

How Relationships Hold the Keys to Kingdom Business

Is customer relationship management (CRM) an acronym for vision? CRM is only a database if we don't grow relationships.

I was reminded recently of how important it is to reunite with lifelong friends. All the years of separation disappeared in minutes. We talked as though time stood still, with little need to catch up. I only had to keep up. When I see family and friends in heaven, there will be no sorrow about time missed or anything else. We will know in full.

As I absorbed all the medicine that shot to my heart while in the presence of friends, marketplace lessons lit my mind like lightning bugs in the summer dusk. Our customers, clients, leads, prospects and even the tire kickers seek a relationship with someone who will help solve problems. The closer we remain to the people who invest in our products and services, the better our opportunity to build kingdom relationships.

After all, the first goal of the kingdom business is to build kingdom relationships, agreed? Relationships hold the keys to the kingdom. Seek transformations over transactions. "Remain in me as I also remain in you" (John 15:4a).

Hanging around matters. We shouldn't underestimate the importance of proximity. Relationships are observable. It's easy to see what matters most. We remain close to it. Absentee relationships tend to lose their luster.

The key question is, how can we get close and stay close? I asked that question on a college tennis court when I first saw the woman I would marry. I've been asking the same question as a marketplace minister for over 40 years.

We must care enough to observe and understand the problems

people experience. We must long to be closer to people who need our services.

Walgreens' marketing strategy is observable. Location matters. Build stores near neighborhoods. The pharmacy chain has 9,560 locations as of the end of 2018, with stores in every state.

Denzel Washington popularized an old phrase: If you hang around a barbershop long enough, you'll eventually get a haircut. While this phrase has a twofold meaning, I prefer to focus on the embedded marketing lesson.

What can we do to encourage people who need us to hang around a little longer? Can we influence others to read our content and come back for more? Can we repeatedly deliver value in a podcast and build an audience? Can we build and maintain a website that delivers information and value to every targeted visitor clearly defined who you are called to serve?

Do what you can do well, repeatedly. Strive for continuous improvement in your lane. Overcommunicate with people who need you. Think transformation over transaction.

Jesus spoke clearly and often to His disciples about their need to remain. As recorded in John 15, Jesus cautioned his disciples to remain eight times in this single passage. Jesus knew the disciples would be tempted to leave the way. He knew they would be distracted. He knew they would need the Holy Spirit to help them remain.

So, He sent the comforter. As we remain near the cross, we remain close to those we are called to serve.

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