



A 1st Principles Booklet #3

BACK to BASICS!

CLIENT RELATIONSHIPS

**You need a 'Princess of Delight', the
'Queen of Service' is not enough!**

by

Dr Bertie du Plessis

With a Foreword by Dean Hilliard-Lomas
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Back to Basics: Client Relationships

by Bertie du Plessis

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“In many organizations, both large and small, the budget approved for advertising, publicity and promotions to attract new customers is often 150 times as much as the budget allocated for training people to care for their customers.”

— ***Aki Kalliatakis***

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Foreword

At Venture Global we cut our teeth as suppliers to the automotive industry, a very demanding environment!

We asked Bertie du Plessis to present a series of workshops to those members of our staff who interact with our clients, because we realised that the best quality procedures on their own will not secure good relations. The human element is indispensable.

This booklet is the result of these workshops.

The truths you will find here are basic. That, however, is exactly the problem in real life. We forget the basics!

Finally, I realised once again how small investments in client hospitality can render huge rewards in warm, understanding and supportive relationships.

Read, enjoy and above all, do!

Dean Hilliard-Lomas

Introduction

Fools go where angels fear to tread. This saying surely must apply when you choose to write about good client relations!

You expose yourself to the same dangers that American politicians experience when they pontificate about family values: somewhere somebody will most definitely uncover an unpleasant skeleton in the cupboard!

When we come to client service and relations, we all have a past we'd rather forget.

So, please, please, don't read this book as if I am telling you what I am doing right in my own business practice!

Rather, read the book as a wish list from one bemused person, on the receiving end

of service in the market place, who shares his expectations with fellow ‘clients’ (by the way, you will soon see in this booklet why I am so hesitant to use the word ‘client!’).

Bertie du Plessis

1. People do business with people, not with organisations

The first thing ‘they,’ should understand is that I am a person. ‘They’ do business with ‘me’ long before they do business with my organisation.

Business is exactly the opposite from the famous Mafia slogan, ‘It’s not personal.’

No, business is personal, very personal.

We intuitively realise this in a consumer environment, in a restaurant for instance. There can be no doubt that it’s ‘me’ being served.

Unfortunately we forget this basic truth when we deal on behalf of our organisations with people in other companies.

Isn't it true, however, that when we try to negotiate lower prices from our suppliers we do it because of our bonuses, or our own promotions, or even because our very jobs depend on it?

If we fail in our business relations, we fail in our personal lives.

Long before we start worrying about the welfare of our organisations, we are concerned about what will happen to us personally.

There can be little doubt that we approach our suppliers with a very personal agenda.

Question: 'Do you understand how your client will personally be affected by your performance or lack of performance?'