

Rapport – building relationships that last



The best way to establish rapport with people and to win them over to your side is to be truly interested in them, to listen with the intention of really learning about them.” - Jack Canfield author of the multi-million selling series Chicken Soup for the Soul and co-author of The Success Principles

Jack's words echo a sentiment ingrained in the human condition – that if we feel as though **we are being listened to**, we feel as though the person cares, and automatically we are more likely to open up and allow a connection to build.

The goal is simple: make clients and colleagues feel that they're able to put their trust in you, that you're that likeable person they can do business with.

RULES OF ENGAGEMENT



Rapport is best defined as “a friendly, harmonious relationship; especially: a relationship characterized by agreement, mutual understanding, or empathy that makes communication possible or easy.” – English Oxford dictionary

One of the keys to success in the workplace is our ability to foster strong relationships with the critical stakeholders around us. Great relationships start with a good rapport. For some this comes naturally, but for many it's not so easy.

Confronted with a myriad of different personalities, organisational hierarchy and for some an

introverted personality, building rapport is not always as straight-forward as it seems.

The good news is that's it's a skill that can be learnt and when mastered can help **build trust, deepen relationships** and set you on track to delivering **great results**.



In his former career in Private Banking, Templar Consultant, [Gareth Lewis](#) witnessed first-hand the benefits of investing time in building rapport with clients and prospects:

“People buy people – the question is how do we get people to buy us?”

In his book, ‘Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion’, [Robert Cialdini](#) explores the persuasive power of **likeability**. As human beings we are more likely to listen to or be persuaded by those we like. It follows then, that in business we are more likely to buy from those we like.

Observe how we all make snap decisions about everyone we meet, do I like this person or not? The question then is how can I influence someone to like me?

The answer is simple, find the common ground, focus on something you have in common and **leverage the power of similarity** – that could be a shared previous employer, someone you both know, an interest in today's news about your counterparts business, or something more personal, a sport or hobby you both share. It's in these moments that rapport is built and we lay the foundations for trusted relationships,” Gareth explains.

“We have two ears and one mouth and we should use them proportionally.” ? Susan Cain, Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World That Can't Stop Talking

“You will always meet people who won’t open up, but the **majority love to talk about themselves** given the chance. Spend a third of your time asking questions and being genuinely curious and two thirds of your time listening.

Whether you’re naturally outgoing or more introverted, one of the keys to developing great rapport is to **ask broad open questions** and before you know it, people will open up and arm you with a wealth of useful information,” Gareth describes.

follow these quick tips to help you build great RAPPORT:

- Understand who you’re meeting - do your research: where were they educated, previous employers, hobbies ... it’s all on LinkedIn
- Start strongly – a firm handshake, smile
- Use peoples’ names
- Maintain good eye contact
- Find the “common ground”, leverage the power of similarity
- Ask broad “open” questions
- Listen attentively

SCIENCE OF PEOPLE



The now infamous study led by neuroscientist Giacomo Rizzolatti at the University of Parma 26 years ago, discovered that the electrical activity from neurons in the brain of a macaque monkey, was the same when they put something in their mouths versus when they were watching someone doing the same thing.

In the study after a lunch break, one of the students ate an ice cream in full view of the monkey and they discovered that the very same neurons that would register activity when the monkey performed the action of eating something, were stimulated simply because the monkey was observing the action.

“We are exquisitely social creatures. Our survival depends on **understanding the actions, intentions and emotions of others**. Mirror neurons allow us to grasp the minds of others not through conceptual reasoning but through direct simulation. By feeling, not by thinking.” Dr. Rizzolatti said in an interview.

MIRROR; MIRROR ON THE WALL

There are many schools of thought when it comes to whether we should use “active mirroring” in business interactions and especially when building rapport.

Mirroring can be an effective tool to get someone to feel at ease and by default, this is something that often happens naturally and can indicate you're getting buy-in. This unconscious behaviour takes place when we mimic someone's tone, language, gestures and posture – it helps create alignment and the building of a meaningful connection.

A subtle way of incorporating conscious mirroring in a business meeting could be to take coffee if your client/counterparty is having one. In its simplest form when we mirror each other we're saying, “I understand you”. Mirroring generates a strong sense of relatedness and this can significantly enhance relationships.

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