

Insight

The importance of relationships in sales

Relationships are critical in sales. The decision to focus your energy on the success of your client/prospect multiplies your ability (and your client's ability) to find solutions and capture opportunities together.

Customers want business partners who help them find the right product or service at the right price, and who don't try to "sell them."

Bridgewell Partners' sales and business development processes recognize, respect and respond to customers' interests. The heart of the sales process is your decision to be most interested in the success of your customer, rather than in your own success. Your customers see your commitment to their success and see you act on that commitment. And you deliver on that commitment while also taking care of your own needs and the needs of your (the salesperson's) company.

When you have this commitment and act on it, customers are much more willing to explain their situation and needs with you, and to explore with you. They will work with you to jointly craft a solution.

Creating this kind of relationship is a huge, untapped opportunity in sales. You can multiply your ability and your customer's ability to find valuable solutions and capture new opportunities together.

How to sell

Bridgewell Partners helps salespeople learn to construct a collaborative alliance with the customer. In this alliance, the salesperson and customer together:

- Design a shared goal, one that would not exist if the salesperson and buyer had not come together (a unique goal facilitated by the salesperson's arrival but constructed by both together).
- Create a mutually understood method for working together.
- Develop a series of joint work products.
- Build an identity as a team.

One important result of this process is the sale of large amounts of your products and services.

What happens in the sales process

The sales process is a cycle of engagement, forward movement and re-engagement brought about by specific actions taken by the salesperson. Each time the cycle returns to reengagement, the alliance grows stronger and the joint work proceeds to a deeper level. The cycle begins with the salesperson's first contact with the customer—be it a cold call, a lead follow-up, or an encounter at a trade show. Each significant step forward is typically followed by some form of a pullback by the customer, and the need to systematically reengage him or her. To re-engage, the salesperson needs to know how to:

- Acknowledge what the customer is saying or doing without agreeing or disagreeing (the "neutral response")
- Pursue the customer's success by not getting diverted by the customer's action, but instead continuing to concentrate intently on understanding and responding to what is truly in the customer's best interest.

The tools of engagement

Bridgewell Partners' unique "tools of engagement" provide many avenues for leading customers back into the relationship and productive dialogue. These memorable tools include approaches that:

- Uncover the client's/prospect's motives and bring them to the center of attention
- Demonstrate your commitment to the customer's best interest
- Involve customers in determining how the relationship will work
- Show respect for the client/prospect

Relationships develop in stages, and can become better and better

Our approach to relationship building is based on the belief that all relationships have the potential for getting better and better. The challenge for the salesperson is to make that happen. Our processes help guide the salesperson's interactions with customers so that the relationship successfully moves forward and grows. Our processes are particular to each relationship stage. So participants first need to be aware of the stage of the relationship and the needs of the customer at each stage.

Summary

We understand that relationships are crucial. We believe relationships can be understood and tended to, and that the results will be extremely positive. Our focus is on how to grow relationships by moving them forward and removing barriers that get in their way.