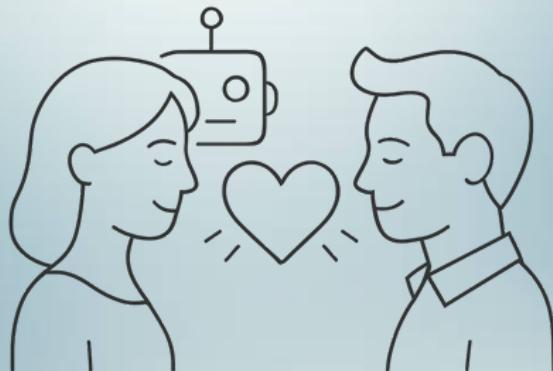


Why Your Personal Relationships Matter Now More Than Ever

IN AN AI-DRIVEN ECONOMY, RELATIONSHIPS ARE THE SCARCE RESOURCE THAT MOVES CAPITAL



In an era dominated by data, algorithms, and automation, it's easy to forget that the crux of business deals still hinge on one thing: relationships. When capital allocators decide where to deploy billions, they don't just assess the numbers—often, the most intense diligence is done on the people behind the numbers. As Warren Buffett famously said, "You can't make a good deal with a bad person." His transformative investment in GEICO wasn't sparked only by spreadsheets or pitch decks, but by a single conversation with executive Lorimer Davidson—a moment of connection that led to one of Berkshire Hathaway's most profitable moves (The Times, 2023).

Salesforce's origin story tells a similar tale. Marc Benioff, its founder, spent over a decade working under Larry Ellison. That trusted relationship culminated in Ellison providing early investment and credibility, giving Salesforce the validation it needed to break into a competitive software market. Both examples highlight a simple truth: meaningful relationships often drive transformational outcomes.

We're entering a new phase of business: one where relationships are the most valuable form of capital. The strategic imperative has shifted from simply using technology to operate faster, to using it to maximize relationships, understand clients more deeply, and build trust that accelerates decisions.

In client-facing roles, this shift is especially stark. AI can prepopulate reports or track engagement, but it cannot replace the human instinct to listen, adapt, and maintain a relationship. As automation becomes the norm, personal connection becomes the differentiator.

Human Nature Prevails

At the heart of all business is a universal truth: people want to feel important. Automation can send a beautifully designed email about market trends. But your client doesn't want "an update"—they want your perspective on how those trends affect them. The desire to be seen, heard, and understood is often overlooked in the pursuit of efficiency. Yet, when used fully, technology can enhance client understanding, ultimately maximizing your communications to always feel personal, relevant, and impactful.

The best-performing professionals today are those who harness new tools to fuel deeper relationships—not just faster transactions. They know when to reach out, what topics will resonate, and how to move from surface-level outreach to strategic engagement. Technology helps identify the window, but human insight still delivers the message.

Relationships are your new Strategic Differentiator

In today's hyper-connected, AI-enhanced business world, trust and connection are premium assets. Clients no longer want access to a portal or self-serve dashboard—they want someone they can call, who knows them, and who can guide them with authority and understanding. In an industry where trust is currency, relationships are capital.

As Howard Marks, co-founder of Oaktree Capital Management, put it: "In the end, investing is about people and their behavior." The future of business lies not in replacing relationships with automation, but in using automation to maximize those relationships. In an age where nearly everything can be replicated, trust cannot. And that makes your personal relationships not just relevant—but indispensable.