

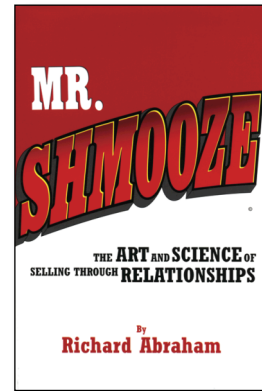
MR. SHMOOZE

THE ART AND SCIENCE OF
SELLING THROUGH RELATIONSHIPS

THE RICHARD ABRAHAM COMPANY • 700 Commerce Drive • Oak Brook, Illinois 60532

For Immediate Release

For a review copy of the book or an interview with the author, please contact Dottie DeHart, Rocks-DeHart Public Relations, at (828) 459-9637 or DSDeHart@aol.com



The Lost Art of Shmoozing: Five Ways to Revive an Oft-Neglected Skill

Great salespeople connect with others on a deep, emotional level.

Mr. Shmooze—the title character in a compelling new book by Richard Abraham—shows us how to build strong, emotion-based, profitable relationships even as the world becomes ever more impersonal.

Oak Brook, IL—Cell phones. E-mail. Virtual meetings. While these tools have made it easier to connect with prospects and colleagues instantly, they've made it harder to, well, *connect*. You know, connect in a deep, meaningful way. Somehow in our quest to provide more, faster, better information, we've lost sight of the truth that people are people, not computers. And ironically, *it is our emotions, not our data, that drive a transaction*. Even the most well-written business e-mail can't touch that part of a person that feels pride when her son makes a touchdown or joy when she hits the high note in *Holy Night*.

That's why sales consultant Richard Abraham wants to bring back the lost art of shmoozing. That's right. *Shmoozing*.

"Shmoozing is all about interacting with people in a way that creates feelings of warmth, goodwill, pleasure," says Abraham, author of *Mr. Shmooze: The Art and Science of Selling Through Relationships* (The Richard Abraham Company, 2002, ISBN: 0-9741996-0-5, \$19.95). "'Just the facts, ma'am,' doesn't go deep enough, emotionally, especially when your product or service is a commodity. The best news is that when you create joy for a living, you don't have to 'sell.' People *want* to do business with you because, in the process, you make them feel good about the relationship and about themselves. It happens as naturally as breathing."

Abraham's book conveys his lucrative philosophy in the form of a story told from the point of view of an intern working with "Mr. Shmooze." This larger-than-life character—a real-life composite of the greatest salespeople the author has encountered in his own career—amazes the narrator as he sails through his unconventional business meetings spreading laughter, humor, and even joy.

"We are on the planet together, right now, working, struggling, laughing, crying, every day," Abraham writes in Mr. Shmooze's unforgettable voice. "I love these people and I want them to know it. Every time! Everyone makes decisions about who will be their friend, who will be their partner, who they will take a call from, and, in business, who they will buy from based on two basic sensations: *pleasure* and *pain*. If they associate you with pleasure, you win!"

While this book is aimed at salespeople, its principles apply to almost anyone who communicates with prospects or current clients. They also apply to anyone who wants to win friends, influence people, find a new job, or climb the corporate ladder. (We all "sell" in some capacity—therefore we should all "shmooze.")

So what can you do to transform yourself into a "Mr. Shmooze"? Abraham offers the following words of wisdom.

- **Figure out what *really* matters to the prospect. (Hint: It usually has nothing to do with the business at hand.) Capitalize on the opportunity to enter the prospect's emotional world.** Mr. Shmooze helps his client see that his prospect's passion in life is his son, a talented golfer. Rather than simply inviting the *prospect* to play golf, he should invite the prospect's *son*. Then, Mr. Shmooze brainstorms with the client to come up with ways to make the outing really spectacular—incorporating shirts and golf balls imprinted with participants' names, an impromptu group lesson from a pro, and videotapes of everyone's swing, mailed a week after the event. "The point is that by paying close attention to your prospects and clients, you can figure out what really drives them," says Abraham. "You'll find clues in the photos in his office or the things he brings up in casual conversation. The key is, be alert."

- **Practice the art of elevation.** In every interaction, seek to elevate the prospect's experience to a memorable level that goes above and beyond the ordinary. Let's briefly revisit our golf story. You'll notice the basic idea (a day of golf) is not earth-shatteringly unique. But Mr. Shmooze's version contains details that "kick it up a notch." A run-of-the-mill salesperson might well have come up with a golf outing and a gift of golf balls. But by including the client's son and personalizing the golf balls, the outing is elevated to an exhilarating new level. Likewise, the book's "Dinner à la Shmooze" chapter

demonstrates how a business dinner becomes an event to remember when it's elevated with a surprise car wash service, a gift of wrapped steak knives, and several ice-breaking games that have people bonding like mad. **(NOTE TO EDITOR: See attached excerpt)**

- **If you're thinking the dinner story is over the top, price-wise, relax. You *can* shmooze without spending a fortune.** Abraham admits that "Dinner à la Shmooze" is a bit exaggerated—but its purpose is only to get you thinking about the myriad of opportunities that exist for value-added shmoozing. There are plenty of ways to elevate a client or prospect's experience with you that don't cost much, if anything. You can call him on his wedding day or attend his daughter's soccer game. (Both examples are from *Mr. Shmooze*.) Or if you discover that your client loves Thai cooking or Afghan hounds—based on books or photos you saw in her office—you can e-mail her a link to an Asian recipe website or send her a book on exotic dog breeds you found on clearance at the bookstore. These small gestures can make a big difference. "I have a colleague who called on a prospect who happened to be a huge Chicago Cubs fan," relates Abraham. "After my colleague left the meeting he happened to walk by a store with a Cubs tie in the window. Naturally, he bought it and overnighted it to the prospect. It's very likely that that \$20 expenditure, plus postage, won him the account."

- **Do your follow-up shmoozing *immediately*.** Read *Mr. Shmooze* and you discover in the very first chapter that, the minute the protagonist leaves a meeting, he's on his cell phone with his assistant asking her to send things to his clients, prospects, and colleagues: Braves tickets, real estate license class schedules, articles from the Internet, and so forth. In proper shmoozing, time is of the essence. "There's a graph we show clients that illustrates the *recency effect*," says Abraham. "It shows that within a week a potential buyer has forgotten 90 percent of what a salesperson shows her. And in fact, a lot is forgotten in the first 24 hours after a meeting. But if you send someone a book or a tie the very next day, you go a long way toward overcoming that effect. Plus, if you make it standard procedure to do your follow-up shmoozing right away, *you* won't forget to do it."

- **Don't limit your shmoozing to "people who matter." *Everyone* matters.** Read the book and you'll notice that Mr. Shmooze shmoozes *everyone*, not just potential clients or people with money. He generously tips bartenders, gives expensive cigars to carhops, gives restaurant hostesses cosmetic gifts. Why? Because these are the people who carry out those all-important "little details" that elevate the entire experience to a higher level. By shmoozing service people you not only motivate them to do a good job for your prospects, you set in motion a "compound interest" effect that can benefit you in the future. "You don't know who the waiter's parents are, or, for that matter, what the waiter himself will be doing when he gets out of college," reflects Abraham. "And it really doesn't matter. You can't build goodwill with too many people."

By now you may be thinking: isn't all of this shmoozing a little, well, *manipulative*? That's the wrong question, says Abraham. You're going to be interacting with these people anyway, so why not do it in a manner that makes their lives a little

better? What's not to like about accentuating the positive? The best news of all is that, in a time when so many people suffer from the all-work-and-no-play syndrome, shmoozing *is* a form of play. It's as fun for the shmooz-*er* as it is for the shmooz-*ee*.

“It surprises people to learn that selling is not about manipulating or talking or even persuading,” says Abraham. “It's about *giving*. So in its purest form, shmoozing is simply making people's lives better. And here's the key: the universe is set up in such a way that when you help others, they want to help you in return. So shmoozing, in this context, is a beautiful thing and a heck of a lot more fun than being clinical and ordinary. Try it. You'll find that not only is it profitable, it's rewarding on a very deep and personal level. There is no better way to live.”

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About the Author:

Mr. Abraham is president of The Richard Abraham Company, a company he founded in 1981. He became interested in the dynamics of the selling process through his involvement in the development and marketing of over \$1 billion of commercial real estate.

Today he continues to conduct extensive research and advises organizations that wish to better understand the art of relationship-building and the science of selling. You can e-mail the author at rabraham@rabraham.com.

About the Book:

Mr. Shmooze: The Art and Science of Selling Through Relationships (The Richard Abraham Company, 2002, ISBN: 0-9741996-0-5, \$19.95) is available at bookstores nationwide and major online booksellers.

For more information, visit www.mrshmooze.com.