

Doing Business with Love

Business is often a forgotten area for showing love and many would say that, on the surface, love should be left at home when negotiating deals. It has been said success can only be achieved by the 'hard-nosed' business people who are aware of the 'tricks of the trade' and who 'give no quarter'! Such an attitude is short-sighted and any success will either be short-lived or mediocre. Love is a key ingredient to having the ideal business.

Real success in business has love as its base and the love is expressed through honesty in dealing with others, high-quality products, service given for mutual benefit, giving the other person the benefit of the doubt and thoughtfulness and duty-of-care to employees.

Business people who use love in business are not being asked to check their brains in at the door. They still need to be 'street-smart' and aware that some business people are less than honest in their dealings and would prefer to survive at the expense of others. They understand, however, that businesses interact and that, in the long-run, they all need to relate and depend on each other.

Long term, your business prosperity depends on interacting with love and showing respect to everyone you are in contact with in business, from your business partners to the truck driver. Showing love means seeing to it that everyone benefits and prospers in some way from their business relationship with you. For example, if you sell a product, information or a service, make sure the price is right and there is a benefit there for those who purchase it.

Honesty is a very important expression of love in business; honesty with everyone you deal with such as business partners, employees, suppliers and customers. Each of you depend on each other and honesty will reap rewards for all parties. It engenders respect and appreciation and is usually repaid many times over.

Whatever your products, they should be priced fairly so that, if you are the manufacturer for example, there is room for a reasonable profit for everyone along the chain. This will provide a reasonable standard of living and happy participants in your business and happy participants are repeat business. Happy clients will help you build your business. So the circle continues and as you can see, we all relate to and depend on each other.

If another business needs your help in some way, be prepared to do what you can to be of service. Help given when it is really needed may bring more business to your office not only from the business you were able to help, but by other businesses who heard, usually by word of mouth, that your business is helpful. If some businesses are slow in paying you, it may be a good idea to speak with them to see if they have a good reason. An honest business will do all they can to pay their bills on time, but if someone is having a short term problem, you may both be able to come to an agreement.

Within your own business love and respect your employees. If you share your vision for the company with them you allow them to commit to that vision. There should be an open and honest relationship between everyone. You achieve this by providing good working conditions and being prepared to compliment work well done. It can be difficult to find good employees but when you have found one, show your appreciation. If you are an employee, give over and above what is required of you. A business is equally the employer and the employee/s. The business needs both and both need each other just as much as they both need customers. When employers and employees feel appreciated they are less likely to be competitive and will view each other as friends. Such a work environment can have a very positive impact on everyone's wellbeing and should be cultivated. When people love their work they tend to love their colleagues and clients as well and productivity usually increases. Hours worked are getting longer and people are spending more time with colleagues at work than with their family. As the well-being of both employer and employee is of paramount importance for the business to succeed, this provides a good reason to make sure the work environment is peaceful and oriented toward a friendly love for each other.

It is important to understand that the attitude of those in charge will permeate down through the ranks and on to suppliers and customers. If the attitude is a narrow one, without thought for people and where the bottom line, the profit, is all that that drives the company, that is the attitude that will permeate right through the company and it will eventually become known in the industry. On the other hand, if the attitude is more rounded and the wellbeing of everyone along the chain is taken into account, the chain will remain strong and prosperity will be available to all.

I knew a farmer who, during a prolonged drought, decided to sell most of his sheep. A prospective buyer looked at the sheep and offered a price which was much lower than the farmer would normally have received for his sheep. However, the price was agreed on by both men and they shook hands on the deal. There was no signed legal document. As the buyer was from interstate, he asked the farmer if he would be prepared to keep the sheep for a further few weeks until he could organise transport. The farmer agreed although there was little feed available. A week later it rained heavily over the district and within a few days the paddocks were carpeted with plenty of green sheep feed. The sheep grew fat and the prices went up. Friends of the farmer suggested he back out of the deal with the interstate buyer as he would now get far more for his sheep than had been agreed upon. The farmer shook his head and said since he had agreed to the price and shaken hands on the deal he would not go back on his word. Everyone knew that the farmer would need to pay a much higher price to re-stock his land but they also knew that the farmer's word could be trusted and that he would always do the right thing by others. It wasn't about the deal; it was about the farmer's attitude to his fellow man. His love and respect for others meant he could only be true to himself and make sure that his promise stood firm.

That is the honesty and a love of your fellow man that is required in business and it inspires respect and love in return. We need more business people such as this to have

the strength to set an example. When business is based on a foundation of love and respect, it cannot fail.