

# The Power of the Personal in Building and Maintaining Business Relationships

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It's been said that people do business with people they like and trust. Not with computers or apps or processes they like and trust.

People.

Technology has been a market-mover for many businesses, making companies more responsive, efficient and profitable and enabling them to better serve customers. But since technology is ubiquitous and available to all, what is the true competitive advantage in business relationships? Perhaps the answer is, people.

Before you decide to replace that friendly receptionist that everyone who comes in or calls loves to talk to, or automate more of your product or service delivery functions, ask yourself these questions:

- How important is it to your business to have long-term relationships with your customers?
- Does your business depend upon customer loyalty?
- How are your competitors currently delivering the service you are thinking of automating, and are they more successful because of it?
- Are there other cost-cutting measures you could implement before sacrificing human customer service?
- Are you using technology to distance yourself from the needs of your customers?
- Does the technology you are using force your customers to adapt to your processes and limit their access to personnel?
- Do your customers have any resistance to your technology?
- Are you attempting to use technology to modify customer behavior?

Relationships thrive in a business environment that provides mutual benefit. Technology certainly has a role to play in delivering the benefits of convenience, service, quality and affordability to your customers. But when technology sacrifices the customer relationship by cutting out all human interaction, that relationship inevitably suffers. <http://bit.ly/MNWAMI>

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