

## More Rapport

Rapport plays a massive part in sales as you are well aware. What you may be unaware of is what constitutes rapport and how to use it better in order to gain more sales.

The most common mistake made in sales is what I call 'hairdresser's rapport' (and I make no apologies to any hairdressers reading this article!). This, by definition, is when the sales person tries to balance out a conversation between business and non-business matters. Exactly what you experience in a hairdressers chair. 'So, what are we doing for you today?' (business) 'Are you going on holiday this year?' (non-business) 'Do you want along fringe or short fringe?' (business) 'Any plans for the weekend?' (non-business) and so on. Hairdressers usually aren't consciously selling you anything so we put up with it and hope they haven't distracted themselves too much and your hair looks okay when you leave. Next time you go back, the same set of mind-numbing personal questions raise their ugly heads because all the hairdresser is doing is going through the motions and trying to have a good 'rapport' with all their clients.

Use this simple model in sales and you won't sell a biscuit to a dog.

Rapport is developed gradually and doesn't refer to colloquial, friendly chat but more to a level of understanding you develop with the customer.

Rapport is something that you have with existing customers and you can build and solidify this rapport in much more effective ways than simply, 'chit-chatting':

- Reliability – delivering on what you said you were going to do including calling back at a particular time or sending relevant information if you are only generating leads at this stage. They begin to *trust* you.
- Professionalism – this will gain you the *respect* of the client which is critical to developing rapport.
- Product knowledge – the more you know about what you sell, the more questions the customer can ask and the more *interesting* you become to them.
- Patience – taking your time and developing the interest and relationship over several calls shows that you respect what the client wants and are willing to take your time rather than get a 'yes' or 'no' immediately.
- Recall – unlike the hairdresser, when a customer tells you something about themselves or their business, make a note and remember it. Follow up on the line of conversation the next time you speak. This shows that you consider what the customer has to say as *important*.

When you think *rapport* don't think 'chit-chat', instead think *trust, respect, interest, patience, professional, relationship*. Rapport isn't instant no matter how nice a person you are but concentrating on these relevant areas can speed up the process and help you build those relationships that produce results.

Happy Selling!