philosophy is that there are plenty more fish in the sea: people with whom I'd love to do business, so I am only ever really looking out for them.

Having enough confidence in yourself and your ability to be able to walk away from the wrong people comes over time but you can help yourself along the way massively by coming from a mindset of abundance. This means that you never base a decision on what you think you 'need', but recognise that you have an abundance of everything already and can therefore make your decision based on what your business instinct tells you is the best choice instead.

The first few times you do this it will feel scary, but learning to trust yourself and your intuition is one of the most personally, professionally and financially rewarding things you can ever do while building your business.



## **BFO - Blinding Flash of the Obvious Opening a Relationship Not Closing a Sale**

### **1. Think lifetime customer value not one-off sale**

If you choose to focus on closing sales you'll be forever on the 'one-off treadmill'. Even years down the track you won't be able to slow down or relax because you will have to be out there day after day working really hard to chase down the next piece of business. Whereas, If you open relationships and invest the extra time building meaningful foundations from the outset, you will find your business growing, flourishing and taking on a life of its own in no time - just like seeds scattered in the wind.

### **2. Why are referrals so valuable?**

Because with a word-of-mouth referral from a happy customer, half your job is already done for you before you even start. Your new contact is pre-disposed to appreciate you.

### **3. Most important lesson for establishing rapport**

You cannot ask for anything unless you're 'in rapport' and; You cannot be in rapport unless you have first 'paced' them.

People do business with people they like... and people who are like them. There are a number of 'pacing' techniques you can use in order to be more like your clients, and mirroring behaviours you can adopt to reflect that which feels safe and familiar back at them.

#### **P + D = \$\$\$ + Success**

Your PEOPLE (prospects) and your DATABASE are the two essential ingredients to achieving unparalleled success with sales revenue based on repeat and referral business. Master this simple equation and you will never be desperately chasing business down.



## Register for your Online Coaching

It's easy to feel overwhelmed by the number of business ideas and resources out there, so in order to save you from wasting time and energy on the wrong ones I have set up a free online coaching system to support you in your journey.

Used in conjunction with this book, you can register for this free online coaching system and receive a monthly email with reminders of core concepts, BFOs and downloadable worksheets. These will help you to stay on track and assist you in becoming a master implementer.

**Get started right now  
Visit [www.onlinecoaching.kirstyspraggon.com.au](http://www.onlinecoaching.kirstyspraggon.com.au)  
and register your details.**



## What people are saying about *Work As If You Own It...*

*“Work As If You Own It* is filled with Kirsty Spraggon’s expert success strategies that will take your business to the next level. Whether you’re just starting out in sales or you’ve been in business for years, this book is an essential read for anyone wishing to attain a higher degree of success.”

—Ivan Misner

New York Times Bestselling Author and  
Founder of Business Networking International

*“If ever there was a time that the sale training industry needed a fresh face with a ‘can do’ attitude it is now. There is whole generation of salespeople struggling in today’s market because they have never experienced conditions like the current ones. There are very few speakers who can inspire these people to go to another level when they are surrounded by so much negativity. Kirsty Spraggon brings a fresh new approach that will help sales people go to a new level even in the most difficult environment. Today’s market is loaded with opportunities so read this book and set your self up to take advantage of them”*

—Michael Davoren

Director 2bid2

*“Right now, more than ever is the time you must focus on increasing your sales. Whether you are a business owner or a sales person, Kirsty’s book is the ultimate business tool that will help to increase your sales exponentially. If you aspire to be outstanding in sales, read this book.”*

—Toney Fitzgerald

Best Selling Author, Speaker and Lifestyles Coach



“Kirsty Spraggon walks the talk. She understands the nuts and bolts of success in the market place because she has lived it. This book is essential reading. Apply the principles in it and your life will prosper.”

—Pat Mesiti  
International Motivational Speaker & Author

“Having been personally involved with some of the world’s best Authors and Educators, such as President of Brian Tracy International, Anthony Robbins, Tom Hopkins and Zig Ziglar, I highly recommend that you read Kirsty’s book. It is a definite for anyone wanting to learn from the wisdom of someone whom has walked the path themselves. You will shorten your learning curve and save yourself thousands of hours by reading and then applying Kirsty’s wisdom and knowledge.”

—Ronnie Kagan  
International Speaker & Best Selling Author



## To Read More From This Book

I hope you have enjoyed this chapter. To read further chapters or order your copy of *Work As If You Own It* go to the resource section of my website at: [www.kirstyspraggon.com.au/resources](http://www.kirstyspraggon.com.au/resources)



## Planning a Conference or Training Session?

Kirsty is an incredibly driven individual with high energy. As a professional speaker, she adds a refreshing approach to any event.

Kirsty is passionate about supporting high performance sales people through the transition from salary to commission and performance based incentives. Her deep insight into the profession enables her to connect with her audience and encourage them to take action.

Audiences love Kirsty's contagious energy and say "you can't help but get caught up in her wonderful enthusiasm and positive outlook on life".

Expect high doses of fun, interaction and engagement. Kirsty's sessions are energetic, dynamic and inspiring. She is easy to work with on and off the platform and will be a fabulous contribution to your next event.

Phone: +61 413 531 800

Email: [kirsty@kirstyspraggon.com.au](mailto:kirsty@kirstyspraggon.com.au)

Website: [www.kirstyspraggon.com.au](http://www.kirstyspraggon.com.au)



At some point in our lives most of us have thought about:

being our **OWN BOSS**  
working our **OWN HOURS**  
making our **OWN CHOICES**

... But few have the courage to make it happen. If you have dared to take the path less travelled and have embraced your entrepreneurial spirit then this is the book for you.

Whether you enter the world of commission sales through real estate, the automotive industry, network marketing, mortgage broking, financial planning, insurance or recruitment (just to name a few) you should be working as if you own the business.

In this practical 'how to' book you will be guided every step of the way from start up to success.

Discover how to:

- ✓ master the transition from employee to entrepreneur
- ✓ identify the beliefs and mindset barriers that may hold you back
- ✓ set up and run like a business with a clear plan & strategy
- ✓ position yourself as an expert and create a perception around your brand
- ✓ master the art of delegation, outsourcing and making the most of your time
- ✓ thrive instead of just survive by planning for the long haul
- ✓ achieve all this while still maintaining balance ... and your sanity



**Kirsty Spraggon** is a speaker, author and coach who has been there and done it herself. She has been selling for over 15 years in a variety of industries, always at the top of her field. Kirsty ranked in the top 1% of individuals in RE/MAX's global network of 121,000 real estate agents while still managing to enjoy 3 months off every year. She is living proof that you can be hugely successful while still having fun and creating the life you want.

**“Whether you’re just starting out in sales or you’ve been in business for years, *Work As If You Own It* is an essential read if your goal is to attain a higher degree of success”**

**Ivan Misner, New York Times Bestselling Author and Founder of Business Networking International**