



Schmoozing Enables Relationships

Confident Conversations

Anyone who says that "schmoozing" isn't critical to business success does not understand what is meant by the term. It has certainly been a big part of my success in life. If you know me, this will come as no surprise. My husband, Jay calls me Madame Butterfly, in his opinion I flit from place to place sprinkling magic dust :) There may be some truth in what Jay says on a personal level, but when it comes to business, I take schmoozing very seriously.

You see business success is all about relationships, and schmoozing enables relationships. Schmoozing is how you network with confidence and style. It also plays a big role in marketing and sales, getting deals done, developing and maintaining long-term relationships with customers, garnering support from your peers and colleagues getting ahead in your career.

Perhaps some of you think schmoozing is all about bovine scatter, telling people what they want to hear. Not true. In fact, the actual [definition of schmooze](#) is: "to converse informally, to chat, or to chat in a friendly and persuasive manner especially so as to gain favour, business, or connections." Do you consider that to be a critical part of your business success and life in general? Successful schmoozing is all about being open and genuine, about connecting with people. However, there are plenty of lines you shouldn't cross. Follow these Great Schmoozing Guidelines and have fun conversing in an open, friendly and fun fashion:

- 1.** Maintain your credibility. If you want to become a successful executive, leader or friend ... look for the good. You can find something good and interesting in everyone if you watch, look and listen hard enough.
- 2.** It's never about you; it's always about them. Connecting with people means finding things you have in common, or even different views on a subject you both feel strongly about. You already know you, what you don't know is them.
- 3.** People like to be schmoozed. Perhaps you disagree? However consider this:
 - People like attention,
 - To be noticed,
 - To connect and engage.

So just be honest and straightforward in your conversations.

4. Be open and genuine. Be you. The most effective way to connect with people and find common ground is to be yourself, with all your native charm, faults, and idiosyncrasies. There's nothing more attractive than genuine humanity - humility, humour and simply being authentic.

5. Don't overdo it. Trying to be someone you're not and trying too hard are the biggest schmoozing pitfalls. Pushing too hard will backfire. "Just smile and wave" as they say on the movie, Madagascar. Smile, wave and sprinkle magic schmoozing dust...

It's amazing but true: more people are denied promotions and opportunities, because of attitude and habits rather than lack of knowledge and skills. So why do many people spend their time and effort working on knowledge and skills instead of attitude and habits? And one habit worth developing is people skills. Here are a five more tips for the skill of schmoozing:

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1. You can schmooze with everyone. CEOs, MDs and PAs; for the simple reason that everyone likes attention, under the right conditions.
2. Always be appropriate. Make others feel comfortable. Never invade someone's personal space or mind space. If you are not sure what their boundaries are then observe. It's different for everyone, so pay attention and show respect.
3. Now more than ever, our time is our most precious resource so be very mindful of other's time. Talk with people. Nobody likes to be talked at. They like to be engaged. They like to be listened to. There's a big difference. Give a little... Get a little... Listen a LOT...
5. Be schmoozable. Although, by definition, schmoozing is related to the art of persuasion, think of it in terms of building long-term relationships. That means you should always be willing to help people first, that's the law of harvest.

Is this a leadership agenda item? I believe so. Information, communication and relationships are all leadership concerns and smart leaders understand things need to change, and change quickly. Such change is linked to related issues such as the attraction and retention of quality people; it is linked to transforming HR or I prefer it, talent management into a strategic partner within the business; it is linked to personal mastery and a willingness to re-invent, reboot - knowing:

- What to keep,
- What to discard,
- And what to create.

It starts by asking smart questions and it might just be that you need to find an effective schmoozer, learn their skills and set these as your default.

If you would also like a copy of my checklist - just ask.

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