



Relational GPS®

Your Roadmap to Relationship Success

Driving a car equipped with a GPS (that is, a Global Positioning System) has become a way of life for us as we travel, taking much of the guesswork out of following directions that our parents' generation struggled with. Global positioning systems rely on satellites that orbit the Earth at more than seven thousand miles per hour, synchronizing coordinates and time and then sending signals to the GPS device in your car. It amazes me how accurate these directions are even in construction zones.



They are the new road map to travelling successfully—getting where you want to go. In much the same way, the key to getting where you want to go in business—the road map to your success in developing outstanding business relationships — is to understand the Relational GPS® of each of your clients. **If your clients believe that you can help them deal with their goals, passions, and struggles on both a professional and a personal level, you can advance through the sales cycle much more meaningfully and successfully.** The challenge, of course, is that clients—who are people, after all—are generally not inclined to share their goals, passions, and struggles with anyone they do not deem as credible or competent.

What is Relational GPS®?

Business relationships do not begin until your client or prospect shares a goal, passion, or struggle— everything up until this point is like driving cross-country without a map. People often look at me in confusion when I ask them, “When do business relationships begin?” Their responses include, “When I take them to lunch,” “When we meet for the first time,” and, “With our first conversation.”

If business relationships are about each party achieving mutual goals, then how can one begin without one party or the other sharing what matters most to most humans—a goal, a passion or a struggle?

Every one of a client's needs will fall under these three categories:

Goals

Personal short and long term business objectives

Passions

Business and personal causes people care deeply about

Struggles

Obstacles or commitments that are holding them back

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Relational Currency: Credibility

When a client begins to share these with you, then you are advancing the relationship. **It all begins by developing credibility through the questions you ask your client or prospect.** This is where most client-facing professionals make a huge mistake. They ask a question or two and then launch right into how their solution can solve the client's problem. It is very difficult to fully understand a client's problem after a few questions. It's almost disrespectful on your part.

Your credibility and believability will shine through based on the questions you ask. Even if you have asked these same questions to other clients and they have become routine to you, they are fresh to this client. In this person's mind, they are the only client that matters.

Programming Your Relational GPS® System

To practice asking questions without offering solutions, try this exercise. Sit down with a young child that is playing with a puzzle. Try asking them questions on their activity for five minutes without offering much in the way of instruction or advice. If you can stay focused on this for that amount of time, you are on your way to developing the skill to work with adult clients!

The big issue client-facing professionals have is “resisting the urge to offer solutions” too early in the process. Remember, your new client or business contact doesn't care about your solutions yet. They are still determining if they like you, trust you and believe what you say—in other words, find you credible. Your company, brand and solutions have no relevance yet.

The questions they have at this point are:

- Do they like you?
- Can they trust you with their team?
- Will you embarrass them?
- Will you come through in the clutch?

Be aware that when you can identify a goal, passion or struggle, the relationship is just beginning to advance. Continue to explore each one, and keep in mind that your client does not expect you to have all the answers and solutions to their problems at this early stage of your relationship.

Asking questions and learning about their Relational GPS® assures them of your intellectual honesty. Your ability to admit that you do not have all the answers and need help from them on various topics helps advance your credibility.

If your client believes that you can help them deal with their goals, passions and struggles on a personal and professional level, you can advance through the sales cycle much more meaningfully and successfully.

Only after our clients deem us credible will they begin to ask us to do things for them that align with their goals, passions, and struggles. Once you've programmed your Relational GPS®, don't stop. People reveal themselves slowly. You can practice your worthy intentions by learning more and more about that individual's Relational GPS®—their higher goals, stronger passions and deeper struggles.