

Chris's Corner: Business to Business

I am going to keep this short and sweet this month. If you are a business that's customers are other businesses, there is only one rule. Treat that customer, that business, as if it were your business.

Whether you sell a product, provide a service or do both, take what you know in your very own business and take that insider knowledge and take care of your customer the way you would take care of yourself, knowing what you know.

Take your array of products and services and pretend you are dealing with yourself. Don't sell a machine for an application that you wouldn't buy for that application. Don't provide a service that you wouldn't utilize yourself.

Practice that every day. Once your customers understand your sincerity and integrity they will be even more open with you about their needs, problems and situations and you and the customer will collaborate to find a winning solution. This advice is dependent upon your sincerity.

If this is just some act you're going to adopt, it won't work and will ruin your reputation.

Don't deal with customers thinking about what you want from the transaction. If you do you are going to cut corners or maximize your short turn returns and possibly, most likely, not provide the best value and best solution to your customer. Business is not built on one time deals; it is built on long term relationships.

Once you have earned your customer's trust, your transaction time and cost will go down because you and your customer will cut down on the dance of negotiation and positioning, instead working towards the best solution for the customer.

This attitude and practice takes time for customers to warm to. Most people are going to be skeptical, as this is not the way they're accustomed to be treated or to

deal. Overtime, however, when what you provide matches what you say, you will get customers for life.

This relationship, too, is all dependent upon your willingness to stand behind your words, actions, products and service. If something doesn't work out, you have to be willing, actually eager, to make things right.

Sounds simple, try doing it. Put yourself in your customer's shoes and do the right thing; each and everytime.