

Storytelling and Intimacy

Steven Shepard

Steve@ShepardComm.com

24 May 2013



Intimacy is one of those words that we don't typically associate with business relationships, yet it is a central theme in long-term sales situations. Let's take a look at the definition of the word:

A close association with or detailed knowledge or deep understanding of a place, subject, period of history, etc.

Intimacy doesn't come from a single meeting over a cup of coffee. It comes from a long-term commitment to the relationship that leads to a clear and deeply rooted understanding of the person, the company, the account, the situation, the challenges, the opportunities, the threats, the promise. It is the basis for trust, the basis for Trusted Advisor status, and the basis for insight through conversations that use storytelling as a foundational platform.

The other piece of this equation is the ever-present balance between proactive and reactive forces in the relationship. Proactive behavior implies that you are taking action before it becomes necessary – a process that indicates commitment and foresight. Reactive behavior is more about triage – responding to a problem that crops up and dealing with it as quickly and efficiently as possible. Both are necessary: It's nice to say that proactive engagement eliminates the need for reactive response, but that just isn't realistic. Things break. Software fails. People quit and move on. Water pipes leak. But what is also true is the fact that ongoing proactive actions on your part, combined with solid storytelling techniques, will develop strong bonds of trust between you and your customer so that when emergencies occur, they trust you to deal with the emergency and will not second-guess you at every turn.

Thanks for reading.