

Rapport is king. Here's why.

Spear Communications

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30-1954 Bloor Street W. Toronto M6P 3K9 ◦ (647) 882-1965 ◦ spearcommunications.com

Every one of us has goals in life.

Maybe you don't spend a lot of time thinking about them, in which case your goals could be more like occasional fantasies!

Some people want a promotion, some want to retire. Some of us are building businesses. Others are just beginning to carve out a career.

What we all have in common is a desire to be seen as competent and trustworthy.

We all want to be valued for what we do.

We know that basics like competence and trustworthiness open doors—to promotions, business success, and fulfilling careers which ensure a secure retirement.

But getting those doors to open can be difficult.

How do we get others to see us as competent, trustworthy, and effective?

That's the question—and the answer is *rapport*.

I hear you. "Wayne, are you saying skills and talent don't matter?"

No, I'm not saying that. In fact, they matter very much.

What I'm saying is more subtle and powerful.

And it's this:

People assess your skills and talents largely on the basis of rapport!

Cultivate your ability to develop rapport more effectively and quickly with others, and watch the doors open.

Here's a way to think about it.

Let's say you hire an electrician. A week later a friend

says to you, "I'm looking for an electrician. Can you recommend one?"

You say, "Yes, I have a great electrician!"

A *great* electrician? How on earth do you know that?

I mean, you're not an expert electrician, right?

Did you go through your house and analyse his work? Of course not! You couldn't do that even if you wanted to.

And the truth is you don't.

This isn't just true of electricians. Fact is, most of us are not able to assess the work of the experts we hire outside of our own areas of expertise.

Not our mechanic, or our doctor, or our lawyer.

So on what basis did you decide your electrician is great?

What you did is what we *all* do: you assessed your

electrician, and not his expertise.

You watched his every move, and listened to his every word.

You noticed whether or not he took the time to listen to your concerns and to answer your questions.

You paid subconscious attention to his body language.

In a word, rapport was what you assessed.

- Did he show up on time and do what he said he'd do? (fix the light, make the stove work again).
- Was he nice?
- Did his price seem fair?

When we can't assess expertise (and we usually can't) we assess rapport.

Rapport is a huge component of expertise, and even of basic competence.

Now, of course, if someone performs poorly, we all

notice it. No amount of rapport will make up for gross incompetence.

But as you move up the competence ladder, rapport grows in relative importance.

If you like and trust someone, you're going to give them expert points. It's human nature.

Here's a personal example.

I'm a writer by trade, and what I've realized is that if people find my views agreeable, they'll tend to think I'm a great writer and that my opinions are trustworthy.

If they don't agree with me, people will often conclude that I don't understand the topic and I'm not an expert.

Grammar, syntax, diction, and my use of literary tropes rarely figure into the non-expert assessments of my work. In fact, relatively few are aware of what I am doing on a technical level.

Rapport is what sets the great writers apart from the masses.

And the good news is that you can learn simple techniques to build rapport.

The most simple technique of all is to assume it.

Just treat other people like they are special to you. Smile, and be kind. Be trust-worthy.

Assume the rapport, and soon enough others will assume it also.

If you're still not sure, then try subtly mirroring their body language. People will give you clues about how they want to be treated.

But the important point here is that rapport really is king.

It will open doors that no amount of education or credentials can.

And opening doors is what achieving your goals, and your dreams, is all about.





- Wayne K. Spear is the Founder and President of Spear Communications. This article is part of his ongoing series called "Thought Bombs."