

## *Tips for Winning Client Communication*

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If you have ever listened to someone speak about an area of expertise with esoteric lingo and obscure terminology that makes your head spin, you understand the reason that empathy is important in business communication. Empathy helps you understand another person's point of view, which is particularly valuable in business because too often technical jargon gets in the way of clarity and understanding. There are other uses of empathetic communication, such as anticipating and inquiring about needs, questioning a client's goals to help you reach beyond expectations and following up with a survey or with an email or phone call to ensure the needs are met. Including these communication steps in your business process will help you deliver the type of top-notch customer service and stand out from your competitors.

### **Use Clear Client-Centered Language**

Focus on clarifying terminology when explaining only those processes that a client needs to know in order to do their job more successfully, or if they ask for clarification due to intellectual curiosity.

Putting yourself in your client's shoes may require examining the business's website, asking questions and actively and enthusiastically assessing their needs. The authenticity with which you pursue a client's best interests will lead your communication down the correct avenue.

### **Anticipate and Inquire About Needs**

Whether you are familiar with a client's business or need to research it in advance, learning about the latest advancements in the industry, reading the company website, and obtaining any information from your business network colleagues prior to an initial meeting can help you list and ask intelligent questions, resulting in a clearer understanding of its terminology, challenges, goals and objectives and industry standards and innovations. Speak slowly to ensure that the client perceives that you think their input is important. Establish a two-way conversation that allows both parties to be heard effectively. Limit distractions and give the client your full attention.

### **Be Specific: Clarify Goals to Effectively Meet and Reach Beyond Expectations**

After discussing a client's needs, be specific in clarifying goals, with numbers and concrete measurements of expected results that will give you and the client the clarity you need to prevent misunderstandings. Put the agreement in writing and ensure all parties have a copy that easily defines the expected outcomes with clear language and formatting. Communicate what the process would look like if adjustments to the original agreement are required after the project is in process.

### **Follow Up to Ensure Satisfaction**

After a product or service has been delivered, follow up with a survey and email message or phone call to verify that the outcome is successful. Survey Monkey and Poll Daddy are two online survey services that give you flexible pricing and a professional feedback format for improving your business and verifying in writing a successful outcome. Customers complete it online and it reaches your inbox with ratings and details regarding satisfaction

on all of the important delivery points, including communication. The follow up and any services that are required to fulfill the original goals should be included in the initial fee, however, if additional services are required that reach outside of the original goals, fulfilling them would earn you additional revenue for your business. A current client is a repeat customer for so many businesses. A professional and well-executed follow up is an effective way to develop additional contracts.

### **Track Improvements and Build a Repeatable Process**

The intuition you build through experience gives you and the client confidence, but the backbone of the feeling is a verified and repeatable process that results in a successful outcome reliably. If you write down improvements and draft a process document that includes communication details, you will perfect your business interactions much faster than working from memory. It can be empowering to have a guide to follow during a meeting, and having a written document is useful for handing off to employees or a backup colleague during a vacation or emergency.