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 become 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 to do the deal quickly. So I contacted my existing bank, Existing Bank.

The meetings commence
Existing Bank arrived on time. New Bank arrived on time. There was genuine interest and we were offered a really good scheme and I was in my element.

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

The trouble to find out all about me, before he came to see me and was genuinely interested. We also found several topics we were genuinely interested in football, cricket etc. We were connecting.

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 said that I would take it over with my wife.

New Bank arrived on time. There was just one of them and he was called Brian. Brian spent the first few minutes asking me lots of questions about my business and my website, which he had visited the day before, and about some of the training I had delivered. We must have spent at least 20 minutes discussing my business and my life, and I was in my element.

You see, ‘ME’ is my favorite conversation. He asked me questions about what I required and presented some quotations he 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 about me, before he came to see me and was genuinely interested. We also found several topics we were genuinely interested in football, cricket etc. We were connecting.

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.

Practice Management

The art of connection
You have to bond with your patients if you want them to say ‘yes’ to treatment. Author Ashley Latter offers some invaluable advice

Really focus on getting the customer to like you and ‘connect’ with the patient.

 Ashley Latter

About the author
Ashley Latter has now delivered the ethical sales and communication programme to over 4,000 dentists and their teams 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.