

## The Power of a Name

Remembering a customer's name can improve your sales. However, people in my workshops often tell me that they have a difficult time remembering names. I sometimes think we tend to get too hung up on trying to recall a person's name, especially if we have only met them once. Like anything else mental, the harder you try to remember someone's name, the more it will elude you. However, there are a few things you can do that will help;

1. One of the most common tips is to repeat their name as they introduce themselves. *"Hi Chris, it's a pleasure to meet you."* As you introduce yourself think of a mental or visual image that can help you recall their face. For example, if your customer appears somewhat gruff you could say to yourself, *"Chris is cross."* This process helps you connect their name and physical appearance and can make it easier to recall their name at a later date.

An interesting challenge occurs when we meet someone for the first time. Many people forget the other person's name immediately after meeting them – I know this has happened to me at conferences and networking meetings. The reason is simple; as the other person is introducing themselves, we are usually thinking about our introduction and what we'll say to make a good first impression. We think about the handshake and hope we connect properly. And in some situations our attention is focused elsewhere.

2. The next step is to use their name a few times during your conversation. This will help you remember that person's name during your meeting and for a short period of time afterwards. An easy way to do this is to ask them a question and include their name. Here's an example, *"So, what type of business of you in Jim?"* or *"Jim, what is the biggest business challenge you're currently facing?"* This approach appears relaxed and comfortable and is a natural way for you to use the other person's name. One important note – do not overuse their name or you will come across as insincere and phony.
3. When you return to work record that person's information in your organizer along with any personal or business information you learned during your conversation. If the person said or did something that stood out, record this information as well. As you do this, visualize that person and repeat their name aloud a few times. This will help drive their name further into your memory and make it easier to recall at a later date.
4. To recall that person's name at anytime in the future requires some additional work. You need to picture their face as you state their name aloud several times. This should be done several times a

week for the first month and then on a weekly basis for several months afterwards. While it seems like a lot of work, it is an extremely effective approach and is virtually guaranteed to help you remember someone's name.

5. It's also important to understand that the setting will help you recall names. For example, I can quickly remember the names of people who attend my workshops but if I bump into them in a shopping centre, it is highly unlikely I will recall their name. That's because we run through our mental Rolodex trying to figure out where we met that individual. I remember That means you should take the time to picture them in different settings – imagine where you could run into them and visualize what they would look like in that environment.
6. The last suggestion is to focus on remembering the person rather than their name. People are very forgiving about name if you are able to recall their face. I have had people attend a workshop and even though they participated in a previous program, I can't remember their name. I admit that by saying, *"I recognize the face but I can't recall your name."* I have never had anyone express disappointment that I didn't remember their name.

There is no question that it is more difficult to remember names if you meet dozens of people everyday. However, people in these situations seldom expect you to remember their name after just one meeting. Also, remember that most people have a difficult time recalling names. I remember delivering a full-day workshop for a company and a year later conducting another program at their annual conference. When I arrived at the second conference, I instantly recognized one of my contacts but I did not remember the other person even though we had met and spoken at the previous conference.

Like anything else, we can improve our ability to remember the names of our customers and people we meet. It takes some effort and practice but the result is worth it.

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