

The Lost Art of Relationships



One of the biggest problems in sales right now is simple: we've stopped talking to people.

Selling has become a system of emails, LinkedIn messages, automated follow-ups, and measured activity. There is more outreach than ever, but fewer real conversations. Relationships do not come from sequences, and trust does not come from volume.

Some of this changed during COVID and never really changed back. People got used to distance. Work moved to screens. Efficiency took over. In sales, that meant fewer calls, fewer meetings, and more reliance on messaging.

Years ago, I asked a retired friend about a sale he had made decades earlier. He still remembered the customer's name, his wife's name, and his son's name. That is what happens when you actually know people.



I learned the same thing when I was writing music for advertising. If you wanted access to people controlling major budgets, you had to build real relationships. You did not get meetings because you sent enough emails. You got them because someone knew you, trusted you, and wanted to hear from you. You had to pay attention. You had to remember what mattered to them.

One experience has stayed with me for years.

I was at an industry event in Nashville. A lot of senior people were there. In rooms like that, business is not usually discussed directly. People are deciding who they trust and who they want to know better.

I met a woman and noticed her earrings. They were old coins set in gold. I asked if I could take a closer look. She smiled and said yes.

When I saw them up close, I recognized what they were. They were ancient coins, hand-struck, more than two thousand years old. I told her where they were likely from and a little about their history.

Her expression changed.

More Than Outreach



She told me her husband had bought them for her on a trip to Europe. He had since passed away. In that moment, the earrings were not just jewelry. They were a memory. They were a connection to someone she loved.

So we talked. Not about business. We talked about the earrings, her husband, the trip, and what they meant to her.

That conversation mattered because it was real.

Later in the year, I walked into a meeting about a studio that had been sitting unsold for eight months. The owners wanted out. The board had not moved. I was there to sell it.

She was in the room.

She recognized me right away because she remembered that earlier conversation. We talked again about the earrings and about her husband. Before anyone got into the deal, there was already trust in the room. Six days later, the deal closed.



People want to be known. They want to feel that they are more than a name in a database or a target in a sequence.

The strongest relationships are still built the same way. You notice. You listen. You remember. You care enough to ask one more question.

A lot of salespeople have stopped doing that. They rely on templates, automation, and speed. Those tools have value, but they do not replace human attention. They do not build the kind of trust that makes someone remember you years later.

That's where AI stops. It can help write a message, organize follow-up, and make the process faster. But it cannot notice the earrings, understand what they mean, and respond with genuine care. It cannot build trust the way a human being can.

Sales is still a relationship business.

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