

People *Savvy* FOR Sales Professionals

LEAD THE FIELD. FOUR SECRETS FOR GETTING INSIDE YOUR
PROSPECT'S HEAD AND HEART AND CREATING CUSTOMERS FOR LIFE.

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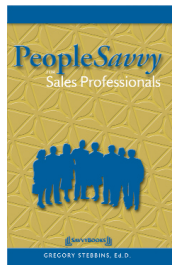
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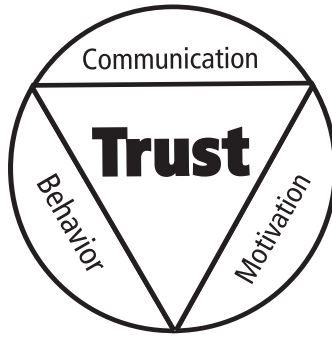
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1: TRUST



You're feeling pretty good about yourself. You just had a meeting with a new customer and things really clicked. The customer liked you, she heard what you said about your product, and she was favorably impressed. She didn't actually say so; however, you know, based on the connection you felt with her, that you will get the sale.

A week later, you hear through the grapevine that the customer placed her order with your competitor. Your confidence is shaken. How could such a good sales call, with such good rapport, go so bad?

You're about to find out.

How Do You Spell Sales? T-R-U-S-T

At the heart of all positive customer relationships is an intangible quality called *trust*. Over the years, we have examined the concept of trust with hundreds of top producers. As they have looked deeply at their experience, they consistently conclude that lack of trust, more than any other reason, prevents sales from closing.

Knowing how to develop trust is absolutely essential to building a stellar sales career and is the foundation of everything in this book.

While trust means different things to different people, qualities like dependability, loyalty, and honesty are building blocks that encourage a sense of trust.

Most often, we trust someone when we have confidence that they are going to keep their word. **In business terms that translates to trusting another person if we have confidence in their ability to deliver on those promises they make to us *that have positive economic impact for us.*** Economic impact can mean anything from giving the customer a financial edge to making them look good in front of a superior, which may affect their job evaluation. What's more, we have a better shot at establishing trust if a customer believes the relationship with us is going to last over the long term.

Your reputation as a sales professional is a capital asset. Your reputation for being trustworthy (worthy of trust!) is something you build over time with consistent positive performance. However, it can be ruined in an instant with a single negative event: a missed deadline without telling the customer in advance, not delivering on a promise you made to a customer.

Who Will Trust You If You Don't Trust Yourself?

The foundation for earning the authentic trust of others is an innate trust of yourself. This inner trust is a cornerstone for creating customer relationships. Ask yourself, "Do I trust myself?" Now ask yourself, "Do I keep my word with myself?" If both answers are "yes," you have a solid foundation for building trust with others. If you're not keeping your word with yourself, then you may not have a very deep level of self-trust, and that can erode your efforts toward building customer trust.

The skills outlined in this chapter are focused on building trust with the customer. They can also be used to develop greater self-trust. In both cases, you win.

No Trust = No Sales

We've been told that no matter what you do, few customers buy from a person they don't believe to be trustworthy.

If you are untrustworthy, you still might make a sale if you are the only available supplier for a specific product or service and the buyer actually must have it. Or you might get a sale if the buyer is impulsive. You can also temporarily trick someone into making a low- or no-trust sale. However, you cannot build a career on such an unstable foundation. If you want to develop enthusiastic customers, repeat business, and profitable relationships, you must earn your customers' trust.

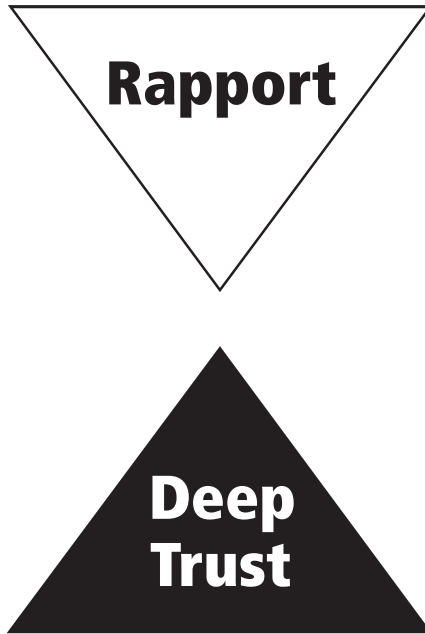
Trust is expectation, hope, and a sense of being able to predict future events—at least in relation to you and your behavior. Trust is mutual and reciprocal. Creating trust depends on your perception or interpretation of a person or a situation.

With trust comes vulnerability, comfort, willingness to risk, and security. There is also a sense of reliance and confidence.

One of our clients told us, “When I have felt heard and acknowledged, that’s when I begin to trust the other person. Being listened to creates a feeling of safety.” Another client said that, to him, it is vital to have a non-threatening environment, so trust can only happen when personal (psychological and physical) safety is guaranteed.

As you develop the ability to support these experiences in your prospects, you will gain their trust...and their business.

Rapport vs. Deep Trust



There are two aspects to trust. The first is *rapport* and the second is *deep trust*. **Rapport and deep trust influence the customer in similar ways, yet they are very different in power and influence when it comes to closing the sale.**

You can build rapport very quickly with another individual, whether it's on a customer call, at a cocktail party, or waiting for a bus. And it is possible to persuade another person to buy something from you when there is mutual rapport. However, **if a transaction will have some sort of major economic impact for the person making the buying decision, rapport will not be**

enough to carry the day. If you want to win bigger orders and repeat business, you need to know how to gain deep trust.

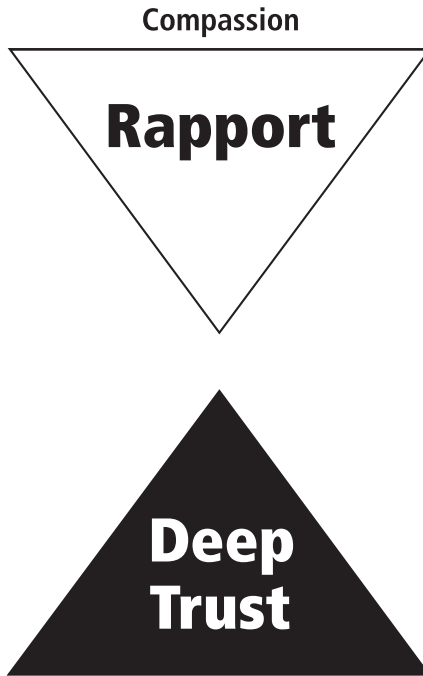
The distinction between rapport and deep trust is often missed by inexperienced salespeople. Understanding them both will put you in a stronger position to increase your record of sales successes.

Rapport has three parts: compassion, connection, and credibility. Think of each of these as a building block in the foundation of your successful sales career. With a strong foundation, you can build very successful customer relationships. Without the foundation, the relationships are fragile. Another way of saying this is that with a solid foundation, you can build reliable future sales. With a weak one, future sales are likely to be hit-or-miss.

Deep trust also has three parts: competence, commitment, and consistency. The taller the building, the deeper the foundation required. The greater the economic impact of the sales, the deeper the trust required.

Here's how you lay a solid foundation and build a strong structure for your career as a sales professional—no matter where in your career you are.

Rapport: Compassion



Why would compassion be a component of rapport, which is in turn a component of trust? Because trust implies that you genuinely care about your customers, their concerns, their challenges, and their goals. Your customer is, after all, another human being with thoughts and feelings.

Why should you care about their feelings? For the most important reason in the world: Because the customer has feelings about *you*. If they don't feel good about you, it will impact their trust in you and will have direct consequences on your sales success.

Developing compassion opens you to greater possibilities. When you think only of yourself (or your sale), your ability to see

clearly narrows and you miss opportunities that could otherwise be obvious to you. For example, when visiting a customer and he is distracted, do you notice? Do you keep on making your presentation to a person who is obviously “not home”? Or, do you suggest that he seems to be focused on other things and it might be best to reschedule the presentation for another time? If he agrees to rescheduling, he will remember your being compassionate with him and next visit he’ll be much more open to you and your ideas.

Compassion is a process that works chiefly in the unconscious mind. Many sales training books include lessons about how to influence another person. The problem is, the approaches these books offer are generally based on only a superficial understanding of what the process of influence consists of.

Consider that, rather than focusing on influence as the *method*, there is a much stronger influence that is really the *result* of being compassionate. Genuine compassion is a more authentic form of influence. Wherever there is compassion, some influence will naturally be occurring.

How & Why Compassion Works

Have you ever noticed that two people talking together tend to take on each other’s gestures, tones of voice, and general physical ways of expressing? It’s a fact, and it is quite understandable: According to the principle of compassion, *it is impossible* for two or more people to engage in genuine conversation without approximating each other’s mannerisms.

Compassion is a deep state of identification in which one person feels so connected to the other as to temporarily lose their own identity. It is in this profound and somewhat mysterious process

that understanding occurs and then influence takes place—not as a manipulation, but as a natural, positive result.

Sometimes, the result of genuine compassion can be surprising.

I met with the VP of marketing for a medium-sized aerospace company to discuss some work they were considering hiring me for. The VP and I hit it off rather quickly and he liked what we were talking about. The president was in the office that day and the VP wanted to bring him into the conversation.

As soon as the president walked in, it was obvious that he would have been happier to be somewhere other than in that room with us. In fact, it was quite clear that he wasn't fully there with us, that something was on his mind.

He sat down without shaking my extended hand and looked down at the floor. So I sat down and looked at the floor and asked him, "What do you want to know about our discussion?" His response was to put his head in his hands.

Here before me was a powerful and successful man, and at the same time a very "feeling" person who was having some great challenges in his life. They could have been business or personal, I didn't know. I saw that my immediate sales job was to be compassionate with him. It wasn't directly about making the sale; it was about establishing rapport so there could possibly be a sale.

Assuming his physical posture, I re-asked the question, "What do you want to know about our discussion?" After an uncomfortably long pause, he started talking about his

business. While he talked, I sat perfectly relaxed, letting my eyes focus on the same piece of carpet that his were on. I permitted myself to become absorbed in his story. I was so completely engrossed that I was unconscious of our physical surroundings and was aware only of this man's concern, his quavering voice, and the fascinating human drama he was describing.

He told me how he had created the business and built it up from nothing. During this moment I felt the pride that was in his voice, as though I, myself, was responsible for creating the business. He spoke of the glory years and how it seemed everything he did made money. And as he described this feeling of invincibility, I experienced a euphoric feeling, as though the feeling had been my own.

Then this man spoke of how much the business world had changed in the last two years and how his company was losing contracts. He spoke of how frustrated he was trying to figure out how to make it work. He said that he was looking for a successor to take over his business since his son had shown no interest. I could feel his sense of disappointment with his son as if the boy had been my own son.

As a sales professional, I had become so absorbed in his story that his emotions had temporarily become my emotions. I actually felt his feelings of euphoria and desperation as he succeeded and struggled. In the moment, they became my own experiences.

This partial identification was so real that, when I commented, my voice took on the same hesitant, quavering quality of his. The reality is, in this deep sense

of compassion, he and I were, for all intents and purposes, one person at that moment.

At the conclusion of the conversation he finally looked up at me, blinked, and extended his hand for a handshake. As he was leaving the room, he told the VP, "This is the first guy you've had in here that really understands our problems." The VP was astonished and wanted to know what I did, as the president never spent more than five minutes with anyone else before leaving the room abruptly.

What I had done was practiced genuine compassion. As a result, not only did I create a positive impression with the president of the company, but I also earned the confidence, leading to trust, of the VP, the individual who would be making the buying decision.

This is the power of compassion. It means entering the private perceptual world of your customer and becoming thoroughly at home in it. It involves being sensitive, moment by moment, to the changing thoughts and feelings that flow through your customer's mind and emotions. It means temporarily living in their life, moving about delicately without making judgments or trying to manipulate. It involves taking on their postures and gestures, not as a technique, but as a means to deepen your understanding of their world.

Why bother to go so deep? Because the more fully you understand your customer, the better you can anticipate and address their needs. And when you address their real needs, you are well on the road to building the kind of relationship that can mean solid, repeat sales.

Compassion begins with unconditional acceptance. To successfully merge with your prospect, you temporarily lay aside your own

views and values in order to enter their world without prejudice. In some sense, it also means that you lay aside your agenda. By doing this, real understanding between the two of you can take place. With this understanding, rapport is initiated and the seed of trust is sown.

Your ability to be compassionate is not related to your intelligence or ability to diagnose your customer's problems. Diagnosing your customer's problems without compassion comes off as clinical and cold. With compassion, your prospects open up and begin revealing concerns, hopes, goals, and desires they may never have communicated before. And these will assist you in assisting them, both in their deeper need now and in the long run.

Of course, when customers begin to open up and tell you what's going on with them, you need to know how to listen.

I Know You Heard What You Think I Said

There are many different forms of listening, each producing a different type of response from the customer. For example, most sales professionals are good at fact-oriented listening skills. These skills would include comprehending what the customer's often-superficial needs are and evaluating your company's ability to fulfill those needs. They may or may not serve to establish trust. There is another form of listening, called compassionate listening, that, when genuine, will support the trust-building process.

Compassionate listening integrates an attitude of curiosity. When we listen compassionately, we are fully available and present for the customer. We have no preconceived notions about what's going on with them. We are not busy rehearsing our "pitch" or planning how to respond to what they might say. We are not just waiting for a moment to break in and interrupt. We do not care if

we are right and they are wrong. We have no need to defend ourselves or to prove ourselves brilliant, insightful, or witty.

We do have a burning desire to understand the essence of this person in this moment. We are pure awareness, soaking in the words—and going far beyond the words to be in a place of fully resonating with the customer.

Compassionate listening is a way for you to help your customer explore a problem that may not even directly involve you. It is a way of listening and responding to another person that improves mutual understanding and trust. Compassionate listening encourages the surfacing of information and creates a safe environment that is conducive to collaborative problem-solving.

Through compassionate listening, the listener lets the speaker know, “I want to understand your problem and how you feel about it; I am interested in what you are saying and I am not judging you.” In so doing, the listener encourages the speaker to express fully—free of interruption, criticism, or being told what to do.

Through the use of compassionate listening, you can influence the sales call by your:

- willingness to let the other parties dominate the discussion
- attentiveness to what is being said
- care not to interrupt
- use of open-ended questions
- sensitivity to the emotions being expressed
- ability to reflect back to the other party both the *substance* and *feelings* being expressed

When you listen well, you:

- acknowledge the customer
- increase the customer's self-esteem and confidence
- communicate to the customer, "You are important" and "I am not judging you"
- gain the customer's cooperation
- reduce stress and tension
- build teamwork
- elicit openness
- accomplish a sharing of ideas and thoughts
- obtain more valid information about the customer and their needs

The bottom line is that you encourage trust.

Premature agreeing, disagreeing, offering solutions, or presenting another point of view can abruptly stop the compassionate listening process. It is essential that you not let your premature opinions block your own ability to fully listen. Suspend agreement or disagreement with your customer as long as possible. Otherwise, you may say something that will stop the continued exploration of your customer's needs.

How do you know when you have ceased to listen compassionately? Here are six signposts:

1. **You start giving advice** or suggesting ways to fix the customer's problem. During the initial stages of rapport-building, you have not established credibility or demonstrated competence. While your solutions may be accurate, they will often fall on deaf ears.

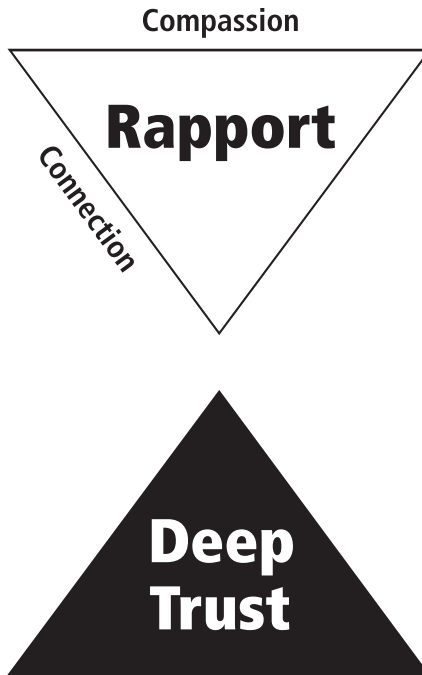
2. **You become impatient.** Your attention drifts and you subtly communicate disinterest. When you realize that you've begun to think about anything other than the person sitting in front of you, you are no longer demonstrating compassionate listening.
3. **You interrupt** the customer and start asking a lot of fact-based questions. There is a time for these types of questions—this isn't it. If you interrupt during this stage of rapport-building, you give the impression that you are "grilling" the customer and you break rapport.
4. **You change the subject** and turn the spotlight onto yourself by relating stories about your company or your successes. Fulfilling your own needs this early in the rapport-building process causes the customer to perceive you as shallow and only interested in yourself—even if your illustrations are relevant to the customer's problem.
5. **You discount the customer's feelings.** Customers may unconsciously share deep feelings, especially when they sense that they are really being listened to. If you find yourself trying to gloss over these feelings by saying, "It's not that bad," or "You'll feel better tomorrow," you risk losing the customer in that moment.
6. **You move into one-upsmanship.** You'll know you're doing this when you start to say, "That's nothing. Listen to this!"

Compassionate listening will carry you a long way on the path to building genuine compassion, and compassion carries tremendous psychological power. It is impossible to accurately sense the perceptual world of another person unless you value that person

and their world (i.e., engender compassion). Compassion dissolves separation, allowing your customer to feel valued, cared for, and accepted.

By practicing compassion, several clear, yet powerful, unconscious messages are sent: “You and I have a lot in common. I think like you do. I have needs like yours. I am like you in many important ways. I understand you. You are safe with me.” These are the vital messages that support a customer in moving toward greater trust with you.

Rapport: Connection



When you first meet another person, your initial decision about them is often based on whether you *think* you like or dislike them. This reaction is generally based on personal bias.

If a stranger walked into the room where you are at this minute, your initial reaction might be based upon such things as their clothes, how attractive they look, or whether they appear to come from a culture that you are comfortable with.

As you were forming your opinion, if this stranger took the trouble to come over and pay you a compliment, you might be inclined to feel more positive about them—though you still know nothing about them.

First impressions are generally superficial and as often wrong as right. Nonetheless, people do tend to judge a book by its cover. No matter how favorable a first impression you make on a customer, eventually you are going to have to provide more concrete reasons why they should continue to like you and want to pursue the business relationship.

With each subsequent encounter, the attraction between you and the person you're dealing with becomes based less upon bias and more upon mutual interests and concerns.

Connecting is something we do well with people who are like us. For people who are not like us, connecting is more difficult, though it is a skill that can be developed. Connecting is absolutely necessary if you ever expect to develop a mutual feeling of trust. Of the many ways to connect with people, two have the most impact. These are *shared experiences* and *mirroring*.

Shared Experiences

When two people have gone through similar experiences, it creates a familiarity between them and plants the seed for a new relationship. Shared experiences may include going to the same college, having children the same age, serving in the same branch of the military, etc.

Janet once met a Senior VP of Sales for a medium-sized company. The introduction was made by the VP of Human Resources. At the start of the meeting it was clear that, for some reason most likely not related to Janet personally, the sales VP would probably have preferred getting a root canal to speaking with Janet.

As she listened, Janet discovered that they had both gone to the same college and had been a year apart. They started talking about the same professors. After 30 minutes of this, the sales VP looked at the HR VP and said, "She's OK. We'll do what she thinks we need." Janet then had about a 30-second conversation on what she would be doing for his sales professionals, and the meeting ended.

The sales VP is still one of her largest clients, and is also a personal friend.

How do you ensure the shared-experience connection happens? It often requires doing some research on the people you'll be meeting with, prior to the actual meeting. The easiest way is to key the person's name into your favorite Internet search engine. Put quotes around the name to ensure that you bring up only people with that exact name.

Internet searches often allow you to gather a significant amount of personal data. For example, you may find out if the person is married, where they live, if they have children or not, etc. The objective of the search is to find connections from shared experiences. Once you've accomplished this, stop. Continuing to uncover more and more information about a person is a form of stalking.

If your Internet search doesn't yield any information, however, you may have to do a little low-tech detective work. You may find that someone in your organization has already worked with the individual and can share what they know with you. Or, if there's someone in the customer's company you know well enough to speak with, they may be able to give you some insights.

As you gather data, you might consider creating a client profile that captures additional information. As you develop a deeper relationship with the customer, they might start sharing more facts about their personal life. As they do, note where you might have a shared experience. This is a natural process for most people; though, as a sales professional, you will be doing this more deliberately.

I highly recommend that you don't tell people that you've created a profile about them. People are extremely sensitive about their privacy, and knowing this can actually get in the way of gaining their trust.

Mirroring

Mirroring involves a very specific way of responding to another person's behavior. It is founded upon two behavioral principles. One is that **our feelings influence our physical expression**. When you are happy, what kind of facial expression do you have? When you are sad, is your facial expression different?

While your feelings influence your expression, the opposite is also true: your expression can influence your feelings. Research suggests that a particular expression modifies the blood flow to the brain and in so doing alters its neurochemistry, which in turn creates the feeling that normally accompanies the expression. If you want to feel happy, put a genuine smile on your face and hold it there for a while and watch what happens with your attitude.

The other principle upon which mirroring is based is called **“reciprocity.”** It is a **natural human tendency to return favors.** If I give you something or do something for you, some part of you is likely to feel like you need to return the favor. This “reciprocity urge” is found in every human culture. When you feel you need to give back to someone who has done something for you, you are experiencing this reciprocity urge.

Therefore, **if I mirror your physical expression, I will begin to feel what you are feeling.** If I mirror you in some way, I am actually honoring you. You may not recognize this consciously.

To be effective, mirroring must come from an intention of honoring the other person. If I’m mirroring you because I truly want to feel what you are feeling so that I better understand you, then I’m working to build trust. If I’m mirroring you only to get you to do things my way and am unconcerned about how you feel, then I’m seeking to manipulate you.

The first way, to honor, builds rapport and causes people to feel comfortable with you. The second way, to manipulate, creates the need for the other person to manipulate *you* (as a result of the same principle—reciprocity) and causes people to be uncomfortable with you.

This is not theoretical. It is not, “This *may* happen.” It is, “This *will* happen,” just as when you drop something, gravity *will* pull it to the ground.

How will people know whether your motivation is one of honoring or manipulation? They may not know it consciously. However, you will definitely see differences in the results over

time. In the short run, attempting to manipulate may serve you. In the long run, it will hurt you. Guaranteed.

Mirroring another person's behavior offers them both visible and unconscious pictures of themselves. This is a natural process that most people learn before they are eight years old.

Mirroring Is Not Mimicking

Mirroring is not to be confused with mimicking. Mimicking involves exact duplication of every behavior the other person exhibits. You copy their body movements and other behaviors precisely. Children love to mimic and play this game with their friends. Adults and children will play this game with each other. Adults rarely play this game with other adults except when they want to insult someone. Mimicking another adult will usually destroy trust. So when you are mirroring another person, be selective in what you decide to mirror.

Have some fun with your discovery of mirroring. Go to a popular teen hangout and notice how many of the young adults have adopted the same body postures as each other. Check out other environments, such as the library, video store, or supermarket. You'll be amazed at how people adopt similar body postures and behaviors.

Making Mirroring Work

Mirroring is very simple to do. My first experience with it in a sales process had immediate impact on a major sale. When I first learned about the concept, I was very skeptical. I was told that if I mirrored others, behaved like they behaved, a state of rapport would develop. If I was effective, I could test for rapport by taking the lead, which meant that if I slightly changed my behavior the other person would mirror *me*. For example, if I folded my hands on the table, the other person would soon follow, and so on.

I was presenting a proposal to the vice president of sales for a Fortune 500 company. His assistant was in the room, and while he would not be making the decision for this VP, he could negatively influence it.

We were all sitting in swivel chairs while discussing the various pros and cons of my proposal. At one point, we reached a part that the assistant had disagreement with. His beliefs and my beliefs differed. At that point, he started shaking his head back and forth indicating that he wasn't in agreement and started to verbally raise objections.

The VP noticed this, yet didn't say anything and asked me to continue. I knew I had to do two things: first, state my recommendations clearly; and, second, become more connected to the opinions of the assistant. I did this by mirroring the physical behavior of the assistant until I had established a deep level of rapport.

It's important to understand that I did not try to make his ideas wrong; I simply wanted to establish a connection so he could start to experience my viewpoint as well as his own. As we connected and I could see we were in touch, I gently led him out of the negating behavior, non-verbally.

What I did was very easy: Every time the assistant started to shake his head "no," I slowly rocked back and forth in my swivel chair, keeping perfect time with his head-shakes, while still making my case verbally. Interestingly, when I got into perfect rhythm with his non-verbal head-shakes, his verbal objections started decreasing.

The next step was to start leading him out of the negative behavior. So when I was perfectly matched with him for about 45 seconds, I slowly started to decrease my rocking. I found that if I did this very gradually, he would follow me, trying to keep in perfect sync with me and not break rapport. Was he conscious of this? I can't imagine he would have been. After about 10 minutes he was no longer shaking his head, I had stopped rocking, and he had no more verbal objections.

The vice president was pleased with my "explanation" and asked his assistant if he had any further comments. His assistant replied, "No, sounds like a good idea to me. When can we proceed?"

I want to emphasize that I was not attempting to manipulate the assistant's thinking or argue with him. I was working to establish a connection with this person, honor his point of view with this connection, and present my case in a neutral way that was in sync with him. I respected his point of view and, as we came into greater rapport, he was able to respect mine. The rocking was a way of establishing this connection and assisted us in coming to a place of mutual agreement.

Here are some ways to mirror a person.

Content Mirroring

This form of mirroring is perhaps the one most over-used. Salespeople learn early that when walking into an office they need to do a quick scan and find something that seems important to the individual and ask a question or make a comment about it to "break the ice." This is a form of mirroring interest. Unfortunately, if you are selling to someone who has frequent dealings with salespeople, they may have long ago tired of this "game."

In fact, there are people who intentionally put objects in their office that do not reflect their interests. And remember that some people work in offices that are decorated by others, so their interests may not be reflected in the office decor.

A good friend of mine is a crusty old purchasing manager. He's been doing this job for about 35 years. About 10 years ago, he put up a beautiful oil painting of an antique airplane with spectacular art deco lines. The painting recalls a slower, more graceful time.

When salespeople call on him, they almost always try to discuss the painting. His response goes something like this: "I hate flying and always get airsick. Now, what is it that you want to sell me?"

While mirroring shared interests can be an extremely strong rapport-builder, today you need to have more. You need to demonstrate to your prospects that you are interested in them and in helping them achieve goals or overcome obstacles that are inhibiting their success.

Doing your homework before your initial meeting is only the first step. Coming into the meeting, you need to have your eyes wide open, your ears tuned, and your antennae up pulling in the vibes of the office so you can effectively mirror back to the customer.

Notice the environment around you. If there are others involved, what's happening with the people? Are they friendly, cold, or just indifferent? What's on the walls, on the tables, on people's desks? The above example notwithstanding, the fact is that in most cases everything you see gives you clues about who the people are and who they aren't. They just may not automatically be rapport-builders.

With a little practice and enough time in the field, noticing what's missing can give you as many clues as what you do see, hear, and feel. However, as you begin to practice this, just notice. In a later chapter we'll discuss what these things mean and how they reflect what motivates the customer.

For the time being, though, focus on and mirror your customer's unconscious processes.

Voice-Pattern Mirroring

Often your first contact with a prospect is on the phone. Even though you have not physically met the person, and may not know much about them or their company, you can still start the rapport process.

How do you do this? By mirroring the person's voice patterns. Each person has unique characteristics to their voice. Voice-pattern mirroring consists of matching tempo, tone, volume, and accent.

Let's define those terms:

tempo	the rate or speed at which a person talks
tone	the pitch of the voice as it is high or low, or as it rises and falls
volume	the loudness of sound or fullness of tone
accent	the characteristic manner of pronunciation of a language heard in different parts of the same country or different countries

People who grow up in countries where several languages may be spoken develop a natural ability to mirror voice patterns. When they speak with a person from a different country, they may shift automatically into that other person's language. Often they do this

unconsciously, meaning they don't think about it and when asked may not even know they made the switch.

Verbal mirroring is something people do naturally. It doesn't take much effort once you have practiced the skill. Becoming more conscious of this skill and using it helps build better connections.

Tempo

The easiest of all of the voice characteristics to match, and the least risky, is tempo. Some people speak quickly, and some slowly. Can you recall a time when you were talking with a person who seemed to take forever to finish a sentence? Do you remember how uncomfortable you felt? Did you feel like you were going to grow old and die before the person completed the sentence? Now, imagine how the other person would feel if you rattled off a sentence back to him at light speed.

Effective connection implies a two-way process—you with the other person and the other person with you. You can help ensure effective connection by being aware of your speaking rate.

The most obvious example of tempo mismatch would be to take a person from the Deep South and put them in a sales meeting in New York City. Unless this person had something extraordinary to offer, they might be quickly dismissed as a country hick. The reverse is true as well; a New Yorker in the Deep South would probably be dismissed as pushy and overbearing because of their verbal speed.

Another aspect of voice tempo is pauses. Some people pause only briefly before starting up again. Others take a longer pause before continuing. Going back to our North versus South example, if you take a short pause in New York, most people will consider that a

sign that you have completed your communication and that they are free to jump in. If you're a Southerner in New York, you will feel cut off by people jumping in. On the other hand, if you are a Northerner who starts cutting people off in the South, they will generally consider you rude and ill mannered.

A word of caution is needed here. If your tempo is extremely different from that of the other person, go easy on your voice adjustment. Gradual adjustments to voice tempo accomplish two things. Slowing down or speeding up slightly is not likely to be consciously noticed. Secondly, the other person will unconsciously feel honored that you are making an attempt to connect more effectively with them.

Tone

Tone has two components: *pitch* (i.e., how high or low the voice is) and the *rate of rise and fall*, which indicates attitude. When it comes to the latter, some communication scientists say that almost half of the total communication is delivered through the voice tone. I remember my mother saying, "Don't take that tone of voice with me, young man!" It wasn't the information she was objecting to, it was the attitude of disrespect that was communicated in the tone.

Mirroring a person while on the phone together can be very powerful.

One sales professional I coached had a customer who was always "sharp" with him on the phone. He described the quality of the other person's voice in detail and told me that he thought her voice was unpleasant.

I suggested that judging the other person's voice and labeling it as unpleasant was counterproductive. He agreed to work at dropping the judgment and begin mirroring the "sharpness" in her voice. The next time he spoke with his customer, he began to mirror her voice tone.

He told me that the customer began to warm up to him and discuss problems that he knew existed, but that she would never admit to before.

When he told me about this, I suggested two things. First, by mirroring the customer's voice, he initiated and built a better connection with her that she was probably desperate to have. Second, by dropping the judgments he had about her voice, my friend removed some of his own counterproductive thoughts that were blocking him from hearing what she had to say.

Most of us are unaware of our own vocal tone. Because it is subtle, tone is a good medium to use for building connections.

Mirroring pitch can have similarly powerful results in building rapport. Take two tuning forks of the same pitch and strike one so that it begins to vibrate. What happens to the second tuning fork as you move the first closer to it? It begins to vibrate as well. People can be similar in that when you mirror a person's voice tone, you create the same complementary vibration.

When mirroring tone, it's important to stay within your natural tone range. If you sound like a violin and the other person is a bass guitar, you're going to sound phony if you try to exactly match the other person's voice. Drop your voice down to the lowest tone range that you are "comfortable" with. Pay attention; you might notice that the other person raises their voice tone ever

so slightly. This is a good sign; reciprocity is kicking in. And, while you're doing this, begin to mirror one or two of the other voice characteristics.

To illustrate how much impact voice tonality can have, consider this:

In a recent study, Stanford W. Gregory and Timothy J. Gallagher of Kent State University hypothesized that a certain non-verbal tonality in a person's voice has a profound effect on how they are perceived and accepted by others. In a study that encompassed 30 years of televised presidential debates, the scholars claim that the candidate with better "fundamental frequency"—a subtle, non-verbal hum that is part of the human voice—won the popular vote in every election. The authors link this fundamental frequency to a speaker's dominance or submissiveness.

While you may not be able to identify this level of subtlety, it's important to be aware of how voice tonality can work for or against your objective.

Volume

Some people roar and others whisper when they talk. If you roar and your customer whispers, it's quite possible that he may feel overpowered. If you whisper and your client roars, you may not gain her respect.

In some parts of the country, it's more natural to speak with a louder volume. In the United States, Texas is a great example. Some Texans just tend to speak louder than people in other parts of the country. I recently overheard two "good-ol' boys" talking at a conference where I was scheduled to speak. While the two of

them were standing very close to each other, their voice volume was loud enough for everyone within 20 feet to hear them.

I noticed several people looking at these two guys with daggers coming out of their eyes. While I, too, was a little uncomfortable with this, they were not. In fact, they didn't seem to have any awareness of the impact of their voice volume, just as people on cell phones are often unaware of how loud they're talking, even in a quiet environment.

As a sales professional, you cannot afford to be this unconscious or unconcerned.

If you need to adjust your voice volume with a customer, make these adjustments in your voice volume slowly. If you speak softly one moment and loudly the next, you may actually break connection and diminish rapport.

For some men, voice volume is a marker of personal power. If your customer's voice is louder than yours and he raises his voice louder as you try to mirror the volume, stop raising your volume. You may actually create a shouting match with disastrous consequences. You might slightly raise it again 10 or 15 minutes later. If nothing happens, then it's OK to mirror his voice volume more fully.

Accent

I suggest that sales professionals *not* try to mirror another person's accent. If you grew up in the same place as the other person and you sound like a native, great. However, one of the most painful things to watch is a non-native trying to mirror the local accent and failing. Generally, the locals will view that person as a phony. Think of a person from North Dakota moving to Mississippi and trying to mirror a southern drawl.

Once you've lived in a place long enough, you will eventually begin to mirror the local accent. That is a natural process that happens more or less unconsciously.

Tempo, tone, volume, and accent all focus on vocal connection. Here are some other ways to connect with people.

Corporate Culture Mirroring

Every organization has specific behavior patterns that are acceptable and not acceptable. For example, many companies have a "business casual" dress code, while others require suits and ties. Some companies call people by their first names, and others address each other by their last names. Some companies have a distinct chain of command that limits communication between lower-level employees and senior management. All of these subtle behaviors are part of the overall corporate culture.

Culture, in most organizations, is so much a part of the fabric of the organization that it goes unnoticed by the employees within the culture. What people are very aware of, though, is when someone is not in alignment with the culture.

For most of us, rules such as how we speak or act with each other are different on the job than at home. Imagine speaking with the CEO of your company the way you speak with a younger brother or sister. Would you do it? What would the consequences be for doing it? While these are some of the obvious things, they point out that you must be conscious of the rules of the customer's organization to avoid violating them and possibly destroying your chances of establishing a relationship.

Let's look at some of the observable artifacts that make up corporate culture.

Clothing. Every company has a uniform. It may not be as obvious as those you see in the military; however, it is a uniform nonetheless. Your job is to notice the “corporate uniform.” For some corporations, pinstriped suits, white shirts, and wing-tip shoes for men and the same suiting material, white blouse, and sturdy shoes for women are the uniform. For other companies, especially some computer software companies, T-shirts, jeans, and running shoes make up the corporate dress code. White or pinstriped shirt and suspenders has become popular in some organizations.

Dress varies within different parts of the country and even regions within those parts. Dress may even differ within parts of the organization. Consider how the people on the shop floor dress, or those in accounting, or in the computer room. If you interact with any of those folks, what can you do to mirror them? Would they confide their needs, concerns, and predispositions to you if you were overdressed or underdressed compared to them?

When you’re dealing with people outside the executive suite, you can still make the sales call dressed in a nice suit. Modify your appearance by removing your jacket, if necessary. If you’re out on the shipping dock and working with those people, you may choose to roll up your sleeves partway and loosen your tie. Leave the expensive watch at home if you’re not meeting with a person who needs to see that.

The whole purpose behind having an appropriate uniform is providing the other person with clues that you are like them, which helps them connect with you. The less time they spend trying to get comfortable with you, the more time they can be mentally available to build a relationship with you.

Pecking Order. This is a term that is, in fact, based on the social organization of poultry, where the dominant chicken can peck at a lesser-ranked chicken, and the lower-ranked bird must allow it. In companies, it relates to the business hierarchy—things like when a person can speak based on their level of importance inside the corporation or when to use titles or not.

Business Meals. Customs about when to discuss business at a business lunch may differ from region to region and within regions. In some areas, as soon as you sit down is an appropriate time to jump to the matter at hand; in others, you wait until after dessert. In still others, it's not till you are in the car driving from the restaurant that the subject is brought up.

Gift-giving. Customs for giving gifts differ within certain types of organizations. For example, giving gifts to government contractors may actually jeopardize the recipient's employment and your contract as well. Some companies limit the dollar amount of the gift that can be received. For other companies, gifts are an accepted part of doing business. If in doubt, ask.

Asking a question or two before your first meeting may be all you need to prevent embarrassment when it comes to internal—or even unspoken—rules and regulations. “Are there any customs that I need to know about before coming to your office—things that may be different from other offices you have been in?”

Building Connection at the First Meeting

You're about to have your first meeting with a new customer. You've done your homework and know something about the

corporate culture. What do you do when you meet the person for the first time? Mirroring their physical expressions and mannerisms can be very powerful and also provide you with a great deal of information about them as a unique person.

It's useful to think of a person's body as divided into two "mirror zones": face and body. This will make it easier for you to grasp and use the following information.

Facial Expressions. The expressions on a person's face can give you great insight into the thoughts and feelings going on inside the person. Research indicates that we learn to read faces by the time we are six months old. We know when Mother and Father are happy, sad, or upset by the looks on their faces.

While expressions are important in revealing moods, our faces can tell much more about us than that. Indeed, some people who have studied faces for a living claim that our characters and dispositions are indicated in the lines of our face. For now, however, just focus on a couple of simple mirroring techniques.

Do you maintain eye contact while speaking with another person? Does that person maintain eye contact with you? In the United States, we generally prefer to look people in the eyes when we talk with them. Generally, we believe that eye contact is a sign of honesty. In many Asian countries, it is a sign of respect to lower one's gaze when addressing an individual of higher status.

If you pay attention to your customer, you will notice that a certain amount of eye contact is comfortable for them. For most people, staring is uncomfortable. When you mirror the eye contact with your customer, keep it natural and don't exceed the amount of time they connect with you.

Body Posture & Movement. For the most part, the way people hold and move their bodies is done unconsciously. This means that people are generally unaware of what their bodies are doing at any given moment. Mirroring this unconscious behavior is one of the most powerful ways to connect with another person.

There have been a great many books, articles, and even videos produced that purport to tell you how to interpret the messages in a person's body posture. While interpreting body language can be helpful, using it as a key to mirroring can be even more powerful.

For example, what is the implication when someone crosses their arms in front of them? The common interpretation is that the person is closed off to anything you might be communicating. While this might be very true, it could also mean that the person is cold, is embarrassed with their extra weight, has a stain on their shirt or blouse, or is just comfortable with that position.

Let's suppose for a moment that a customer is sitting behind her desk with her arms and legs crossed. Is she closed off and resisting? Perhaps. If she is, the absolute worst thing that you can do is try to be more forceful with your communication or to lean forward and become more enthusiastic or charming. If she's really closed off and you do this, what will she do? She'll resist you more.

But by mirroring her body posture, you can discuss your plan with your legs crossed or your arms crossed. If she is, in fact, feeling the need to protect herself, you are subtly communicating your agreement that there may be things in the business environment that are unsafe. It is as if even you need protection from fast-moving changes in the business environment. When your customer feels safer, she will open up and you can naturally follow her. And if she's not feeling unsafe, but has her arms

crossed because she's more comfortable that way, you have certainly done no harm in mirroring her.

The point is, you don't need to know *why* she's in that position; you can connect with her, whatever is motivating her posture, through mirroring.

Another customer in the apparently closed-off body position might just be uncomfortable about the way he looks and is afraid that you may be sitting there judging him. Again, you sit in a way very similar to his. Probably not consciously, but unconsciously, he will tend to relax a little bit more because your non-verbal behavior is neither aggressive nor judgmental. Simply put, you have connected with him on an unconscious level.

Think of this as a dance between you and your customer. When dancing, one person leads and the other follows. For the most part, let your customers lead. Your part is to stay in sync with them and they, in turn, will often enjoy the dance.

This skill gets more interesting in group situations. For example, let's say you need to make a presentation to a committee or board. Glance around the table. Are people already mirrored with other people in the room? If they are, you will have a fairly clear direction as to how to posture yourself. If they're not, then what?

On one occasion, I noticed that there were two distinct body postures in an executive team meeting. The president and VP of Sales were mirrored. However, the CFO, VP of Human Resources, and VP of Marketing were mirrored with one another but different from the others. Since my presentation was a team-building session, my first question was if there was disagreement among the group.

Everyone was taken aback. They wanted to know how I knew that they were not in agreement. As I explained what I had noticed, you could see people begin to adjust their body postures. Within about 15 minutes, most of the people in the meeting were sitting in a similar way. And they stayed that way throughout much of the day, which allowed much freer communication and opened the door to resolving the issues.

You actually do these things instinctively. When you want to talk with a little child and you want to connect, do you stand over the child and look down? Or do you stoop to the child's level and start talking with them? When you are interacting with a child, you're much closer to an instinctive level—partly because you don't feel threatened and you're pretty assured that you're in control. Not only that, you are also unconsciously responding to their innocence according to the principle of reciprocity.

With subtlety, you can do the same with adults. For example, I'm over six feet tall. When I'm speaking with a person who is substantially shorter than me, I find a chair to sit in. That way, we're much closer to being eye-to-eye—and seeing eye-to-eye is much more than just a figure of speech.

When you mirror people's body movements, you're mirroring the way they walk, sit, use their hands, gesture, hold themselves, and demonstrate any other physical manifestations of non-verbal communication. Your mirroring needs to be subtle and fluid. Making sudden or sharp movements is likely to break connection with the other person.

Once connection has been established, body mirroring can shift in and out of sync as the conversation flows. This is normal. As long

as you feel comfortable, you probably still have connection. If you notice your customer beginning to appear uncomfortable, check your mirroring. If you are not in sync, reestablish posture, and you will likely improve your connection.

Test this with friends or business associates. Initially match their body posture for a couple of minutes and then purposely mismatch their body posture. Notice their reactions and the differences in the flow of the conversation. After this, go back to mirroring and again notice the differences—both in yourself and in their reactions. Most people have reported that when body posture is mirrored, conversations are smoother and more relaxed than when posture is mismatched.

There are over 60,000 different variations of specific body language, many with specific cultural meanings. For example, if I'm in the United States and give you the OK sign, making a circle with my thumb and fingers, no problem. If I go outside of the U.S. culture and do the exact same, there could be a big problem. That sign, in some cultures, conveys a very insulting message.

Interpreting body language can be chancy if you are not well versed in all of the subtle cultural meanings. Even in the United States, you need to understand what culture a person was raised in, which may be different from what their face and features indicate.

Crossover Mirroring

If your customer is constantly shifting his body posture, it might be difficult to follow his lead without being obvious. In that case, you can use crossover mirroring to connect with him. This means you use similar gestures with other parts of your body to match his body movements. For instance:

- If your customer is sitting with crossed legs, you can keep your arms crossed while keeping your feet flat on the floor.
- If your customer has crossed arms, you can cross your wrists, legs, or ankles.
- If he is leaning back on a chair, you might lean to your side.
- If he is sitting with his legs spread apart, you might sit with your arms wide open.

Subtlety is the key with any mirroring technique. If you're clumsy with this, your customer may become annoyed or ask what you are doing.

Mirroring Emotions

Have you ever had a meeting with a customer and noticed that she was in a gloomy mood? If the two of you had a good relationship, you may have asked her what was happening. She may have told you, sometimes in more detail than you wanted. The worst thing you can do is be Mr. Sunshine and make casual remarks like, "Boy, you look down!" "Did your dog just die?" "Who kicked you around today?" These will only create separation, and you will lose rapport quickly.

Mirroring the person's emotional state is a sign of respect and allows you to more deeply sense what is happening with your customer. Acceptance and neutrality can be your greatest assets in mirroring difficult, emotionally charged situations.

Accepting the person's emotional state will prevent you from getting defensive (especially if he appears to be angry with *you*). Keep in mind that acceptance and agreement are different. You may not agree that your customer has a right to explode; however, you can accept that people sometimes do this—and he just did. Getting angry with him will usually escalate the situation.

Responding in a kind, soothing voice—treating him like he had a recent frontal lobotomy—also often worsens the situation. It only comes across as being offensive or patronizing.

So, what *can* you do? You can accept his emotional position and begin to use your voice tone and tempo mirroring skills. He’s probably talking very fast, so mirror his voice tempo. His tone is sharp, perhaps harsh, and you can mirror that. His voice volume may be rather loud; we recommend *not* mirroring that. What you also want to avoid doing is mirroring his content, especially if he is questioning your genetic heritage or speculating on the marital status of your parents at the time of your birth.

By mirroring without anger and with acceptance, you can reestablish connection with him. Sometimes this will be enough for the person to stop and become more civil. Other times, you will have to mirror for about five minutes and then gradually slow your tempo and soften your tone. If you have succeeded in connecting with him, he will follow your lead.

I know that this goes against everything most people ever heard about how to handle angry people. The key thing here is that this *works* and works well, especially if you maintain your neutrality and accept the person attacking you as another member of the human race.

When you emotionally connect, you may be surprised at the depth and quality of information people share with you. Often the person may not even know what he is sharing because the information is coming from an unconscious level.

By using emotional mirroring, you step into the other person’s reality—into their world—and you start to see, feel, and hear

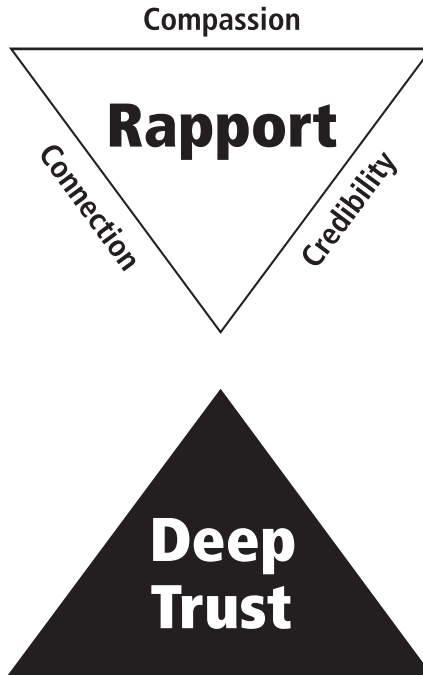
things from that perspective. This, in turn, helps you adjust your sales approach to more closely match the client's needs and preferences. Consequently, your acceptance of who they are is mirrored as well.

Connecting It All Together

This section has presented to you a number of ways to connect with an individual. Once again, I suggest that you try this with friends and family first. Initially, you might be a little uncomfortable with these skills. Take the time to become comfortable in a non-sales situation. They'll pay big dividends when you've learned to use them well.

There is no need to use all of the connecting skills at the same time. Use whatever skill you need to connect with the other person. Then use the other skills to enhance or deepen the connection. Keep it simple and, before long, you'll notice that people are feeling more and more comfortable with you—and that will open many new doors to serving them more successfully and gaining more business.

Rapport: Credibility



How do you get people to *know* you can do what you say you can do? In some professions there is implied credibility because, in order to be licensed, a certain level of skill has to be demonstrated. Not so in sales. With a few exceptions, sales professionals do not have a government-controlled board of examiners to determine if those in the profession are qualified to sell. Even in professions that are regulated to some extent, such as real estate, banking, or securities brokering, the examiners are less concerned with the level of skill in selling than they are with adherence to ethics or legal guidelines.

Most other professionals—physicians, for example—must pass rigorous academic requirements before being licensed to practice. In addition, they have additional annual continuing education

requirements that need to be met to be able to continue working in their profession.

Because physicians are perceived to know their field thanks to this licensing, they automatically have a certain level of professional credibility. Because of this, patients will generally follow the course of treatment their physician recommends. They may occasionally get a second opinion, but they normally have high levels of trust in their physicians.

In sales, you can print up a business card, declare yourself a salesperson, and start attempting to sell. There is no inherent trust that goes with being a sales professional since the perception is that anyone can do it. So you must *build* credibility from the ground up.

Men and women who bring value and solutions to their customers are more than salespeople; they are true sales professionals.

They are knowledgeable about both what they sell and what the customer requires.

They are alert to changes that affect both.

They are attuned to the customer—his employees, his practices, and his problems—and are skilled in interpreting what they hear or learn.

They communicate back to responsible plant, office, or management people the information that they have gathered—the unpleasant as well as the pleasant.

They are catalysts who bring the resources of the company they represent to provide solutions to the appropriate buying influences that specify, use, or otherwise affect purchasing decisions.

And they see selling as a function that enhances the success of their customers.

But how does the customer know that he is dealing with a professional? By the individual's track record. Yet how is a customer to know what a salesperson's past performance has been? How can the customer differentiate among several salespeople, all supplying the same items? Are the customer's definitions of "performance" clear enough to know what they're measuring? Can the customer capture data that realistically reflect the "performance" he wishes to measure? Does he have reliable systems that enable him to update, analyze, and report "performance results"?

On the other side, do you know and understand how you are being measured? It will serve you to know these things, if you are to build credibility with a customer.

Credibility refers to your ability to present yourself as a sales professional who has something—generally, more than just a product or service—to offer the customer. When you demonstrate credibility, the customer sees you as possessing a breadth of knowledge, depth of insight, and length of experience that may help her come to grips with some of the contradictions, complexities, and dilemmas in operating her business. There are several ways to gain credibility with your customer.

Earned Credibility

Credibility is ultimately something that you earn with the customer. It's developed over time and often requires face-to-face meetings. Knowledge, insight, and experience are the three key elements of credibility.

Knowledge, in this context, refers to what you know about the customer and his business. Doing your homework on the company before you have your first meeting is the price of entry in today's sales game. You need to know what the customer's company is about, who they do business with, what their issues are, where they have failed, how profitable they are, and other information like this. Can you answer these questions about your customer?

- Is the customer's industry and/or customer base stable or evolving?
- Who are the customer's competitors or collaborators?
- What is the customer's competitive advantage?
- What has contributed to past successes for the customer?
- What products or services contributed most to this success?
- What innovations are anticipated that could change the character of the customer's environment?
- Are there any new management initiatives or procedures that will be instituted by the customer's organization?
- How will the future regulatory, legislative, or political environment affect organization performance?

This is just a small sample of the kinds of questions you may want to ask yourself when doing background research on your customer in order to be in the strongest position to demonstrate your insight.

Insight refers to how your product or service will help the customer to be more successful. It's not enough to know the features and benefits of your product or service. You need to have the insight into how those features and benefits are going to apply specifically to the customer's company and help accelerate customer success.

Have you solved another company's problems? Have you helped another company to be more successful? Are you willing to take the time to see if the customer really needs what you're offering at this time? Think of the company as a human being. If a person were dying because of arterial bleeding, trying to sell him on a vitamin regimen to help with iron deficiency wouldn't be appropriate.

Jean, a sales professional I know, does extensive research on each of his customers. He wants to know what the company is about, so he reads the annual reports and the various press releases the company sends out. He ferrets out information about the company on the Internet.

For his particular service, he wants to see if the benefits it offers are perceived as benefits from the customer's perspective. More importantly, he wants to know *how* his services benefit each unique customer. He meets with the customer only after he is certain he has a good grasp of this information so he can use this knowledge to gain credibility in their eyes.

Experience is a little harder to communicate. So Jean has developed a "secret weapon" to demonstrate his experience. Over the years, he has been diligent about getting signed testimonial letters from his customers. After 20 years in business, he now has a binder three inches thick with customers praising him for solving some of their more sticky issues. He always has this with him, even after the first meeting.

What we say as salespeople may be suspect in the eyes of the customer. However, if one of our customers says it, or in Jean's case, several hundred customers say it, it must be true. Jean says that after sharing his binder of testimonials, his customers rarely have doubts about his experience or his credibility.

Credibility by Referral

What if you don't have 20 years of experience and a three-inch thick binder of customer testimonials? You can accomplish something similar by having one of your satisfied customers refer you to one of their friends or associates. Their providing you with a letter of introduction, or a phone call from them, arms you with a modest amount of credibility when you walk in the door.

Even with this introduction, to earn credibility you still need the *knowledge* and *insight* about the person and company you're meeting with. If you take the meeting without these, you risk losing the credibility that has been bestowed on you by the referral. In other words, you are given a certain amount of capital to spend with the new client. You do *not* want to squander it by being ill prepared.

A word of caution: *If you have credibility by referral and do something to cause the prospective client to not trust you, it is a given that you won't be able to develop trust with them. What's worse is that the loss of referred credibility will also impact the relationship of the person providing the referral.* Asking for a referral is not something to be done lightly. People are appropriately very sensitive about making referrals and having them go sour. When you receive a referral, you take on the obligation of performing well, not just for yourself, but also for your client who has referred you.

Credibility by Association

There is one final way to gain credibility. If you represent a product or service that's highly regarded or you represent a well-known company that has extensive industry credibility, you will be given more professional courtesy during the initial sales meeting. The credibility of the company and/or its products and services has been transferred to you.

If you gain credibility through referral or by association, ultimately you still need to transform that into earned credibility. Credibility by referral or association is like having a co-signer on a personal loan. Eventually, the bank or credit union needs to know that you can pay the loan off yourself.

These sorts of bestowed credibility get you into the game. Staying in the game and prospering is up to you.

Wrapping Up Rapport

After reading this section, you may be wondering how you will be able to remember to do all of this while you are trying to conduct a reasonably coherent sales call. There is a simple solution—develop the habit of mirroring.

Rapport is not mechanical. Nor is it as simple as it may seem to those of you who have always set it up intuitively. However, as you practice these techniques, establishing and maintaining rapport will become more natural and automatic.

Maintaining rapport is a way to synchronize with the different experiences and meanings of other human beings. Mirroring accentuates similarities and plays down differences so that understanding and rapport between people increases.

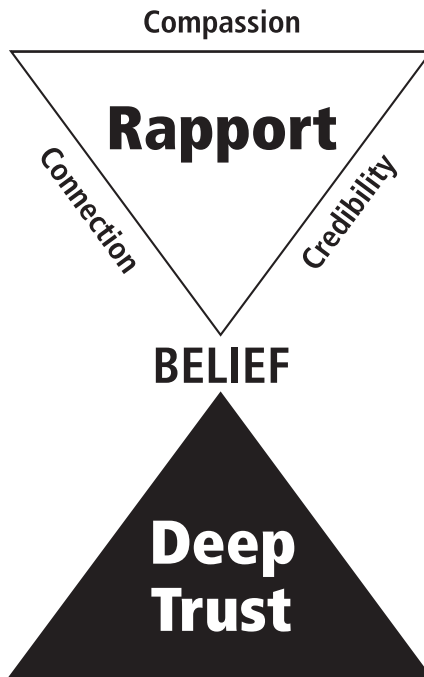
Some people may feel it is unfair to utilize a natural phenomenon such as this to gain your desired-end-result. Remember that you will not gain and retain your own desired goal unless you keep the customer's desired-end-result in mind. By doing this, rapport becomes a tool to benefit both of you.

Taking Rapport on the Road

Now that you are conscious of compassion, connection, and credibility as the three critical elements of building rapport, notice how you are able to implement them within your workaday environment. The suggestion here is to improve any of these skills by doing them one at a time. Make it bite-size. Start with the one that interests you the most or that you find the easiest. Many people find mirroring posture or voice pattern to be a very good starting point.

In work, family, and social situations, continually try meeting people where they are. Notice how they relax when you seem to be in their rhythm. Become aware of how easy it is, once you are in true rhythm with them, to make very subtle changes and bring them into true rhythm with you. Practice, experiment, and enjoy.

Deep Trust: Crossing the Belief Threshold



The second primary element in establishing trust is *deep trust*. Where rapport can get the car started, engine revving, deep trust is what gets you in gear and really moving down the road to bigger sales and repeat business.

Your customer brings to the table certain opinions about working with salespeople. She also has had experiences working with salespeople that form the basis for her beliefs. Opinions, beliefs, and knowledge are very similar, varying mostly in the degree of confidence the holder has in them. Knowledge would rank as the most certain, and opinions as the least certain.

For example, if you have an opinion about something and you collect enough evidence that supports the opinion, you transform the opinion into a belief. At this point, you pass the belief to the unconscious and put it into the “how the world works” file. You do this because it frees your mind to focus on other things. For the vast majority of people, this is an automatic process—and thank goodness for that, because you wouldn’t make much progress in life if you had to constantly reevaluate every detail of your life.

For example, how much would you get done if you had to relearn how to turn on the shower every morning? Have you ever traveled and found that the shower in the hotel worked differently from yours at home? Did it take you a few moments to figure it out? New facts or new knowledge may require us to reevaluate our beliefs and make changes to our behavior.

Your customer does a similar thing with salespeople. She takes all of this input, both from the past and present, and constructs a mental and emotional map from the information about salespeople found in her unconscious “how salespeople work” file. The information she draws on influences her behaviors in a selling situation.

Does your customer generally believe that all salespeople are honest and can be trusted, or does she believe that all salespeople are for the most part self-serving, interested only in making the sale, and need to be watched like a hawk? Or is she neutral? Whatever she thinks, if her beliefs have been reinforced over time she will be very confident that they are accurate.

Her confidence in her beliefs about salespeople serves as a psychological gatekeeper of sorts, systematically determining

how your actions match her beliefs. The degree of confidence she has in her beliefs is determined by the consistency of salespeople's behaviors that match her beliefs. If, in her experience, most salespeople act as she believes they will, she possesses sound evidence for those beliefs. Sound evidence, in turn, implies accuracy. Highly confident beliefs should therefore be highly accurate.

But are they? **There is surprisingly little psychological research that supports the idea that confidence is closely tied to accuracy.** Instead, confidence and accuracy often seem to be disconnected.

The Confidence/Accuracy (Dis)Connection

Some of the most direct evidence for the confidence–accuracy disconnection comes from studies in which psychologists grew progressively more confident in their impressions of clients while the accuracy of their impressions remained low.

Other studies of eyewitness testimony have revealed virtually no relation between the observer's confidence and the accuracy of their observations and thus beliefs. Even when people make judgments about “objective facts,” there seems to be little relation between their confidence in their information and the accuracy of their beliefs.

If you want an experience of this, consider these two questions: Who invented the airplane? Who invented the automobile? Did you say the Wright brothers and Henry Ford?

Many people confidently believe that the Wright brothers invented the airplane. But, in fact, there were a number of airplanes in their day. The Wright brothers innovated a method of steering that made flying practical. Similarly, there were a variety of autos

when Henry Ford came up with the idea of the assembly line, which is what really put Ford on the map.

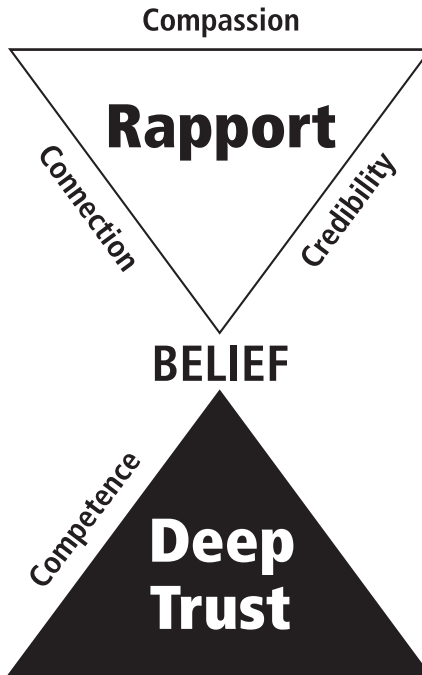
The customer's confidence acts as a form of self-fulfilling prophecy. She sees, hears, and feels what she wants based on her beliefs, not based on the evidence that is present. If you are going to move from rapport to deep trust, you need to cross this Belief Threshold. This crossing needs to be handled delicately and may take time, depending on her beliefs about salespeople and their trustworthiness.

In the process of crossing the threshold and moving toward deep trust, the customer will evaluate you on three criteria:

- First, she will try to determine how competent you are.
- Second, she will try to determine if you are committed to her desired-end-results.
- And finally, she will want to know how consistent you are.

Her evaluation will be based solely on your repeated *behaviors*. Verbally declaring that you are competent, committed, and consistent won't have any credibility with her. You must make certain that your actions continually support these three criteria, if you want to cross the Belief Threshold. And crossing the Belief Threshold is a critical step to creating deep trust and a successful and enduring customer relationship.

Deep Trust: Competence



You can have credibility with your clients by demonstrating knowledge, expressing insight, and having experience. Credibility will help you build rapport. However, to begin to establish deep trust, you must be perceived by your customer as being competent (i.e., demonstrating competencies). Competencies are the *attributes, skills, and knowledge* considered critical for successful sales performance.

Attributes are the personal qualities in your psychological makeup that contribute to your overall sales success. These include your values, which were hardwired in you before you were eight years old. For example, drive is something that is hardwired in people. If a person doesn't have it by the age of about 21, only rarely will

they develop it in later life. In adulthood, it often takes a significant emotional event to create the desire to change and follow through with the change.

Skills are your demonstrated expertise. These can be developed or acquired through training or experience. Negotiation skill is an example of that. Learning to negotiate well takes education and practice.

Knowledge, in this context, is a given body of factual information. That is, it is information that is objectively proven reliable. For example, the specifications of your product or service would be part of your body of knowledge. Deeper knowledge would be how your product or service is going to benefit the customer based on your experience in situations similar to that of your customer.

Here are some specific sales competencies.

Attributes:

- Adaptability
- Drive
- Initiative
- Tenacity

Skills:

- Account management
- Listening
- Presentation
- Interpersonal relationship
- Leadership
- Prospecting
- Time management

Knowledge:

- Company mission and vision
- Competitive strategies
- Financial
- Marketing
- Pricing

Each competency has specific behaviors that identify whether or not you are, in fact, competent. For example, these are the behaviors associated with Organizing Skills:

- Sets clearly defined and attainable goals
- Creates detailed plans that focus on accomplishing goals
- Creates and completes effective to-do lists that track progress toward goal completion
- Uses either manual or computer-based time management systems
- Organizes paper using in-baskets, tickler files, or general filing systems
- Commits to and honors time deadlines

As you develop competency, you go through five stages. They are: unconscious incompetence, conscious incompetence, conscious competence, unconscious competence, and mastery (sometimes called “reflective competence”). This applies for every skill and the knowledge that needs to be developed to be an effective top-producing sales professional.

You may have different competence levels with different skills. You could be a great listener but fail when you have to make a persuasive presentation. You may be strong in making presentations but be weak in the time management area. Your strengths may not offset your weaknesses, and your customer may or may not be willing to work with you when you are at the lower levels of competence.

You don't have to be perfect at everything; however, you will want to bring your weaker skills up to an acceptable level. Knowing which skills are at which level of competency will assist you in doing just that.

Unconscious Incompetence

When you are functioning at the unconscious incompetence level, you probably are blissfully unaware that your confidence exceeds your ability. Basically, you don't know that there is anything to learn. You may not understand advice given to you because you haven't begun to ask the right questions.

And yet you may still be successful at this level. It's called "beginner's luck." You know so little that all you can do is ask questions of the customer. The customer respects that you're interested in him and his needs and awards you the business because you didn't try to pull any fancy sales moves on him. This confidence in you will not persist, however, and you will not find yourself in a solid position over time unless you move out of this level.

Unconscious Incompetents would demonstrate these behaviors:

- They are not aware of the existence or relevance of the skill area.
- They are not aware that they have a particular deficiency in the area concerned.
- They might deny the relevance or usefulness of the skill.
- They must become conscious of their incompetence before development of the new skill or learning can begin.

The aim of the trainee or learner who is at this stage is to move into the "conscious incompetence" stage by demonstrating the new skill or ability. The trainer or teacher starts this process by

communicating or demonstrating the benefit that the skill will bring to the person's effectiveness.

An awakening needs to occur to get to the next level. Losing a large sale is often what accomplishes this.

Conscious Incompetence

The awakening event that takes place causing a mental shift to this level may feel like being hit with a brick. You think you're doing great and, suddenly, out of nowhere, you lose the sale or otherwise have evidence that you entirely missed something. When this happens, it may even seem to you that you actually know nothing and that there's so much to learn. In fact, your confidence may drop as you realize that your ability is limited and that you will need to study to learn.

Often this means not succeeding at first. In our culture, people have a difficult time at this level because they label the learning "failure." The good news is that, when this occurs, **you are actually way ahead of where you were before it took place because you now know what you don't know and can do something about it.** So you begin to study.

Conscious Incompetents would demonstrate these behaviors:

- They become aware of the existence and relevance of the skill.
- They are therefore also aware of their deficiency in this area, ideally by having attempted or tried to use the skill.
- They realize that by improving their skill or ability in this area, their effectiveness will improve.
- Ideally, they have a measure of the extent of their deficiency in the relevant skill and a measure of what level of skill is required for their own competence.

- If they want to shift this, they make a commitment to learn and practice the new skill and to move to the “conscious competence” stage.

There are three keys to getting to the next level: Practice. Practice. Practice.

Conscious Competence

Once you’ve practiced enough and acquired more skill, you become consciously competent. Conscious Competents have the knowledge to perform particular skills, have extensively trained at performing the skills, and are proficient at the skills. However, the skills do not yet come automatically; they still require conscious thought to be performed correctly. Your conscious mind can only cope with a small number of new bits of information at any one time. While your confidence increases with your ability, you still have to concentrate on what you know and how you do it.

Conscious Competents would demonstrate these behaviors:

- They can perform the skill reliably at will.
- They still need to concentrate and think in order to perform the skill.
- They can perform the skill without assistance.
- They will not reliably perform the skill unless thinking about it (i.e., the skill is not yet “second nature” or “automatic”).
- They should be able to demonstrate the skill to another, but are unlikely to be able to teach it well to another person.
- They should ideally continue to practice the new skill and, if appropriate, commit to becoming “unconsciously competent” at the new skill.

For a person to reach the next level, the skills and knowledge are practiced enough that they become habits.

Unconscious Competence

At this stage, you can do the skill while your mind is on other things. Your skill has become instinctive. Your confidence and ability have peaked; you no longer have to concentrate on what you know/do. This is the start of the next learning curve.

Unconscious Competents would demonstrate these behaviors:

- They become so practiced that the skill enters the unconscious parts of the brain (i.e., it becomes “second nature”). Common examples are driving, sports activities, typing, manual dexterity tasks, listening, and communicating.
- They can perform certain skills while doing something else—for example, knitting while watching TV.
- They might now be able to instruct others in the skill concerned; although after some time of being unconsciously competent, the person may actually have difficulty explaining exactly how they do it because the skill has become largely instinctual.

Reaching this level and displaying these behaviors arguably gives rise to the need for long-standing unconscious competence to be checked periodically against new standards.

As effective as this level is, there is still one more level to go.

Mastery

The fifth stage is mastery, or what is sometimes referred to as reflective competence. At this stage, you are aware of your own levels of competence and you recognize that, unlike conscious competence, you don't need to think about the skills in order to execute them well. In some ways, it's almost like you're observing yourself from outside of yourself. These won't be the exact same skills and knowledge that you learned consciously and then became unconscious of. It will appear as a flow, where you pick part of one skill and combine it with some knowledge to create a new approach that is totally appropriate for your customer at that moment in time.

The Critical Importance of Competence

Whether they see it through your performance or not, customers know unconsciously whether you are competent.

Their unconscious level controls their deep emotional satisfaction, or dissatisfaction. If you do something unhelpful (i.e., in some way incompetent), their unconscious knows it.

The tricky part is that the unconscious and conscious mind can disagree. Your customer may have all the facts to make a decision in your favor, but something you've done holds them back from trusting the facts in front of them. This is why demonstrating competence is so important.

Demonstrating competence allows you to create a safe space within the customer's unconscious. This is the important emotional or interpersonal environment where every detail of your interaction with the customer must reflect safety and support, if you are to build deep trust.

Over the last 30 years, customers have become much more sales savvy. Many purchasing agents take the same public sales training courses as salespeople. One individual I know has a box with every standard close written down on three-by-five cards. When he's meeting with a new salesperson and she uses one of the standard closes, he opens the box, takes out the card, slides it across the table, and tells her, "That's one; you have one more chance."

He's not doing this to be mean. He just doesn't have time for salespeople who are going to be using all of the old sales techniques that have been used for the last 100 years. He wants to work with sales professionals who are competent and are interested in helping him be successful.

Demonstrating Competence

If you had a doctor's appointment and the doctor met you at the door and greeted you by name, you might be very impressed. If he then showed you to a small reading room and pointed out the medical reference books and said, "Look through these. When you've discovered what your symptoms mean, come to my office and I'll write the appropriate prescription for you. Oh, by the way, we're having a special on kidney transplants this week."

How would you feel about the physician? What would you do next?

Requiring the customer to diagnose their own problem is not professional selling. And prescription before diagnosis is medical malpractice. It is also sales malpractice. Yet this is the way many salespeople try to sell. They push product or service brochures across the desk hoping that something will catch the customer's eye. They don't do a thorough diagnosis. **Competence is demonstrated by the quality of questions you ask.**

Demonstrating Competence: Guidelines

Ask quality questions. The more focused and specific you are when asking questions, the more it will be clear to both the customer's conscious and unconscious mind that you have prepared and are meeting with the customer to find a way to help them.

Hazy and rambling questions around the customer's important issues make you appear incompetent. If you notice the customer getting fidgety or distracted, you have some good feedback that your customer would rather be doing other things than talking with you. In other words, you are not being perceived as helping them and, thus, you apparently have no value to them.

(If you want to develop your skills in asking great questions, check out *SPIN Selling* by Rackham, *Solution Selling* by Bosworth, or *Strategic Selling* by Miller and Heiman.)

Learn advanced listening skills. When we discussed compassion, we referenced compassionate listening. To demonstrate competence, there are three other listening skills that need to be applied. These are comprehensive, discerning, and evaluative listening skills.

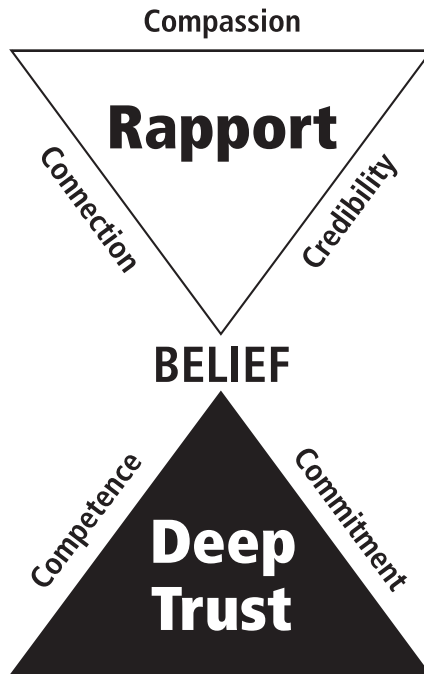
Comprehensive listeners are good at recognizing key points and links between one point and another, even when the customer's communication is disorganized. You need to listen for how a customer develops her arguments so that you can understand her rationale. You may ask questions to clarify the customer's intention. However, be clear on your questions so if an individual does not understand what you've said, you can re-explain it in terms she does understand.

Discerning listeners want to make sure they have gathered complete information. They do not assume facts that haven't been

stated by the customer, even if making that logical leap might be appropriate. You want to know what main issues and end-results the customer desires.

Evaluative listeners are skeptical by nature. When a customer tells them something, they will probe more deeply to understand what is driving the issue inside the customer's business. They listen intently, waiting for the customer to complete his thoughts and presentation before suggesting a plan of action.

Be authentic. Being yourself is critical to being perceived as competent. If your customer sees you as a real, flesh-and-blood human being with your own passions, frailties, and emotions, they are much more likely to begin trusting you more deeply. They will remember you as a whole person.



Deep Trust: Commitment

Every sales relationship is in a state of dynamic tension. That tension is often created by three desired-end-results that may be at odds with each other.

1. Your customer wants you to be committed to her.
2. Your company wants you to be committed to maximizing the company's profit.
3. You need to be committed to yourself.

It's tough enough to serve two masters, let alone three.

I once consulted with a company whose salespeople needed to persuade three different parties before booking a sale. They of course had to (1) sell to the customer. They also had to (2) sell to their own company's finance office to satisfy that department's demand that customers meet their requirements of financial viability. And, finally, they had to (3) sell to their own company's manufacturing department to ensure that the equipment could be built in a time frame that was reasonable to the company. Two-thirds of the salesperson's time was spent selling to people other than the actual customer.

As you might suspect, this company is no longer in business, at least in part because its commitment to protecting itself was out of balance with its commitment to the customer.

To commit means to entrust, to put into safekeeping, to pledge oneself to a particular course. You can tell when someone is committed to a customer.

The committed person asks, “What can I do to help? How can I do my best to benefit you?” The person who asks, “What is the minimum I can do and still be part of this? What can I get by with?” will not communicate commitment to the customer. The difference shows up in the attitude and is readily observable.

Failure to honor commitments ranks high as a source of customer dissatisfaction. This is because the customer often is relying on the salesperson’s word. Like a row of dominoes where each domino stands because the others stand, breaking a commitment sets in motion extensive subsequent ramifications for the customer. It may impact other parts of the customer’s business. It may even extend to *their* customers.

The very essence of commitment implies trust. Promising what can’t be achieved is a sign that you cannot be trusted.

Co-Creating Commitment

Some salespeople will declare that they want the customer to have a complete say in determining what happens. Yet, salespeople often subtly or overtly override customers’ concerns and expressed wishes to do what they, as salespeople, feel is important. If a relationship is to have a chance, people must make their own commitments between themselves about their goals and expectations, as individuals, and as business partners—and they must keep them (or renegotiate if conditions change).

Commitment requires you to explore, develop, and nurture a co-created boundary around the business relationship. You have to work together at it. You each need personal autonomy within that relationship, but you also need to recognize, honor, and respect those agreed-upon and shared boundaries as well.

You can't demand boundaries in advance. You have to negotiate them and promote agreement. You can't impose them on your customer, since you don't have the right to be in charge of the other person. People who try to impose their will on their customer tend to have short-lived business relationships. Customers want to be empowered, not controlled.

Boundaries aren't static. They may need to change over time. This requires both you and the customer to acknowledge and continually review what you expect of each other as the relationship grows. For example, as your customer gains understanding about your product or service, he may need less of your application skill and thus less of your time. This doesn't mean the business relationship is automatically over, unless one of you makes that decision on your own.

What Are You Committed To?

Sales professionals hold dearly to three commitments other than to the customer. The first and most basic of these is a **commitment to a set of values, principles, or beliefs**. These underlying personal principles define the salesperson's uniqueness.

The second is the **commitment to oneself**, to how one acts. To be successful, sales professionals must possess a strong sense of personal integrity and self-confidence. Making a commitment changes the view people have of themselves. Once an active commitment is made, your self-image is squeezed as a result of the pressure to bring your self-image into line with your actions.

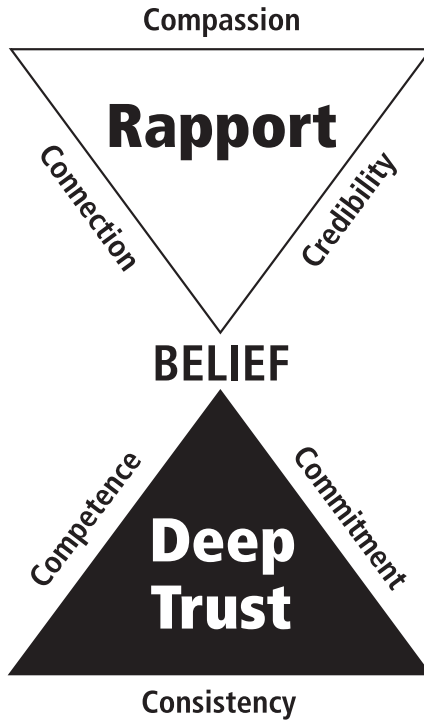
Besides serving customers, all organizations target specific results. **Commitment to results** is the third commitment and is largely determined by how clear priorities are, what actions get rewarded, and what risks are being taken to improve intended results.

Effectively demonstrating commitment, whether to customers, to principles, to oneself, or to results is never easy. The truth is, demonstrating commitment is hard work. Wavering commitment is usually seen as no commitment at all. The only way to achieve a reputation for commitment is through determination and persistence. **Genuine commitment stands the test of time and is proven during tough times.**

How someone weathers the storms most clearly demonstrates the depth of their commitment. Epicurus, a philosopher in ancient Greece, stated: "...a captain earns his reputation during the storms." When your competition scores big against you, when the money dries up, or when the glamour of success wears off, that is when it is easiest to compromise your commitments. The real test comes in holding the line against the easy—and tempting—route of compromise.

Fortunately, paying the price that commitment demands has payoffs worth the cost—a reputation for integrity and, even more important, the commitment of others in return. **Commitment is a two-way street. You only get it if you are willing to give it.**

Deep Trust: Consistency



Your customers want you to be consistent. In fact, they rely on it. Prominent psychologists, such as Leon Festinger and Fritz Heider, have uncovered the secrets of consistency. They found that the idea underlying consistency is that we all actively strive to avoid change. That is accomplished, in large part, by being consistent in our beliefs and behaviors.

Any inconsistency acts as an incentive to change either our beliefs or behaviors. When we wake up in the morning, we want to find the roof over our heads, the sun shining, and hot water in the shower. Just as we expect these kinds of physical consistency, we also expect mental and emotional consistency. If we had marriages,

families, and jobs yesterday, we expect to find them today in pretty much the same condition.

These physical, mental, and emotional beliefs make up the expectations of how our world operates. This includes the people in it and our relationships with them. The glue that holds all these relationships together is consistency. Consistency helps us to understand the world and our place in it. It allows us to free our minds to focus on other things.

Compromising Consistency

Where are we likely to uncover inconsistency? First, our beliefs and behaviors may be inconsistent with each other. We discover these inconsistencies by looking at situations in which our beliefs would require incompatible behaviors.

Suppose, for example, that I believe that it is wrong to disobey my boss and also believe that it is wrong to tell a lie. Then suppose that one day my boss insists that I tell a customer something that I know to be untrue. I can either obey my boss or I can avoid telling a lie, but I cannot do both. To be consistent, I must modify one or both of these beliefs by examining the reasons I have for accepting them. Then I need to weigh these reasons to see which is more important and worth retaining and which is less important and in need of modification.

Integrity is an often-used word to describe people who behave in ways that are consistent with their beliefs. Polonius, a character in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, points out how critical such integrity is to life when he says to his son, Laertes:

“This above all: to thine own self be true,
And it must follow, as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man.”

As much as we need consistency, however, there are many occasions when things occur in surprising and unexpected ways—when there is an inconsistency between what we expected and what we got. Someone hands you a luscious-looking tropical fruit. Just looking at it makes you salivate in anticipation of its sweetness. You sniff it and it smells like perfume. You close your eyes, take a big bite and...it’s all you can do to keep from spitting out the sour, juicy mass. For a moment everything freezes; time stops as you try to make sense of these two conflicting things—it’s supposed to be ambrosia and it tastes like a lemon on steroids.

Dissonance Detracts

The state that arises following this inconsistency is called “dissonance.” Dissonance is simply an academic term for the mental, emotional, physiological, and behavioral response that occurs when things do not go the way we expected them to.

One thing that almost immediately happens when we experience dissonance is that we move into mild confusion. We may ask, “What? What was that? I don’t get it. Wait a minute.” We try to figure out what we missed. Interestingly, we also begin to feel somewhat rattled and upset, almost like we are nervous or anxious. Finally, the physiology of our bodies changes when we experience dissonance. Our heart rate elevates, our blood pressure goes up, and our hands get sweaty.

Dissonance arouses tension and motivates individuals to seek ways of reducing the dissonance. This also explains why hardball

persuasion tactics often don't work. When a salesperson explicitly, openly, and directly confronts a customer, the customer is often immediately resistant because of dissonance.

If you, as a salesperson, are inconsistent, you create dissonance with the customer. Inconsistent people may be viewed as confused or indecisive—or at the extreme end, liars.

The congruence of your words and actions is absolutely crucial. Few things destroy customers' trust in salespeople more quickly than saying one thing and doing something different.

People who are dependable and reliable are not only consistent; they also reinforce their commitment to the customer. When you follow through on a promise or pledge to do something, you tell others they can count on you. You can be trusted to “walk your talk.” Making a commitment and honoring it builds trust in both your intentions and competence. Your predictable and consistent behavior gives customers a sense of security. They need not spend all their energy figuring out what you are going to do next.

When you don't follow through on a promise, your customer has to make sense of why you didn't perform. He may try to guess what is likely to have happened to you. In a sense, he creates an explanation that resolves the inconsistency (i.e., he's making stuff up).

Once the customer has decided who you are to them, it's too much trouble for them to change their mind. If you're inconsistent with who they've decided you are, you create additional uncomfortable levels of dissonance. The customer then needs to change their beliefs about you or, as it becomes ever more uncomfortable, the level of trust retreats, sometimes to the point that they find it necessary to engage one of your competitors.

Meeting Expectations...

The most difficult kind of consistency to achieve is matching people's expectations. Because you often face a large audience and a wide range of expertise, it's difficult to meet everyone's expectations. You can address this problem by carefully weighing the consistency issues in the context of your target audience and their needs.

...And Matching Your Messages

It is important that there is consistency between your verbal message and your non-verbal message. For example, you're sitting in the customer's office with your arms crossed over your heart while telling him that you're open to hearing what he has to say. This is clearly a mixed message. Your words tell him one thing while your non-verbal cues suggest something very different. This kind of inconsistency may result in customer confusion and withdrawal of business.

To prevent dissonance from happening with your customers, make sure you:

- Know what you've committed to do
- Know what the customer thinks you'll be doing (i.e., what you see and what she sees may be different)
- Pay attention to the details of those commitments
- Keep track of your commitments, no matter how small
- Follow through on every commitment that you are tracking
- Communicate with the customer to ensure that you've met his expectations about the commitment
- Do this consistently

Long-term customers rely on mutually beneficial relationships to accomplish their own agendas.

Wrapping Up Trust

There is a reason we started with a chapter on trust. Without understanding trust, why it's crucial to a long-lasting sales relationship, and how to build trust, first in yourself and then with others, the rest of the material in this book would be far less effective for you. Without this understanding, the best you might hope for is to become a better salesperson.

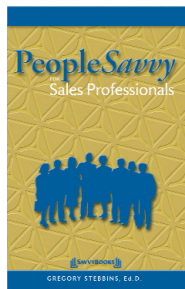
Knowing and practicing the principles of rapport and deep trust, however, will help you establish a firm foundation upon which you can confidently and effectively stand as you practice the rest of the tools and resources you are about to learn.

Used in the context of trust, they will provide much of what you need to build an outstanding career as a successful sales professional.

Is your sales career worth a small \$20 investment?

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Gregory Stebbins, Ed.D., has built an outstanding reputation in the fields of sales, sales management, and sales consulting over the last 30 years. He applies his extensive educational background in business and human motivation (MBA Finance from University of Southern California, Ed.D. from Pepperdine's School of Education & Psychology) to his hands-on, practical approach to sales and sales training. He

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