

# Instant Rapport...The Key to Sales Success

By Della Menechella

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Did you ever meet someone with whom you just clicked? Someone who was so much like you that you practically knew what he was thinking? How comfortable did you feel with that person? Did you trust him? Chances are that you have very high rapport with that person.

Rapport means harmony between people. When people share rapport, they speak the same language. When people don't have rapport, it is as if one person is speaking Greek and the other person is speaking Chinese. There is no common understanding.

## RAPPORT AND SELLING

Sales research has shown that over 90% of the sales process is based on having a good rapport with the prospect. You may have the best coverage for your client and you may represent the most reputable firm(s), however, if you don't have rapport, your prospect will find a reason to buy from another agent.

We usually develop rapport easily with people who are like us. It is very difficult to understand or feel comfortable with people who are not like us. We perceive them as strange. We judge others based on how we see the world.

Before we can try to talk about how we can satisfy our prospect's needs, we have to get him prepared to listen to us. We do this by getting him to trust us -- by developing rapport.

## BUILDING RAPPORT

How do we develop rapport? Most independent insurance professionals realize that rapport is an important part of the sales process, so they try to develop rapport with their prospects before trying to "sell them." They try to establish a common bond by engaging in small talk. Unfortunately, only 7% of the words we use to communicate get through to others. However, 38% of our tonality and 55% of our physiology or body language are communicated very effectively.

One of the most powerful ways we can develop rapport is through physiology. There is a technique called mirroring which allows us to develop rapport very quickly. What you do is mirror the other person's physiology or body movements. If the person leans back in the chair, you lean back. If the person crosses her legs, you cross your legs. If the individual sits forward, you sit forward. Your goal is to get your prospect to feel comfortable with you being there so she will be open to what you

have to say.

Mirroring is very subtle. Wait several seconds before shifting your body to match your prospect. Mirroring is a continuous and fluid process so as your prospect moves around, you continue to change your body movements to remain in rapport. One word of caution -- don't mimic. If your prospect scratches her nose, don't follow or she may realize what you are doing and get very insulted.

## PRACTICE MAKES SALES

The technique of mirroring takes practice to learn effectively. Try it on your family and friends so it becomes a natural skill for you to use. When you become proficient at using this technique, your prospect will not realize what you are doing. He will only feel extremely comfortable with you because you are so much like him.

Remember, 90% of the sales process is rapport. Use the technique of instant rapport and watch your closing ratio soar!

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