



66 Building instant rapport

What is rapport?

Rapport exists when two or more people find that they have a mutual understanding, share some values, ideals or experiences and as a result can communicate easily. When you have rapport it usually means that there is a connection between you and another person. This connection can happen at different levels over different time periods. From a sales point of view, the more instant the rapport the better. Having a rapport usually means that both parties like each other. You don't have to like someone to be able to do business with them, but it helps if you do. Different levels of rapport will exist with different people. You wouldn't expect each and every customer you meet to share the same level of rapport you have with your best friend. You would expect to create an appropriate level of rapport with the people you do business with.

Why is it important?

Your ability to work successfully with people or sell your services to them will be influenced greatly by the level of rapport you are able to build. The more rapport you have, the easier it will be to build good business relationships. When you think back to your own experiences of doing business, have you ever chosen to do business with someone that you didn't have any rapport with? Have you ever chosen to work with someone because you felt they liked and understood you?

Rapport is the oil that lubricates all good human relationships. Without its presence it can be hard work – with it, everything can be so much easier.

Your challenge

You may meet a lot of people in a typical month in your business. You won't be able to create the same level of rapport with all of them. There will be people you come across who are so different from you that you may struggle to build a connection. Your challenge will be to become interested in those people who are different to you and find some common ground. This common ground is the bedrock that supports rapport.

How to build instant rapport with the people you want to sell your services to

- Start conversations by finding some common ground.
- Share something appropriate about yourself as a person.
- Put yourself in their shoes. Consider what their outcomes are.
- Really get to know them as a person, get interested in their life, challenges and goals.
- Be open-minded and decide to find something to like about each person you meet.
- Really, genuinely care about helping them to succeed.
- Be aware of how they are responding to you.
- Find out exactly how they need you to help them. Find out what they want.
- Make the person feel important and show that you care.
- Pace and match body language and voice tone.
- Laugh together and create a positive state.

HOW GOOD ARE YOUR RAPPORT BUILDING SKILLS? – SPECIAL RESPONSE CHECKLIST

- ▶ What does having a good rapport mean to you?
- ▶ How do you know when you have rapport with someone?
- ▶ How do you know when you don't have rapport?
- ▶ Which of your clients do you have the best rapport with?
- ▶ What kind of people do you find it harder to build rapport with?
- ▶ What do you do to ensure you build rapport with new prospects?
- ▶ Would a better rapport help you to do more business?
- ▶ What could you do to improve your rapport-building skills?

How to use this information

People who are good rapport builders usually attract new business much more quickly and easily than people who aren't. It is worth considering your own rapport-building skills and what you can do to fine tune them.

Think rapport and build stronger business relationships