

Talent Development 24 Business Partnerships

by Bob Whipple, MBA, CPTD



Section 3.2 in the CPTD Certification program for ATD is Consulting and Business Partnering. Section B reads, “Skill in establishing and managing organizational and/or business partnerships and relationships.”

In this article I will outline the process I use to establish, maintain, and enrich business partnerships. The bottom line is a pretty simple equation that starts with a lot of networking.

Networking

You are not going to build a strong team of business partners if you aren’t out there meeting new people all the time. The best advice I received when I retired from the corporate world was to keep active in lots of organizations to keep my network strong.

At one point I was simultaneously involved in 17 different volunteer organizations and associations. I have scaled that back a bit, but still am active in over a dozen groups. The networking leads to friendships that can, and often do, grow into strong partnerships.

Mutual Benefit

You must maintain an attitude of mutual benefit. Both partners must be gaining by the relationship or it will atrophy over time. Choose your partners carefully so there is always a synergistic relationship.

Not Competitive

Avoid becoming partners with a person who is doing the exact same thing as you in the same markets. You can be friendly with these people, but they do not make good partners because they will pursue the same organizations or clients that you do.

It is better to find an individual who has skill expertise that feeds into what you do rather than competes directly with you.

Contribute Freely

Give of yourself to enhance the relationship. Support the other person in every way you can and be generous with your time and your resources. It is a good idea to nominate the other person for awards or find ways to praise the person on social networks.

Establish a Great Working Relationship

If people genuinely like you, they will be excellent partners. Invest in the relationship and work to keep it from going dormant. This is especially true in times when people need to be working remotely. It is easy to lose touch with mutual friends when you do not see each other as often or you only see each other on Zoom.

I find that personal Zooms with another person are a wonderful way to keep the partnership fresh and vibrant. Keep a list of your personal partners and be sure to contact each one often enough to keep the momentum going.

Bob Whipple, MBA, CPTD, is a consultant, trainer, speaker, and author in the areas of leadership and trust. He is the author of: *The Trust Factor: Advanced Leadership for Professionals*, *Understanding E-Body Language: Building Trust Online*, *Leading with Trust is Like Sailing Downwind*, and *Trust in Transition: Navigating Organizational Change*. Bob has many years as a senior executive with a Fortune 500 Company and with non-profit organizations.

