

Chris's Corner: Business Partners

A pretty catch piece of business jargon seems to be making its rounds again lately, or at least in my circle of communications; business partners.

In my world, I hear it as a positive affirmation when referring to me and my business as I am doing business on behalf of companies I represent in the market.

Most of the time, I genuinely accept the term in the manner it was delivered as a sincere acknowledgement of our contributions to the greater good. I say this recognizing that we actually do make real and measurable contributions to the greater good and this statement confirms my beliefs.

While not as good as a larger piece of the pie, it is the next best thing. Everyone enjoys a thank you and recognition.

Other times, I hear this term from other organizations, whether in an email or whatever, where I also do business with or on behalf of their organization or company and it rings hollow.

If you only talk the talk and don't also walk the walk, telling me I am your business partner is a joke. If you're difficult to work with, if I have to keep on top of my game to ensure your treating me fairly, if you're hard to get a hold of or elusive, you are not a business partner; you are simply a necessary evil to me.

I also don't like when I am a customer to a business and the business kind of puts themselves on a pedestal and says we are business partners. That is kind of presumptuous, right? I am paying you money and you are selling me a van, a computer, software support, whatever and we are partners? The last time I checked I am a paying customer and we aren't working together.

That is why I would never, ever say to a customer it is great to have a business partner like you. The customer is king in my world and I am a willing servant. They have choices in the market and right now, they choose to spend their hard-earned money with my company. It is an honor and a privilege, in a market of

options, and I don't take it for granted nor would I ever let my customer think that I am not beholden to them; I am.

No customers, no business. No business, no income.