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CHUCK TALK: Authenticity is fundamental to developing trust

BY CHUCK MACHE

Do your clients or customers trust you? Do your partners, peers, employees and vendors have confidence in your words when you tell them something? And can you say with certainty that you trust them? How important is trust in business anyway?

These questions struck me recently when I had the pleasure of attending an event that featured a panel headed by a successful local independent retailer.

The purpose of the function, as I saw it, was to provide audience members with some "pearls" that they may apply to their own business. The story after all is quite unique: Independent retailer bucks odds and flourishes amongst national giants – a kind of a Rocky or Rudy story, if you know what I mean.

When the company CEO spoke, he told the story of how they had to "bring the heart back" into each and every one of the employees in the business. He spoke about how they had to use their small size to their advantage against the big guys.

He talked about the discipline that was required to live their revamped mission. He talked about pure hard work and how he had to trust his own instincts and beliefs. He talked about teamwork and gave much of the credit to his team. He talked about how much he trusted them. And when he was finished talking, his genuine approach and his authentic demeanor made me trust that he knew exactly what he was talking about.

Authenticity cannot be beaten.

If you're in sales, how much do your clients trust you? Ask yourself these questions:

-- Am I finding their pain and attempting to solve their problems? They'll trust you more if you are solving their problems.

-- Am I doing what I say I'm going to do? They'll trust you more if you walk your talk.

-- Am I genuinely listening versus doing all the talking? They'll trust you more if you tune into their agenda.

-- Do I care more about their needs versus my own? They'll trust you if you put their needs first.

-- Am I helping them more than I am selling them? They'll trust you more if that's first on your agenda.

There are many more questions like this, and not just for people in sales. If you are a leader of a company, do your team and employees genuinely trust you? Not if:

-- Your agenda is ahead of the team's and always changing.

- You are taking all of the credit for the company's success.
- You are blaming your team for your failings.
- You are not allowing your team to make mistakes.
- You don't have genuine care for each and every employee.
- You don't communicate what's really on your mind.
- You are not an authentic individual.

I do a lot of executive coaching, and one of the keys is that there is mutual trust between me and my clients. I do my share of upfront qualifying homework and never take on a client that in my estimation isn't willing to change.

When there is trust between people, things get done faster. Creative opportunities open wide up, problems get solved, hurdles overcome, issues resolved, and attacking challenges that your business is faced with becomes fun and invigorating. Trust exterminates all the "noise" served up by the naysayers. Trust is the glue that binds people in working toward a common goal.

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