

## CANVASSING FOR A CLIENT

In a world of highly sophisticated, knowledgeable clients, and ever-eager competition, how do you consistently distinguish yourself? This issue of Client Loyalty presents part II of “How to Win a Client in 10 Days.” If you’re missing part I, with days 1 through 5, just drop me an e-mail and I’ll forward it on to you. The first five days, in summary:

**Day 1: Drop all the paper and start having a conversation with your client**

**Day 2: Use a hook to engage your client and earn the right to ask questions.**

**Day 3: Pretend you're independently wealthy.**

**Day 4: Start acting like a deep generalist rather than simply an expert-for-hire.**

**Day 5: Ask questions and listen--develop your empathy.**

**Day 6: Help your client see the big picture**

Another difference between the expert mindset and the advisor mindset is a focus on the big picture. Experts are great at analysis, but client advisors go further—they help their clients prioritize the issues, they see patterns in the data, and they ask thoughtful questions that can reframe the problem. The best way to get good at synthesis—big picture thinking—is to become a deep generalist who has a core specialty but also a broad knowledge of markets, industries, and the overall environment your clients operate in. Research on creativity, and my own studies of great client advisors, also show that reflection is critical here. Our best ideas come during a period of rest and reflection following intense work. Every so often you have to pull yourself out of the details and reflect. It could happen while listening to a concert, or even while taking a long shower.

Einstein, commenting on the sources of his great ideas, said, “The solitude of the countryside stimulated my creative thinking.”

**Day 7: Develop greater personal trustworthiness.**

For my most recent book, *Making Rain*, I interviewed a number of executives who started the conversation by saying, “Nowadays I’m wondering, whom can I really trust?” You need to gain a client’s trust in your expertise, but that’s just the start. Trust is based on four key factors. First, it requires integrity, which includes honesty, and on a day-to-day basis, consistency and reliability. Second, trust is based on competence. That may sound obvious, but the key word here is perceived competence. So, a client’s trust in you or your firm’s ability to tackle a particular problem will be in

part based on how well you educate that client and position yourself. Third, a client's trust will depend on your orientation: Are you focused on yourself and your agenda, or on the client, and his agenda? Finally, face time is critical to allow trust to grow. E-mail and conference 1/3 calls are fine once you know someone, but they don't build trust the way face to face contact does.

### **Day 8: Build a closer relationship through the key dimensions of likeability: PASFOR.**

A great deal of scientific research has been done on why we feel comfortable with one person and not with another. Briefly, here are four of the six key drivers of personal comfort: 1: Praise. Everyone responds to praise, including our clients. Start out with what's right, and only then talk about what needs to change!

Reflecting this aspect of human nature, a Hollywood comedian once quipped, "My wife tricked me into marrying her by telling me that she liked me!" 2: Positive association. Clients will view you more positively—or negatively—depending on the associations with you and your firm. This is, of course, what's behind high-paid celebrity endorsements. 3: Similarity. We are drawn to people with whom we feel we have things in common.

So always be searching for common ground, whether it's the college you and a client went to or the simple fact that you both have pre-school children (you can commiserate about the crayon drawings on the new wallpaper). 4: Familiarity. This ties back to face time and trust. We tend to like people and things we are familiar with. That's why it's important, even if you successfully conduct most of your business by phone or e-mail, to periodically meet face-to-face with each of your key clients.

### **Day 9: Add core value, surprise value, and personal value.**

Core value is what the client formally contracts for—your "deliverables" or "outputs." And you have to, well, deliver. But you need to go further, and provide what I call surprise value. The nature of this surprise value will of course vary depending on your profession and the type of contact you have with your clients. You might give your client some suggestions about motivating and managing his executive team. You might identify a cost issue the client was unaware of. You might provide the client with important, proprietary market information, or make a valuable introduction. Then there's personal value. Every client who works with us is getting something personal out of the relationship. One client might be interested in learning about your methodologies. Another might need an introduction to someone in the local community that you know. A third might have a high school senior who wants to go to your alma mater. Clients really stand up and take notice when you go beyond "deliverables" and provide this surprise and personal value.

## **Day 10: Treat your client like it's day 1.**

Baltasar Gracián, who was a famous 17th century Jesuit priest and advisor to Spanish noblemen, wrote a book of sayings called *The Oracle*. In it, he says, "You will be esteemed as long as you are new. Novelty pleases everyone because of its variety. A brand new mediocrity is more highly regarded than an extremely talented person to whom we have grown accustomed." How little human nature has changed in the last 400 years! If you want to keep your clients for life, you have to bring the same excitement, enthusiasm, and new ideas to the one-hundredth meeting that you brought to the first meeting when you were wooing him. If you don't, why would a client stick with you? One way to think about this is to pretend you are your competitor, and you want to steal this client away. What would your strategy be? Now, implement that strategy yourself.

I've sometimes thought that if married couples treated their spouses like newlyweds, the divorce rate would plummet! Complacency is the enemy of long-term client relationships.

Well, we've managed to rush through ten days in less than ten minutes of reading time! I'll leave you with a final quote from Gracián, that well-known 17th century advisor, that captures the spirit of the advisor mindset I've been trying to get across to you: "Princes like to be helped, but not surpassed. When you counsel someone, you should appear to be reminding him of something he had forgotten, not the light he was unable to see."

# How to Win Back a Lost Client

Professional relationships are similar to personal ones in many ways: Sometimes you feel totally in synch, sometimes you have petty disagreements and sometimes you break up. Whether you've actually ended the relationship with a client or simply feel the two of you are growing apart, there are ways to rebuild the bond.

Before embarking on a campaign to win back business, you have to take a trip down memory lane. Did the client often make unreasonable demands? If you frequently pulled all-nighters as a result of the firm's disorganization and were made to feel it was your fault, you probably don't want to work with this client again. Similarly, if the company was frequently late with his payments or withheld some of your fee without explanation, there's little reason to restore the relationship.

However, if you and the client had a few minor incidents—or just seem to be slowly drifting apart—it's worth it to try to make amends. Perhaps you worked with the firm when you first started your business, and your disorganization while you were ramping up led to some missed deadlines. The client didn't "fire" you, but just gradually called you less and less. In situations such as this, a good first step is to send an e-mail or gift to your contact. You might use a holiday such as Groundhog Day to send a note saying something like, "The groundhog decided not to make an appearance today, but I'm here to provide you with the top-notch design services you need to survive those long winter days." Or use Valentine's Day as an occasion to send a box of chocolates to the client, along with a note that says, "I want your business back."

In either case, also include a note or follow-up e-mail admitting your mistake and explaining what you've done to change since you last worked with this person. Maybe you were working with a partner who was frequently rude, and you didn't find out until you and your partner split ways. Let the client know that you've stopped working with the person and apologize for any difficulty he had with your firm in the past. Emphasize your commitment to individual service on each account. You might even offer a discounted rate on the first new project as compensation for past difficulties.

If a client seems to be slowly drifting away, and you don't know why, send an e-mail. You might write something like, "It's been a long time since we've spoken, and I thought I'd check in to see if you need any assistance on projects." You also could offer to take that person to lunch and try to

gauge the reason for the reduced project flow. You might find the client thinks your rates are too high or that business has slowed down. Even if you're unable to make adjustments to better suit the firm's needs, you'll at least have insight into what went wrong.

To this end, consider creating some sort of quality-assurance system for your business. It doesn't have to be complicated: All you need to do is send an e-mail after you've completed a project and ask the client for feedback. Were they happy with the end result? Did you meet their deadlines effectively? Do they have suggestions for improvement so the next project is even better? A simple e-mail system may help you prevent rifts with clients because you'll find out what worked and what didn't, allowing you to make any necessary changes.

Like most romantic relationships, not all business liaisons are meant to be. But keep in mind that whether or not you lure the client back, what's most important is that you tried to make amends—and learned from your previous mistakes. It's a good educational experience that will serve you well in future business relationships.

## Key one:

The key to winning customer and client loyalty is to first sell yourself. This can be seen by both small and larger companies, Such as Wendy's hamburgers. Dave, the originator of Wendy's promoted the brand himself. Second, the company should be sold. Reputation, industry experience and the reason why your "widgets" are the best should be sold. Finally, finer points regarding the value that the product, or service, will bring to the prospect should be highlighted. Simple recipe for sales calls

Identify a need - Prospecting

Identify the decision maker - make the appointment

Sell Yourself First

Sell your Company Second

Sell your Product Third

Provide What you Promised

Reward with excellent service

To retain clients, they must feel that a need is being filled by the company's product, service or representative. If the customer feels that a need is being filled then they feel satisfaction and loyalty. It is typically the first contact, regarding a product or service, that na customer will place their loyalty in, especially if that person follows up and takes care of the clients needs.

## Key two:

How to win loyalty from your customers and clients. Now that you got these new customers and clients, you must relate to their personality and there needs.

If you relate to their personality your clients or customer will feel comfortable doing business with you. And you will know how to approach them for the sale. In short get to know them.

If you relate to their needs then you know what they are looking for. Then you could explain how your product or service can benefit them or their company.

Don't ever let your customers or clients see that you need them, they might think you are desperate and if you are you don't want them to see it. If this happens they will probably run. You want to let them know that you are eager to do business with them because your product or service can really benefit them.

Conduct business with a positive attitude. People are attracted to those with a positive attitude. No one wants to do business with someone who hates his or her job and they will show it through negative attitude.

Always conduct business with integrity. That means always do as you say you will.

You want to keep all of your customers or clients informed on new products and services. They might have a need for these things you will never know if you don't inform them.

### KEY THREE:

The key to winning customer loyalty is just to be personable and friendly to all your clients, and to get to know them a little so that they are familiar with you and think of you first when they need your company's particular line of business or service. Of course having quality products and services helps, but in most markets a lot of the best company's products are very similar, so a personal approach with the customer is what's needed, not any fancy sales talk or acts and figures to do with your products. What all customers and clients are looking for is professionalism, personality and appreciation, and if you can do all three your clients will be loyal to your brand for a very long time.

### KEY FOUR:

To win customer and client loyalty, first your company must have good product, who would be loyal to a company that make product that is easy to break. Who would be loyal to a company that make product that is a waste of money and time?

Second, your company must deliver what you promise, if you promise that you will replace your product if it's break, you have to do it. If the customer come to know that your company try to cheat their money, your company is doomed!

Third, your company's product must have something special about them, like a Krell amplifier have extraordinary bass, a McIntosh amplifier sound like tube, a Marantz amplifier look fabulous So that if your customer love your product, they will come back to your company next time.

Fourth, remember that advertising and marketing only helped your customer to know your product better, it does not make them loyal to your company. **Finally, remember: "Customer is god!"**