

How Do Your Work Relationships Affect Productivity?

We walk a fine line in our relationships with team members.

On one hand, we need to be personable, caring and engaged with our team. On the other hand, we don't want to become too caring and focused on the relationship at the expense of productivity.

It's a fight against becoming too familiar.

As leaders, our goal isn't really to develop friendships or long-lasting personal relationships. The focus of a leader must consistently be upon goal achievement. Personal relationships can soften our resolve to demand excellence in accomplishing the work in the relationship.

As a young salesperson, I developed some strong relationships with clients. At least, I thought that's what I had. I learned the hard way that my relationships were only as good as the product. When a strong competitor entered the picture, I lost the business because of poor performance of the product. All of the lunches, sports events and golf outings, were only business. Nothing personal, just business.

When I was younger, I had a strong dislike for that phrase—it's not personal, it's business. But I learned to better understand the downside of blending personal relationships with business goals.

I will still play golf, go to dinners and care about my team. But I stand on guard against a work relationship becoming too familiar. I've tumbled down that slippery slope and become blinded to poor performance. Performance breathes life into a

work relationship. Without performance, there is no future.

I've learned that some team members view a personal relationship with a leader as job security. I've also learned that when I leave a business in which I held key leadership roles, the team left behind moves on to engage the new boss. I rarely, if ever, have heard from people I have led in businesses in which I invested significant chunks of my life. I frequently hear from students I have taught but only a few former employees have reconnected. I get it. It's nothing personal. It's just business.

Familiarity breeds contempt.

"Yes, my own close friend, in whom I trusted, who ate of my bread, has lifted up the heel against me" (Ps. 41:9).

Platform Tip No. 44

A good message is evergreen.

Brother Lawrence and Frank Laubach wrote *Practicing His Presence* which is over 300 years old and has never been out of print. The message still lingers because it connects so powerfully with our felt need to be in the presence of the Lord.

Is your message evergreen?

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