



## Are You Easy to Refer?

We can all agree, this is an interesting time in business and history. (There are other words that work; however, this is a PG-rated newsletter.) One of the observations is the rush that many professionals are making to build networks and relationships. As many business professionals are discovering, this is a sales activity that should never be put in the 'don't have time to do' list. Meeting up with potential referral partners is one thing. Doing it the right way is another. Make sure you are practicing the three do's when developing relationships.

### **DO turn off your blackberry:**

Yes, it's time for the yearly rant against the 'crackberry' users of the world. It's amazing how many addicts don't get how their obsession affects relationship building. The biggest problem? Lack of decision making. Do you want to be at the lunch meeting or with your blackberry? Do you want to be at the board meeting or with your blackberry? Do you want to be at the association lunch or with your blackberry? These events are all key places to meet potential referral and business partners.

All too often, the addiction of checking the electronic box prevents relationship building. Think about it; if you are presenting your report at a board meeting and notice an individual not paying attention, how does that make you feel? When a person is texting during the presentation, is there a possibility that the presenter's colleagues are at the table or one nearby? (And are wondering why you aren't paying attention to their friend?) Or how many of you have set up a lunch only to have the person keep checking their email? (And you have more of a conversation with the waitress than the person.) Like it or not, the message being sent in all of the above scenarios is that the person in front of you is not important, only the people on the other side of your Blackberry matter.

Larry King recently interviewed former President Clinton. Politics aside, most people agree President Clinton is exceptional at building rapport. Larry asked President Clinton if he had a Blackberry. The answer was no because, "*I want to be able to focus on what I am doing.*" Hmm...wonder if focus has any correlation with building rapport and relationships. It's time to make a decision.

**DO study models of communication:**

One of the best models for building rapport quickly is Neurolinguistic Programming (NLP). The underlying principle of this model is that people buy from people they like and who are like them. Creating likeability is connecting and communicating in the other person's language. NLP is a communication model that teaches matching and mirroring; i.e. rate of speech, volume and type of words. Ever meet someone that you know is smart and good at what they do? Did you also come to the realization that you're not connecting with them? There is a good possibility they are not speaking 'your language' (talking too fast/slow, too loud/soft, etc.). People don't refer people they feel disconnected with or dislike.

**DO study the art of small talk:**

Lunches are a great way to introduce potential business opportunities or referral partners. A mistake often made at a referral lunch is getting down to business too quickly before getting to know the other person's story. Good 'ole fashion principles of persuasion still work in this selling scenario. Get to know the a person's story and learn about their hobbies, passions, and family. This creates the setting for finding common ground, which is a key principle of influence. The exception, of course, is when the 'prospect' starts talking business first. Follow their lead and build rapport later.

Do the 'Three Do's and practice the number one activity in building business....BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS.

Good Selling!

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