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## 6 Strategies for Building the Relationships You Need to Succeed in Business

Some people who believe they were born to build a business only focus on the product. Here is how to add the required relationship talent [🔗](#)

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Unfortunately, people who are great at inventing things, and have high creativity, often don't have strong interpersonal skills or interests.

As a mentor to aspiring entrepreneurs, I see a high level of frustration from people in this category who have personally developed great solutions, but can't make them into a business. They don't realize that running a business requires relationships.

I strongly believe the talent to effectively build relationships can be learned, just like any other skill, even if you are an introvert like me. It does take effort and focus, just like learning other skills that you need to achieve objectives you have set.

In business, you need to build relationships with a wide range of people, including investors, peers, employees, and of course customers.

As part of my own efforts to maximize my relationship efforts, I found some concise business-oriented guidance in a new book, *Born to Build*, by Jim Clifton and Sangeeta Badal, Ph.D.

These executives from Gallup bring together their best data from business professionals around the world, to offer the following strategies for stepping our relationship results up a notch:

## **1. Build new relationships by diversifying your networks.**

Force yourself to go beyond people in your immediate circle, and those you know well, to contact and nurture a real relationship with at least one supplier, a customer, and a competitor. The next step is to seek out relevant people from unrelated organizations, such as media and government.

## **2. Give as much as you expect to get from every relationship.**

Effective relationships in business require reciprocity - not a one-way half-hearted effort. Offer and deliver help, connect people with each other, or share industry or nonprofit-sector information.

Only then will you feel satisfaction and find others willing to respond when you need help.

## **3. Selectively spend quality time on key relationships.**

Spend time with your most important customers, your most productive employees, and leaders who can make the most difference to your organization. These relationships will generate returns in the immediate future and in the long run. Avoid the trap of idle discussions and ego building.

## **4. Keep your focus on the local social and business landscape.**

Pay attention to bonds, loyalties, and networks that characterize your community. Recognize the norms, values and preferences that shape the behavior of the people you need.

This will help you form a durable and effective network that you can maximize for your business interests.

## **5. Apply your time, brand, and resources to key social issues.**

Build a constituency of relationships with people who have shared beliefs, interests, and ambitions. Collaborating with them on solving shared social problems will turn them into engaged advocates of your business and make them your most powerful allies in building other relationships.

## **6. Prune, renew, and reshape your networks frequently.**

Nurture people relationships critical to your organization carefully and often. Push contacts whose usefulness has diminished over time into your inactive network.

Regularly identify new relationships that are vital to the future of your business, and define strategies to build these connections.

I do offer some points of caution in all relationship building efforts:

- More relationships are not always better. Highly successful business leaders don't necessarily have larger networks. Be selective about the associations you form, listen carefully for situations where you can add value and derive value, and prune the rest.

- Over-investment in relationships can take precious time away from focusing on the technical elements of your business. Invest your time wisely in balancing the demands of market awareness, new technologies, and future organizational strategy.
- Sometimes strong relationship networks can shut out new people and new thinking, insulating you from fresh input from the "outside." Introducing new elements into your network will generate new perspectives, new experiences, and positive change.

Overall, the breadth and depth of your relationship networks is more critical to your business success than your ability to define and build the perfect solution.

These relationships empower you to confidently and aggressively take risks, continually innovate, and recover from losses and setbacks along the way. Your business is a community, not an island. You can't run it alone.