

CONNECTION

33. Only Connect ...

"Only connect"—E.M. Forster, *Howard's End*

The business of business is relationships.

The essence of effective business is effective relationships.

The "R.O.I." (Return on Investment) that truly matters is ... R.O.I.R.

Return On Investment in Relationships.

Moreover, we can manage and actually measure R.O.I.R.-related activity more accurately than we can manage and measure standard "financial" R.O.I. Lying with statistics is relatively easy. Lying about the state of relationships is nigh on impossible.

34. They Liked Ike (Because Ike Liked *Them*) General Dwight David Eisenhower did the impossible. No, not the successful and history-changing D-Day landing per se. Nor the subsequent march to Germany. His "impossible dream"—come true—was to keep the Yanks and the Brits from annihilating each other long enough to hit the beach and get on with the real job at hand!

Turns out General Eisenhower, most keen professional observers agree, had a "secret," which he in fact understood: "Allied commands depend on mutual confidence; this confidence is gained, above all, through the development of friendships."

That is, Ike, with his easy demeanor, was a master friend-maker. This doesn't come naturally to many of us. One suggestion: Revisit Dale Carnegie's classic *How to Win Friends & Influence People*—named by NPR as one of the top three business books of the 20th century.

35. Always Make It Personal. I break all the rules, and "waste" a lot of time at the outset of a speech. What I'm working on is ... connecting. I'm going to perhaps give my audience uncomfortable advice (that's why I was invited); to have a chance of succeeding, I must be on the audience's side. I sometimes call it "'We' power."

Taught by my 1st boss at McKinsey 35 years ago, I'm faithful to "we" to this day. I religiously use "We" and "Us" when working with Clients—and a team of wild horses could not elicit "I" or "You." While it may be a trick of sorts, it is also a Fundamental Value concerning groups on joint ventures in quest of better understanding and harmonious relationships. So:

We hereby swear to use the word "us" until we are blue in the face. (Words matter! A lot!)

We hereby swear to use the word "partner" until we are blue in the face. (Words matter! A lot!)

We hereby swear to use the word "team" until we are blue in the face. (Words matter! A lot!)

We agree, right?

36. Commit "Acts of Deliberate Relationship Enhancement" As boss of Goldman Sachs, Hank Paulson religiously called "60 CEOs in the first week [of the year] to wish them happy New Year." It was at some level a "trick" or "tactic." But I, who have a similar ritual, find it to be the greatest of pleasures as well. I call these sorts of purposeful activities "ADREs." Or: Acts of Deliberate Relationship Enhancement.

Action: Call (C-A-L-L!) (NOT EMAIL!) 25-50 people ... IN THE NEXT FIVE DAYS ... to thank them for their support in the last 90 days or six months!

This document is #10 in a series of 48 highlights from Tom Peters' *The Little BIG Things: 163 Ways to Pursue Excellence* (HarperStudio, 2010). For more information, visit tompeters.com.

