

## Relationship, Relationship, Relationship

Everyone has heard the expression that in real estate, the three biggest factors determining the value of a person's property are location, location, location. In business, the top three factors that determine the success of your business are relationship, relationship, relationship. As a business leader or owner, you will need positive relationships based on mutual trust and respect to take your business to the next level.

You will want to look at relationships on multiple levels.

**Relationship with Self:** Because everything I teach is about inside-out empowerment, you can't begin to look at relationships with others until you recognize the kind of relationship you have with yourself. Do you take care of yourself? Do you protect your time? Do you keep the promises and commitments you make with yourself?

**Relationships with Your Managers:** You must know the fable about the goose and the golden eggs. A farmer was so excited about the goose he owned that kept laying him a golden egg each day that he learned which goose was the "cash cow" and cut her open to get at all the eggs inside. Obviously, there weren't any and he had just killed the means to get more golden eggs. If you do not treat your managers well, then they will be unable to produce your golden eggs.

Do your managers feel safe, supported, understood, important, respected and liked? Do they have choices? Are they able to work unrestricted? Do they have any fun or useful learning happening on the job?

**Teamwork:** As the leader or owner, you are responsible for the level of teamwork with your managers and their level of teamwork with those they supervise. How well do your people get along and support each other? Do they each recognize their own unique contribution to the ultimate goal? Do they all recognize their value in contributing to the mission and vision of your company?

**Relationships with your Customers:** Do your clients or customers have respect for you and the product or service you provide? Do they buy from you because they like you and your staff? Do you correct any wrongs quickly? Do you take customer feedback seriously?

**Relationships with Board or Shareholders:** Do you have a good relationship with your Board of Directors or your shareholders? Do you operate in a way that inspires trust in you, your leadership and the work your company is doing? Do you tell the truth even if it means admitting a mistake on your part?

**Relationship with Your Community:** The definition of your "community" depends upon the nature of your work. If you are a social service agency, then the relationship with your community would be the immediate area where you provide services. If your corporation is an Internet business or serves a global market, then your community literally is the whole world. Wherever you do business, you want your public relations to be positive. You want your community to trust and respect what you do.

I work with some people who have been discouraged with the less than honest business dealings of other individuals. In response, I have stated that people who do business without regard to the relationship of those involved will be unsuccessful in building their business empire. Many have then countered with, "Well, they will just find new people to do business with." That may have been true in the past.

However, we live in a new age. This is the information age. If you do something lacking integrity, word spreads. There are blogs, there are information boards, there is email, there is simple word of mouth. The methods for spreading information are many. When you behave in a less than honorable way, others quickly find out.

Individual trust, the trust of your people, brand trust and your reputation are all based on the way you interact with people. The relationships you build, both in your personal and professional life, are the things that will either propel you forward or stop you dead in your tracks. Create relationships built on mutual trust and respect and you will be well on your way to developing the business you want.

## About the Author

Kim Olver, LPC is an executive coach, staff development specialist, public speaker and consultant. She has developed and revolutionary process called Inside Out Empowerment, designed to help leaders become more effective from the inside-out. She is also the author of, Leveraging Diversity at Work. To learn more about Inside Out Empowerment go to Inside Out Empowerment.

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