

Associate of the Year





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Why Strong Relationships Matter

No Man is an Island, Entire of Itself.

When you have five days to send out a pre-meeting notice after receiving a requisition, an information certificate to complete, a status certificate due, a bid to prepare, a client to see, focusing on building business relationships may seem like another thing to add to the growing list of “work stuff.” How or why can you devote even more time to “work stuff,” when it seems like there’s no time to spare? While all relationships matter, business relationships can have a positive trickle-down to strong personal self-worth. Fostering strong professional connections with colleagues, associates and even competitors leads to better knowledge, proficiency and contentment in the many

hours we spend on “work stuff,” which can make the mere hours left for personal “life stuff” more enjoyable.

Know What You’re Good at, Know Who’s Just as Good (or Better)

Business relationships are about helping one another to get a job done. They are about making work easier and better so it gets completed well and painlessly. You are only one person and can only do so much. Honing a good professional reputation requires you to know what you are good at and being self-possessed in what you can and cannot offer. Being part of a profession or trade and being confident in your own skills should also cause a conscientious and mindful person to see who

else is out there offering the same services, and whether they are a person you would trust to discuss a problem, collaborate with on a project or send potential work to.

It’s impossible to be good at everything. Or, for argument’s sake, if you are the expert at everything, it’s impossible to have time to do everything expertly. Co-workers, colleagues, associates and even competitors are relationships to nurture and promote. Of course, you do the best work. But if a potential client or customer needs work yesterday and you can’t do it until tomorrow, or if taking on the task will cause your current work to suffer or would have you dabbling in something you know a colleague or competitor has more experience in, make a referral to your professional

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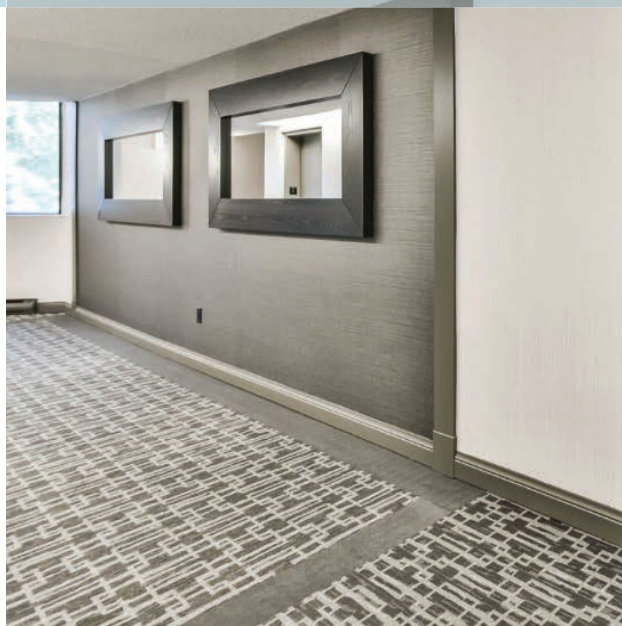
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contact. The customer will remember that you sent them a good referral who helped. The referral will remember that you sent them a customer and will reciprocate. Even if the referral ends up with the competitor – it's better to like and respect the person you are competing with. If you sent your professional colleague a referral because the area was one you didn't have experience in, that's an opportunity to network on the point or learn more. Knowing what you're good at can lead to further

growth and professional development even if it sometimes means turning an experience away.

Some Business Relationships are Difficult

There's no need to like every colleague or competitor. It's not always realistic. Not everyone's compatible. Some people are impossible, and you don't always choose who you work with. However, there's value in dealing with difficult people. Dealing with a difficult business contact

allows you to learn how to control your reaction to a negative impetus. If you have to deal with a nasty business colleague or client for the duration of a contract, you can't let that nastiness permeate your own work or off hours. Learning how to leave such work stressors at work is a valuable skill. The only thing you have control over is your own reaction. We spend a lot of energy trying to please those who cannot be pleased. Accept that. Do the best work you can, limit interaction with the nasty and call it a day. With luck, you can limit your interaction or the amount of personal energy you put into dealing with a negative contact and focus that energy into your good relationships and doing good work (and you'll get a better night's sleep not dwelling on it!).

An Example of How It Can Work

As outgoing chair of the ACMO Associates Executive (and the grateful recipient of the 2018 ACMO Associate of the Year Award), I have witnessed professional relationships build a stronger industry. I have also seen how these solid business relationships build confidence in individual ACMO members, myself included. Membership obviously comprises colleagues and competitors, some of whom have worked together or alongside each other for years. It's naïve to suggest that competition doesn't matter, or that everyone likes each other on a personal level. ACMO's members – from various professions, trades and experiences – take the time and come together to share knowledge on up-and-coming advancements and advocate for the industry. All of the members working together, regardless of their company or history, provide content, skill and support that allows the individual member to do their own best work. ■

Editor's Note: Special thanks to Andrea for writing this article for CM magazine while on maternity leave with a newborn and toddler at home.

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