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 – and for the purposes of this article, let us call them Existing Bank. I strongly believe this is only when you really connect with the customer to like you and ‘connect’ with the patient. It is only when you really connect that a transaction takes place.

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 consider 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.

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 did 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.dentalselling.co.uk.