



Key Skills for Relationship Management

Arun Kumar Vora*

Abstract :

Author, based on his knowledge, experience and wisdom, narrates the importance of managing relationships and key skills to be developed and practised for maintaining excellence in managing relationships, which in itself is a key to one's success in life and profession.

Introduction

Why Relationship management is important
Life is a journey with people all around you, people at work, people around your residence, people in your past like school, college, place of work; people who are near relatives, people who are in larger circle of relatives; people whom you have not connected with but need to connect; people under you and people above you and people in your immediate family. In life - both personal and professional - there are key skills for Relationship management.

People are not objects; they have nature, likes and dislikes, prejudices and favourites, wants and goals : both short term and long term. So also you are. This is where relationship management skill

comes in - managing conflicting interests, nature and goals. It is not simple but with effort and willingness this skill can be achieved.

What helps development of such skill?

Realisation and acceptance that you cannot be completely independent of others. Even after death you need some people to carry you for cremation ! Accept that you are always going to be DEPENDENT on some / many people some time or other - however powerful your other skills are ; however powerful your position may be , however powerful your intellectual, financial and physical prowess may be.

Acceptance that you need to put in efforts to convince others, make adjustments even if temporarily, and even make

* Mr Arun Vora, is the Chairman, Tata International Dlt Pvt Ltd, Pune and Samundra Institute of Maritime Studies, Lonavala, and Member of the Academic Council, Jain (Deemed to be) University, Bangalore, besides being a Founder Member of RECESS (Rural English and Computer Education Support Scheme) a transformational Social Initiative. He held several important positions in the private sector and to name a few, Founder MD, Tata Power Solar, Vice Chairman, TAML, Head of British Petroleum in some of the Asian countries.
E-mail id: akvindia41@yahoo.co.in

compromises for overall progress and goals. Adopt give and take attitude and understand that you are not always right. Listen to others. Understand that almost always “there is a right side” in addition and the others’ side.

Life’s journey is like a three legged race; you can help your partner to move faster but you cannot move faster than your partner. Partner, here, means, all people around you - at home, at work and in your social circle.

Family relationship

This is the first and foremost relationship that you need to manage, nurture and develop. In times of crises it is almost always the family that comes to your aid. If not, examine what you could have done differently to avoid such a situation and not look for faults in others in the family. Respect age; respect elders; love others as much you would like them to love you; help others as you would like them to help you. Shed your ego and self-image; be humble.

Relationship with people who work under you - be they at work or home

Treat them with respect; guide them gently not only to do things correctly and in a better way but help them to think themselves. Nobody likes to be told off; but everybody likes some praise and some gentle suggestions. Sometimes you have to pamper their ego till you manage to replace ego with positive attitude. But remember : you have to first shed your ego and have positive attitude yourself. Authority is not to be shown/ imposed; authority needs to be naturally accepted by people under you. Accept openly when you have been wrong and your junior is

right or has a better idea. Understand that junior will accept you when you are right and have a better idea, and not when you impose yours as the right /better idea. Your juniors are your team and not servants. Even servants at home are part of your team. You cannot score a goal without team effort (unless it is penalty stroke! Even there someone has created a situation resulting in a penalty stroke). Lead by example; and followers will grow and accept you.

Relationship with people above you

Accept that he/ she is the leader, align and establish mutually accepted goals (short term and long term), processes of business and importantly process and frequency of mutual communication. Even if the leader does not ask or insist on written reports please do so at regular intervals corresponding to goals and processes, list challenges, options for solutions and get brand alignment with superiors.

Make a written quarterly report achievements, challenges, suggestions, solutions deployed. Maintain informal and formal but transparent communication with team mates, your team leader and his/her superior (if allowed and appropriate).

Relationship in your social circle

With respect to those already in your social circle, look for strengths and positives in them; accept and overlook weaknesses and negatives, extend a hand forward. You are not going to lose anything if it is not accepted in same spirit. Praise what is good in them (naturally and not artificially). Understand them (constraints, limitation) and they will understand you. With respect to those whom

you want in your social circle, choose wisely, check for matching frequency, mind set and Interests. Accept that there will always be an inner circle and an outer circle. Do not neglect outer circle.

Relationship with customers, vendors, service providers etc.

Always try and build some personal rapport apart from work related rapport (ask how is family? How is your health? I am doing this for exercise, what do you do? What do children do? And so on).

Never find fault; give gentle suggestions (why not we adopt another way? How about doing this way? List down issues and problems if things are done his way and suggest another way where problems can be avoided).

Finally accept that “customer is always right; vendor or service provider is your lifeline”.

Conclusion

In life and profession, there will always be conflicts. You have to resolve without breakage of relation. Resolution to mutual satisfaction and comfort of the concerned is important. Think about root cause of conflict and be honest and talk it over with an attitude of resolving conflict. Talking should never be one sided; listening genuinely and with open mind is part of “talking”. Aim should be to find a solution which is fair and equitable and not proving that you are right/ were right. Even if you are right, find a face saver for the other party.



‘FACTS OF LIFE’

Don't educate your
children to become rich.
Educate them to be happy,
and value of things, and not
the price.