



Relationships...Your Benchmark to a Meaningful Career

By: F. Scott Addis, CPCU, CRA, CBWA

Your ability to build deep, long-lasting relationships is the key ingredient to success in your business.

Relationships just don't happen. They evolve over time. Successful people in business understand that relationship building is more like "farming" than "hunting." Quality relationships are rarely pursued and captured. Rather, relationships are rooted in rich soil consisting of a blend of mutual trust, respect and shared values. When fully grown, relationships produce bonds and connections that enhance both parties' opportunity to succeed.

Research indicates that 88% of executives view the strength of client relationships as the primary reason revenue goals are achieved. Mutual trust and respect are at the heart of these relationships.

Mutual trust is the shared belief that one can depend upon another person. Trust grows out of confidence in another person's honesty, integrity and desire to serve. Respect is the outgrowth of trust.

A few years ago, I had a luncheon meeting with Ed Wallace, Managing Partner of The Relational Capital Group (www.relcapgroup.com). Ed is the celebrated author of the award winning book, *Business Relationships That Last*. He enables his clients to achieve goals through a unique 5-step business relationship process. As a result of The Relational Capital Group's system, acquaintances are turned into professional peers and, ultimately, trusted advisors.

In *Business Relationships That Last*, we learn about the Principle of Worthy Intent, Relational Capital, Relational GPS® and the Relational Ladder®.

PRINCIPLE OF WORTHY INTENT

The Principle of Worthy Intent is the inherent promise you make to keep the other person's best interests at the core of your business relationships. It speaks to your character.

RELATIONAL CAPITAL

Your ability to create relational capital with clients, prospects and centers of influence is a meaningful way for you to distinguish yourself. There are three essential qualities at work in the creation of Relational Capital – credibility, integrity, and authenticity.

Your credibility, integrity and authenticity represent the foundation upon which you are able to build relationship capital in today's business world.

Credibility is the quality that makes others believe in you, your words and actions. Credibility is the outgrowth of your professional competence. **Integrity** is being trustworthy in actions and character. It is the quality of having honest and truthful motivations. **Authenticity** is the quality of being genuine. It is about being who you are.

With worthy intent as your guiding principle, credibility, integrity and authenticity are easily recognized and valued by your clients, prospects and centers of influence.

RELATIONAL GPS®

Getting where you want to go in business – your road map in developing outstanding business relationships – is contingent upon understanding your clients, prospects and centers of influence Relational GPS®. GPS stands for:

- Goals: Short and long term personal and professional objectives

- Passions: Personal and professional causes that your client, prospect or center of influence cares so deeply about
- Struggles: Obstacles holding them back from their goals and passions

People will not share their goals, passions and struggles with you until they feel confident and comfortable in the relationship. Your credibility, integrity and authenticity opens up one's GPS. Once your client, prospect or center of influence allows you to navigate his or her GPS, you have the road map to a long term relationship leading to Trusted Advisor status. GPS also facilitates your ability to move through the sales cycles meaningfully and successfully.

Your business relationships are parked in neutral if you have little or no understanding of one's goal, passions and struggles.

THE RELATIONAL LADDER®.

Your ability to view each business relationship in the context of a ladder will enable you to climb to new heights of customer intimacy and engagement. The frame of the Relational Ladder® represents your technical knowledge as well as your ability to communicate your value proposition. Each rung of the ladder moves you closer to the goal of a mutually profitable relationship. Your ability to climb the Relational Ladder® requires relational capital braced by worthy intent.

BENCHMARKING CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIPS

In *Business Relationships That Last*, we learn that only 24% of corporations formally track the relational aspects of their client and prospect interactions within their customer relationship management system. In addition, 70% of business professionals overestimate the quality and strength of their relationships.

The research of Beyond Insurance supports the findings of The Relational Capital Group. The Survey Results uncover that 80% of agents and brokers do not have a process in place to benchmark customer intimacy, appreciation and loyalty.

The Survey Results are shown below:

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
My firm has a process in place to measure and benchmark customer intimacy, appreciation and loyalty.	3%	7%	10%	56%	24%

When customer relationships are not benchmarked, you do not know how a customer is feeling about your value proposition. Identifying and benchmarking core relationships is an essential strategy toward your goal of building deep, long lasting relationships.

Relationships... your benchmark to a meaningful career.

About the Author

Scott Addis, CPCU, CRA, CBWA is the CEO of Beyond Insurance and is recognized as an industry leader having been named a Philadelphia finalist for *Inc. Magazine's* "Entrepreneur of the Year" award as well as one of the "25 Most Innovative Agents in America." Beyond Insurance is a consulting firm that offers leadership training, cultural transformation, and talent and tactical development for enlightened professionals who are looking to take their practice to the next level. Since 2007, the proven and repeatable processes of Beyond Insurance have transformed individuals and organizations as measured by enhanced organic growth, productivity, profitability, and value in the marketplace