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Finding Gold

How to Develop Trust, Part One

By Michael Lovas



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This article deals with the psychology of selling. Will you find value in it? Let's see. Can you easily answer these questions:

1. What comes first - trust, likability or rapport?
2. If your mind starts to wander, can your prospect detect it?
3. What causes people to like you?
4. Do your prospects have the same basic understanding of words as you do?
5. Does your mind ever wander during a business conversation?

In my research to uncover what makes people buy from you, I've identified a procedure and some rules. Stop and think for a minute. Ask yourself, "Why do some people buy from me? And, why do others not buy from me?" When you can answer that question, you will have taken a giant step toward significantly more sales.

Let's use Bill (a fictional character) as an example to make this procedure easy to understand:

1. Bill feels comfortable with people who pay attention to him.
2. Bill likes sales people he consistently feels comfortable with.
3. Bill likes sales people who "speak his language."
4. Bill likes sales people who meet him at his emotional and psychological level.
5. Bill tends to trust people he likes.
6. Bill buys from sales people he trusts.
7. Bill continues to buy from people he continues to

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trust.

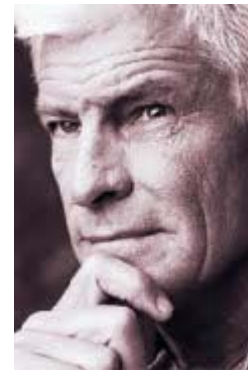
You, like me, need to achieve each of those steps before we can make a sale and gain loyal clients. If we try to jump over any of those steps, we risk destroying the comfort level and killing the affinity and trust we've built.

Can you see the logic in that? When you can start to believe it, you can begin to develop strategies to accomplish each step. Only when you can easily move through those steps, will you see consistent success. Perhaps you're already doing that. But then, maybe your sales volume isn't where you want it to be. In this article, I'm going to give you some strategies to accomplish that.

How do you know when someone is paying attention to you?

Let's say you and I meet at a civic function. How do I know if you're paying attention to me and not thinking about something else?

I would look at your reactions to my conversation. They would immediately tell me when/if your mind wanders.



To connect with me, you would simply match me in verbal and nonverbal ways.

Alert! If you think this sounds too basic, think again. My firm teaches financial and insurance advisors how to build rapport - powerful rapport with people who are important to them. What we have found over the years is that most advisors think they can build rapport. When in fact, the opposite is true. It is our experience working with professionals in many different industries that the

vast majority of them actually sabotage their own efforts at building rapport.

When you're in the rapport-building mode with me, and you focus on me. I will feel that you're paying attention to me. I'll read it in muscular shifts that are so tiny and quick that you won't know you made them - but I will. If you don't match me in body and language, I will feel as though your body is in the room but your mind is on something else.

Remember your last several business conversations. Did you begin thinking about something else? Did you start thinking about what you were going to say next? That means you may have difficulty maintaining focus. If you have difficulty focusing on the other person long enough to build rapport, then you might consider talking with a hypnotherapist. The inability to focus throughout a conversation is a common problem for busy professionals - too many things to think about at one time. Yes, common, but that doesn't make it less dangerous. Remember, it is the other person that assigns any value to your participation in the

conversation. If you have not met the other person where he is emotionally and psychologically, then you'll probably fail the Rapport Test.

Quick true story: My hobby is playing drums. I've been a professional drummer since about 1965. In fact, playing drums kept me out of Viet Nam - I was in the Marine Corps Band in California. A few weeks ago I was invited to play with two classical musicians from Russia. I wanted to make a good impression on them, but it was very difficult. They both spoke English as a second language - distant second. It was a strain just to understand the words, much less the intended meaning.

I love to joke and most of my jokes are language-oriented. That was certainly out of the question. Neither of the guys could understand the subtle nuances of American verbal humor.

I was scared that I'd fall into the old trap of smiling and nodding like an idiot, and not knowing what they were talking about. In the end, I simply mirrored their facial expressions and stood facing them. I also repeated exactly the key words they used. And, yes, I smiled and nodded a lot, but more like a fellow musician rather than an idiot. The result was positive. We determined that we liked each other and that we would play music together.

Picture yourself. Now, picture yourself standing, talking with a prospect. Imagine that person has only a modest grasp of your language. How do you communicate? Since the nonverbal is between 70-93% of your communication, it would be a good idea to do what I had done. (No, not just smile and nod!)

In truth, because we all use words in different ways and even have different definitions for common words, each of us actually does speak a different language. At the heart of this point is what we refer to as "Criteria Words." Those are the important words you use when you're talking about something important to you. I will probably know the same words, but my internal definition of them will probably be significantly different from yours. That's because the important words you use are directly connected to your memories and emotions. Obviously, since we have led different lives, our memories and emotional connections to words will be different. Having been a traveling rock and roll musician, I can promise you - my life has been different!

If you smile at me and I frown back at you, are we growing closer or farther apart? Likewise, if you refer to "family honor," and I reply, "personal honor," it's not the same thing is it? In that scenario, not only would we disconnect, my reply would confuse you, possibly to the point of exacerbation. Is that a good way to build rapport? Is that a good way to help someone like you? Is that a good strategy for making a sale?

The appropriate behavioral strategy is to:

1. Match the other person's body attitude.
2. Look into the other person's face.
3. Mirror his facial expressions.
4. Pick out the important words in his conversation, and repeat them exactly.
5. Then, when you can, use those words in your own conversation with that person.

When you do those things, you stand an excellent chance that the other person will say, "That guy Mike, he speaks my language. I like him."

About the author

Michael Lovas is a Master Practitioner of psychology. He teaches insurance and financial professionals how to be more successful by using psychology in their marketing and sales.

*Michael is the author of two books on using psychology in your business: **Beyond Wave Marketing** and the new workbook/disk set **Face Values**.*

Michael has spoken to: MDRT, FPA (IAFP), NAILBA, Society of Certified Senior Advisors, NALU chapters, NAHU chapters, American Marketing Association chapters, and many businesses including Mobil Oil, Delta Life & Annuity, London Life and Great West Life.

See Michael at:

1. Georgia Insurance Expo in Athens, March 26, 2002
2. Central California Association of Health Underwriters annual convention April 5, 2002.
3. The Financial Advisors Forum in Dallas, April 18-20, 2002
4. GAMA International "Leading Practices" conference in Chicago June 2002

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