

FRIENDSHIPS VS BUSINESS RELATIONSHIPS



WHICH ONE SHOULD YOU BE WORKING ON?



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WE tend to do business with those we like. This makes sense – so much so that many of us feel this way almost instinctively. This belief has been validated by numerous experts, articles and research.

However, this often cited phrase has led many in sales to develop friendships with customers. Developing a friendship is not the same as building a meaningful business relationship – and that distinction is important because you won't get the same results.

Being friendly in business is necessary but friendships in business aren't.

That's an important concept. We can have a **valuable** business relationship without friendship.

Unfortunately, many mistakenly believe that the first step to building a business relationship is to develop a friendship.

Friends are those people whom we socialise with outside of work and are characterised by significant and somewhat intimate interactions.

We might be friends with an accountant but wouldn't hire her as our tax preparer. This doesn't mean that we think our friend is incompetent.

We might deduce that doing personal returns would be outside our friend's area of expertise. Or, it could be another matter entirely.

We may have listened to our friend complain about her workload and not want to add to her burden. With friendships, we can think of lots of reasons not to do business with each other.

INVESTING IN BUSINESS RELATIONSHIP

Our relationship with friends is distinctively different than being in a business



relationship. One sales representative, Sue, learnt this the hard way. She worked to develop a friendship with one of her key customers and they would often play tennis together.

However, Sue soon discovered that being a friend didn't lead to getting more business. When she was brave enough to ask why her 'friend' wasn't using more of the product she was selling, her 'friend' explained that he makes business decisions based on the merits of the product, not on friendship. That was Sue's 'aha' moment.

Now if she had put the same amount of effort into building a meaningful business relationship that she put into

developing a friendship, she undoubtedly would have seen the difference in her sales results.

PROVIDING VALUE TO OTHERS

Both friendships and business relationships take time and effort. The difference is that business remains at the heart of a business relationship – and the sales results reflect that focus.

So yes, we need to be friendly. We need to be welcoming, sociable, open and pleasant. That's usually the first requirement to building that valuable business relationship that has business needs as its foundation.

It might make sense to take a moment and consider how you approach your customers. Are you focusing too much on the friendship aspect? Have you been trying to be friends with your customers and expecting them to buy your product based on your friendship?

It just might be the right time to change your focus to work on building business relationships. Focus on how you can provide value and make a difference in how they do their job.

When you help your customers improve their business and/or their patients' lives, you are no longer just a sales person. You become a trusted colleague.

When Harvard Business School professor Noam Wasserman studied nearly 10,000 founders of technology and life sciences start-ups, the least stable founding teams were friends. According to a research, starting a company with your friends is a risky endeavour. Why? Find out from this article by Adam Grant on Leaderonomics.com at bit.ly/AGfriends

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FIND yourself struggling to get through your day at work? Wishing you had a different boss to report to?

You're definitely not alone. In fact, three out of four employees report disliking their boss – saying it's actually the worst and most stressful part of their job. Two-thirds of people even say they would prefer getting a new boss over a pay raise.

If you're battling a bad boss, just remember that a boss-employee relationship is exactly that – a relationship between two people, and nothing more. And there are always ways to improve a relationship.

Check out these five simple strategies to help you out.

1 DON'T BECOME A JERK

An eye for an eye makes the whole world blind – and, as we enter the workforce, the old adage is every bit as true as it was in our childhood. No matter how much you despise your boss, don't spend your spare time trash-talking him/her with your

GOT A BAD BOSS?

co-workers. It brings you down to the same level of bad behaviour.

2 LOOK DEEPER

When people see an angry person, something very few people like to do is look beyond the irritating behaviour to figure out what's really going on underneath the anger. If you're having issues with your boss, try getting to know him/her better. The challenges they're dealing with on the inside might surprise you.

3 DO THE BEST JOB YOU CAN

One of the worst mistakes people make when dealing with an annoying boss is doing their work poorly – an action that will just result in more anger and irritation on the boss's end. By making his/her life easier, you're reducing the chances of falling victim to the micromanaging and irate rebukes that characterise stress.

4 MAKE TIME FOR YOURSELF

Regardless of what's going on at work, make time to do the things that ground you so that you can maintain your sanity at the office.

Meditation, exercise, reading, and any other hobbies that you find particularly grounding are great for bringing you peace of mind. Don't be afraid to keep them up.

5 LEARN BY (BAD) EXAMPLE

Now that you know what a bad boss does, you also know what kind of impact your boss's behaviour has on you and your teammates.

Whenever you get the opportunity to lead yourself, take pride in knowing that you're not carrying yourself the same way professionally.

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more of his leadership articles here: www.inc.com/author/peter-economy

Some of our best bosses were inspiring, yet controlling. They knew to how switch their leadership hats to seamlessly move from authoritative to

inspirational at just the right moment.

So, what determines if your boss is good or bad? Does your unhappiness equate to you having a bad boss? Check out this insightful article by Roshan Thiran at bit.ly/RTgoodbadboss