



Relationships Can Build or Hurt Your Business

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Even though we are solo professionals, there are many people who can influence us for good or evil over time. It is therefore important to be cautious about the people who we have as associates. There are several types of relationships that can hurt our business:

1. Partners - Many of us have been burned in the past after beginning a venture with high hopes only to have them dashed when the person who we chose to partner with does not have the same goals, lifestyle or ambition. This may be a business partner who perhaps does not invest time and energy to the degree that was promised or a romantic partner who has a completely different idea of how your lives and business should operate. Be cautious!
2. Friends - People can enter and leave your life just as the seasons change. Usually we are attracted to others because we have something in common but if one of us grows the relationship can end either abruptly or through a gradual slide that is almost imperceptible. Unfortunately, jealousy can interfere with what was previously a supportive and enjoyable relationship. It is therefore important that you live in the moment and be able to let go of the other person when the right time for this arrives.
3. Associates - It is very easy to get into habits that might not be very positive for your business. An associate might, for example, invite you for an after-work beverage which evolves into drinking several times a week or even every night. This can be an expensive, time-consuming activity that may actually result in a negative label in the community.
4. Consultants - Over the years, I have spent a great deal of money hiring professionals who claim that they are experts only to be disappointed when they tried to lead me into an area that I felt didn't fit my values or goals. Just because they promote themselves as the "expert" doesn't mean that they are the "expert" of me or my business. You need to have a good match with the person who is to help you to build and grow your business. Choose well.
5. Clients - Usually you don't know clients when they book their first appointment with you and, as you get to know them you will soon realize that some of them are "toxic" individuals who would not hesitate to bad-mouth anyone who crosses their path. Be very discerning about issues that clients may have and endeavor to resolve them before things fester into a situation that might harm your business. Also, remember that it is acceptable for you to "fire" your clients if you feel that you are not making progress. A good referral might be just the answer!