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Connecting With Customers

By Paul Lemberg

I just got off the phone with a friend of mine. Business is up he said, but he didn't know why. I asked him a few questions, but the more we spoke about it the more concerned I became.

"What do you mean, you don't know why they're buying?"

"We never know why they buy," he told me.

"Never?"

"Nope. They just do."

My friend thinks he knows what is great about his product. They believe they understand it's applications, they just don't understand what drives sales.

And there's something else – it has to do with pricing and profits.

Since they don't really know why customers buy from them, it follows that they don't understand the full value customers get from their products. So they don't know what to charge! They discount to make sales – since they don't fully understand the customer's pain points – and that means – they always leave lots of money on the table.

When times are tough – and many people are feeling squeezed these days – there is tendency to panic. Who wouldn't? The economy, the financial markets, and now – terrorism. I read where a group of psychiatrists saying the country was on the brink of a nervous breakdown!

That's certainly not what I want for my customers! Is that what you want for yours?

I think this question can be a profitable one. What do you want for your customers? I started thinking about this and came up with a few others for you to ask yourself.

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Why do you want to serve your customers? What do you love about your particular customers? Are they perfect customers? If not, who would be? Describe them.

Case Studies and the Value Proposition

So I began thinking about my friend's sales problem – which brought me to thinking about a favorite topic of mine – the value proposition. Not in the sense of your USP, but in the sense of – what is the value of your product (or service) to your customer?

In other words, what is your product worth? How much – in money terms – does your customer save or earn when they use whatever it is you sell? Can you quantify that?

If you can't, well – you need to. It will make it much easier to sell.

But it's too complicated – we can't really say what they get from it.

No wonder you have trouble selling when times get tough. If you knew what it was worth, and it was worth more than you were selling it for, you'd have customers lining up pounding on your door for it.

You have to go out and do case studies. Exactly why did they buy. Exactly what is the application. Exactly how much more did they earn because of it and how did they earn it. Or, exactly how much did they save because of it and how did they save it. Get five or six of those and you'll be able to build a return-on-investment case for any prospect, and damn the economy. Which brings me to one last thing – the holy trinity of repeat sales.

Up-sell, Re-sell and Cross-sell What is your best possible source of revenue right now, bar none?

Your existing customers, right? Of course – they always are. Which means you should have a regular program to stay in contact.

What are you doing about repeat customer sales? When was the last time you contacted each customer, and made them an offer of some kind? What – you're waiting for them to call you?

Conclusion: You've got to contact your customers. Under any pretext, for any reason.

Why?

To solidify and maintain your relationships, and reconfirm why you want to do business with them. To understand your value from their perspective. And lastly, to make sure they are being served properly and to sell them everything they need.

Paul Lemberg is the President of Quantum Growth Coaching: More Profits and More Life for Entrepreneurs, Guaranteed. To get your copy of our free report with detailed steps to grow your business at least 40% faster, go to

<http://www.fastergrowthnow.com>

Networking for Women Entrepreneurs: Connecting is the Key To Magical Networking

By Jill Lublin

Something strange happens to many women when they approach networking opportunities. They suddenly forget how to connect, simply going through the motions of shaking hands and exchanging business cards. Networking becomes a chore — part of a business plan that is carried out with apprehension and some degree of loathing. It doesn't have to be this way. Networking magic happens through your connections — and your connections can create the fulfilling life you're looking for.

Your First Step: Start With Your Heart

Real connections come from true, heart-felt, and honest interactions. Shed your business persona and be yourself. If you have a line drawn between your personal and business connections, then erase that line. Start connecting with others as if each person might end up as your best friend. It's a simple formula for connecting from your heart with other entrepreneurs: Be yourself, and you'll naturally attract like-minded, quality people. People you meet are more likely to introduce you to their friends and associates if they like you.

Honesty, curiosity, and vulnerability are keys to success. Intimate connections are the foundation upon which we build satisfied lives and the best connections are heart-centered connections. Don't think for a minute that success in business requires a stoic business persona. Nothing could be farther from the truth.

Maintain an attitude of service

Great connections are the ultimate life and business builders and all great connections are based on a positive attitude of serving. Yes, it's true that we can't stay in business for long if we give everything away. But, there's a fascinating paradox that I've discovered in my many years of networking and creating connections. The more I give, the more I get.

Approach each interaction with an eye toward providing service. Find out what your prospect needs, and if you can't provide the answers, then steer her towards someone you know. You're not giving your business away, but you are always thinking of ways you can be of service to others. A service-oriented attitude is perhaps the most magical networking tool available. You'll be amazed at how swiftly and abundantly it comes back your way. Simply put — the more you give, the more you get.

It's not who you know, it's who knows you

Those with the largest database of business cards don't necessarily win. Unless you've honestly connected with the most influential people in your database, having their names will do you little good. Put your energy toward creating close connections with those who can have the most positive influence in your life and don't limit your search to business connections.

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Think in terms of how you can help these people by connecting them with others you know, by providing a unique service, or simply by being a friend. Make yourself available and they'll respond in kind when you're in need. Ask yourself: Who are the most influential people in my industry? Who are the people with whom I'd most like to associate with? Then, start developing strategies to meet these

people. It's most important to connect with those who are most like how you want to be. And don't for a moment believe that some people are out of your reach. Aim high and you'll reach high.

Connecting isn't a solo trip

Great networking isn't about out-maneuvering your competition. The best networkers think in terms of collaboration, not competition, even with their fiercest competitors. How might two or three of you band together to provide products or services to more high-end, high-paying customers? How can you enlist the help of people around the globe in your R&D efforts?

Connecting by its very nature is collaborative. Instead of collecting business cards and sending out brochures, seek out people with whom you might collaborate and build strong connections. You might meet someone with a brilliant idea who's looking for a partner with your expertise. Or, you might form a mastermind group to brainstorm innovative ways to improve your business while holding each other accountable for implementing these new ideas. Best of all, you'll create new friendships that enrich your life.

Jill Lublin is an internationally acclaimed speaker, nationally syndicated radio talk show host, and best selling author of the books, *Guerilla Publicity* and *Networking Magic*. She is CEO of the strategic consulting firm

Promosing Promotion

and is working on her third book. Need her advice, contact her

via phone at 415-883-5455, or email:

info@promosingpromotion.com



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