



Building the love

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by Nikki Heald

Often, we're so intent on getting that sale that we have a transactional view of our customers, rather than taking the time to build any love. We use them (to increase our profits), abuse them (by providing poor service) and then treat them like a one-night stand - attentive today, neglectful tomorrow.

Sound silly? Well, complaints such as "you never call", "you're always too busy", "weren't you listening?" and "why were you late?" are legitimate gripes often made by disgruntled customers. Today's clients are savvy; they know what they want and they know when they're not getting it. They want to feel special and they want to feel the love. Quite simply, their loyalty and your success depend on it. In my presentations we often discuss building the love so as to nurture key alliances, and ways to dump that "love'em and leave'em" attitude.

Getting your clients to fall head-over-heels with you is the greatest marketing tool you could possibly invest in. Think about it; when people are in love they can't help but tell others about it. They rave on and on and everyone hears about their new interest. Oh, the heady days of love! Imagine if you could get your existing clients to tell others about how wonderful you are. It would certainly save on all of those advertising costs!

Within the insurance profession, successful brokers view their book of clients as their most valuable asset and take good care of them. More than that, successful brokers develop long-lasting relationships by keeping in touch both in good times and bad. Remember, you're not just selling insurance but providing expert advice. As we know, the perception of trust is vital and trust happens once we have built the love.

Of course, cultivating a trusted rapport will take time, effort and energy – just like any other valuable relationship in your life. Remember, it's the little things that count; so here are five tips to get you started:

1. **Make others want you**
Position yourself as an expert in your field – build up your professional brand.
2. **Remember to listen**
Identify client wants – rather than telling them all about what you can do.
3. **Don't forget to check in**
Keep in touch – find ways to make contact and keep yourself at the forefront of their mind.
4. **Keep it interesting**
Grow to meet client needs – be innovative, up-to-date and develop new products and services.
5. **Read the signs**
Request feedback – it's a great tool to assess service and product standards. A word of caution though: even though the aim of the game is to 'build the love', be careful that you don't become too familiar or personal. Always maintain

professional lines and boundaries to ensure your credibility and reputation remains intact.

Finally, when you make a conscious effort to invest in your business relationships it means people are more likely to buy from you than your competitors and we know that when this occurs, it's definitely amore!

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