

SMALL BUSINESS CEO

Helping Small Businesses Grow.



Hi, this is Steve Rucinski of the Small Business CEO weblog which can be found at www.smbceo.com.

Today's topic is: **Building Client Relationships**

A few years ago before I started my own business a friend and I set out on a research project. We wanted to know why some people could make an effective relationship with someone very rapidly and others would take much more time and sometimes they would never get to the point of having a good relationship.

We were doing this study in the context of selling, why would some people get to a trusting relationship quickly and therefore have a higher likelihood of sales success.

Of course we felt that trust was the key to a successful sale of anything that is complex and expensive. We felt if trust could be developed quickly we could shorten our sales cycle and achieve success for our business.

We read at least 20 books on selling, from Tom Hopkins to *Selling with Soul*. The book that really turned on the light bulb for us was a book by a man called Mahan Khalsa called *Let's Get Real, The Demise of Dysfunctional Selling and the Advent of Helping Clients Succeed*.

This book was a real eye opener, it didn't focus much on tactics or tricks or manipulation or mind control. It focused on serving others FIRST. Letting go of your EGO and focus on what you want and instead focusing on what the client wants and serving them. Easy to say but tough to do, we all have ego's and we all need to pay the bills.

We then spent some time with some of the successful sales people we knew and sure enough, every one of them had a pretty low ego and a very strong service orientation. They were passionate about doing anything to help clients. In fact they were just passionate about helping others, client or not. They just had a natural service orientation.

Prospects can smell your intent, just saying it is a sales call outlines the intent that you are there to do something to them, at least that is how most prospects feel. Your intent to serve must be true or prospects will know it. Think about how you feel when someone is trying to sell you, or even become a friend, you can sense when they are being self serving, that sense is built into us. When we sense selfishness on the part of someone else we close off, we certainly don't TRUST that person.

Ego is an important thing though, it helps us do things to get our needs met. How do we convince our ego that our needs will be better met by serving the needs of others? It is not easy to check our ego's at the door. The key point I am making is that just being aware that our ego is there provides us the chance to set it aside and focus on the other person. If you can do that you can then be fearless and totally

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other person oriented. But it takes practice and focus.

This is not to say that technique and process is not important in sales or any relationship but it won't matter if your ego gets in the way and removes your ability to have true service intent.

So we set out to put this principle to work, of course we thought we were naturally service oriented and this just confirmed our belief. Sure enough we started have some great success. We had senior executives starting giving us 2-3 hour appointments that we didn't even know, off a cold call no less.

I could go on and on but I won't, I would just urge you to get the book and check out the website, the audio chapters narrated by Mahan are free and well worth listening to.

Go to <http://www.franklincovey.com/letsgetreal/media.html> to learn more about improving your business relationships by controlling your ego and focusing on helping others succeed.

Thanks, this is Steve Rucinski with Small Business CEO, have a great week.

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