Typically, business relationships are simply characterized by expressions such as: 'excellent'; 'good'; 'could be better' etc, an approach that is at best subjective or at worst inaccurate. So how else can they be described?

Related Vision categorizes relationships into four broad types. We use a sales context when describing them as it provides rich examples, however they are just as relevant in other contexts (e.g. inter-departmental relationships within an organization).

An understanding of each type enables individuals and organizations to move relationships from where they currently sit to where they want them to be.

**Ad-hoc relationships**

These are project driven relationships where the seller is typically called in to help the buyer sort out a current and often urgent issue. These relationships may drive revenue but it is uncertain as requests for help are unexpected which can also put stresses on resources. Requests for time-consuming proposals re a feature of these relationships.

**Technical relationships**

The buyer recognizes that the seller's offering is as good as or better than competitor offerings but there is no personal rapport between buyer and seller. The danger here is that if at some point a competitor develops a similar or better offering, price will become the main differentiator.

**Social relationships**

This is a friendly relationship, but superficial. Both parties have fun and probably share some common interests. However the conversation rarely moves to business issues and indeed there may be some doubt over the suitability of your offering.

**Partner relationships**

This relationship is where the buyer trusts the salesperson. They know the salesperson is there to help them not sell to them. The buyer gets value out of every interaction with the seller, which means that when the buyer comes to have to pay for the offering they rarely argue about price. They never consider giving this work to anyone else. The initial sale may take a little longer longer to win, as you are taking the time to build trust. However subsequent interactions and sales progress quickly, precisely because you do have; there is less haggling and
profitability is typically higher and referrals common.

Related Vision’s focus is on delivering training and support tools that will enable you to build partnership relationships.

More Articles...

- Understanding Your Business Relationships
- Measuring Relationships
- The importance of Power and Influence