



Foreword

The Customer Approved Small Business has a common thread woven through the book: *In order to be successful, a business must build quality long-term relationships with staff and customers.* I can't argue with that, because at Guardian, long-term relationships are something we've been focusing on for over 145 years!

This book is filled with practical approaches to relationship-building. It puts the responsibility of business development and customer satisfaction squarely on the shoulders of the business-owner. All too often in business, people forget the so-called little things, such as sending an agenda before a meeting, showing appreciation to their staff, or surveying their customers on a regular basis to measure their satisfaction.

The research conducted for this book provides a generous sprinkling of comments from corporate decision-makers throughout the pages. These insights give readers the advantage of seeing the perspective from the customer's side of the desk. This "inside information" should be helpful when you read about the relationship building tools you could be using with your prospects and customers. Focusing on the human side of the equation, *the feelings of the customers*

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quoted in the book, will increase your confidence in using the Customer Approved secrets in this book.

As a business-owner, you have the responsibility to ensure that promises made to your customers are always met. That's why it's a good idea to take the book's advice and never make promises that you can't realistically keep. In fact, you're better off when you under-promise and over-deliver. Your customers will appreciate your dependability and integrity, and you will be one step closer to that coveted, healthy, long-term relationship.

This book also addresses another belief that Guardian takes to heart: *maintaining high standards* in all areas of our business. This is not an easy task. You need a solid plan and the right people to execute that plan. Our goal in providing you with this book is to help you with this challenging task. On behalf of Guardian, I wish you prosperity and success as you read, plan and apply the strategies that give your business a competitive edge!

– DENNIS J. MANNING, CLU, ChFC
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THE GUARDIAN LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY OF AMERICA