You have all probably heard the saying: ‘People will only normally do business with people they like and can associate with’, and that the most important part of the sales process is the building up a relationship. I strongly believe this and would like to share a personal story with you to back up this case.

On a whim, during the recent property boom, I joined the many thousands and became a first-time property developer. I decided to offer finance to a builder-friend of mine, so he could buy a run-down property, develop it and then sell it on. It is in a good area and the deal fitted in with my risk taking. What I needed, however, was finance in with my risk taking. What I was able to spend.

The meetings commence

Existing Bank arrived. There were two of them and they were nice and pleasant. They built rapport fairly well, although they were questioning me on what I did as a business. Twenty years as a customer, yet they did not know what I did for a living. They offered a really good scheme and I decided in about five minutes. They had already prepared on the basis of a quick telephone conversation we had had on the day before. You know what, I had already decided to do business with Brian and New Bank before I had seen the offer he was making to me. I was very impressed and I had probably decided in about five minutes. Why, because Brian had taken the trouble to find out all about me, before he came to see me and was genuinely interested. We also found several topics we both were genuinely interested in. We connect fairly well, although they were questioning me on what I did for a living. Twenty years as a customer, yet they did not know what I did for a living. They offered a really good scheme and I decided in about five minutes. I was very impressed and I had probably decided in about five minutes.

‘We must have spent at least 20 minutes discussing my business and my life, and I was in my element’

What’s happened since

1. One of his associates came and collected the forms and all necessary paperwork within 24 hours.
2. I had regular telephone calls from his PA, Stephanie, every other day, informing me of the progress of the loan.
3. Once we had completed, I got a telephone call telling me the money was ready and available to spend.
4. A few days later I got a bunch of flowers thanking me for my business and for choosing New Bank.
5. Once we had completed, I got a telephone call telling me the money was ready and available to spend.

It was harder to do business with New Bank, as I had to provide information that my existing bank already had, however it was a joy to do business with them.

I find in life that for every 100 purchases/transactions I make, about three to four per cent are memorable and enjoyable. The other 96 per cent are nothing special, or the service is not good and I do not enjoy it. So I am delighted to share one of the more enjoyable experiences.

Key points to learn

1. Spend time in preparation. Learn all about your patients, read their records and have staff meetings. Remember – proper preparation prevents poor performance.
2. Really focus on getting the customer to like you and ‘connect’ with the patient. It is only when you really connect that a transaction takes place.
3. Look the part. Nothing more to say here.
4. Once you have gained commitment, do everything possible to make the experience a great one. ‘Wow’ them at every opportunity, keep them updated with what is going on and of course, common sense here, thank them for your business.
5. Ring the patient at home afterwards and ask them how everything is going.

Last thought and something I would like to leave with you. Please focus on building relationships with your patients. You and your team will never get a second chance to make a first impression. It is only when you really connect that a transaction will take place.

About the author

Ashley Latter

has now delivered the ethical sales and communication programme to over 4,000 dentists and their team members over the last 10 years. He is also the author of the book, Helping Patients Say YES. To find out more about his course dates and to register for his free email newsletter, please visit his website: www.thesellingcoach.co.uk.

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