

3 Steps to Building Great Relationships Through Conversations

Great client relationships are the cornerstone of all successful businesses. It's no secret that people do business with people they know, like and trust. Building quality client relationships ensures customer loyalty and long-term profitability.

As Al Ritter, a friend and an exceptional management consultant, asserts:

“When it comes to success in business, the results we get come from our actions and the quality of our relationships”

The same philosophy holds true for both our external relationships and internal relationships. If you're a leader dedicated to sustainable success, you must keep in mind that internal relationships are just as important as external relationships.

Just as we treat clients with special care by asking them what they expect, need and want from us, we must also do the same for each and every one our colleagues. We most certainly must do so with those who are a part of our team.

When engaging in conversations, here are three steps that will go a long way to help earn respect and loyalty:

1. **Treat people as teammates rather than just employees.** Remembering names, establishing comfortable eye contact, thanking individuals for their hard work, and recognizing their successes no matter how big or small, will make a difference. When practicing these actions, it's important to be genuine and show people that you truly care. Touch base often.

Leverage your soft skills by being accessible and easy to work and talk with. Here's an example of why this matters: According to recent survey of people who had left their companies for new jobs, two thirds of respondents stated the principal reason they left was because they did not feel appreciated.

2. **Find the time for conversations.** As busy as we may be, make one-on-one conversations with team members a priority. It's okay that on some days you may have only a few minutes. Just be sure to come out of your office and go speak with people in their offices. When out on the road, call your teammates, even if it's just to say you're about to catch a plane and you're simply wanting to check in to see how things are going. Ask them if there is anything they need from you. A short conversation is better than no conversation at all.

I promise you such conversations will make a difference. Last week, a regional vice president of a successful company shared with me that he was thrilled when his CEO called to talk and ask for his ideas. That really impressed him. He feels great about his personal connection with his boss.

3. **Keep a positive attitude.** Attitude is everything! Hold firm to the assumption that everyone wants to do well and succeed. As bosses, we must engage in conversations to provide our people with the encouragement and help they need in order to do great work. It's our job as their leader to help them. And be positive, always reinforcing the positive attributes of your team and the company. A positive and caring attitude will help to build strong relationships with teammates that will lead to outstanding service and results.

Through conversations, we must ask questions about our teammates' ideas and goals, listen to understand and learn, and most importantly we must realize that each team member may have different needs. For example, some may need to be challenged while others will need to be encouraged. If they know you are rooting for them, they will try to live up to your expectations.

While there is always more one can do to develop and maintain strong, loyal relationships with teammates, mastering these three steps is an essential starting point.

Remember that your interactions and relationships with customers and with your team are equally important to achieving sustainable outstanding results. By implementing the leadership practices above, you can expect to meet and exceed goals year after year.

About The Author



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