

8 SMALL STEPS TO IMPROVE CLIENT RELATIONSHIPS

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We have all experienced the client (internal or external) who, for some reason, you just can't satisfy. It is frustrating – you deliver excellent results but they're never happy.

Sometimes you can put this down to poor expectations management on your part, especially if you've played the "yes man" role up until that point (e.g. "Yes, absolutely, I think your envelope opening has great media potential...").

There is another potential reason though.

Little details; big impact

Consider: has your client's entire experience matched-up with those excellent results, or have you fallen short in some areas?

Your client's perceptions may be equal to the [lowest common denominator](#) in their experience – the weakest link in the customer service chain.

Confused? Let me explain.

This past weekend, I took advantage of Ontario's [Family Day](#) to whisk [Caralin](#) away for a Valentine's weekend in beautiful Montreal. On our second night we went out to a lovely restaurant in [Old Montreal](#). The food was exquisite, the service impeccable and the atmosphere relaxing. However, the hotel bathrooms were poorly decorated and sub-par.

Did that bathroom affect the quality of the meal? No, but it pulled my perceptions of the restaurant down. All that work on food, service and atmosphere was undercut by a small detail.

The little details can make a big difference.

So, rather than shaking your head and wondering why your client is being unreasonable, consider:

1. Do you return emails and calls promptly or do you wait to do it until later?
2. Do you show up for meetings early or do you always arrive a few minutes late?

3. Do you meet deadlines, or do you often push them back?
4. Do you constantly keep clients updated on progress or do you check-in occasionally?
5. Do you stay within your budgets, or do you frequently exceed them?
6. Do you deliver high-quality products the first time around or do you expect others to revise them for you?
7. Do you follow-through on tasks without needing to be reminded, or do you need frequent prompting?
8. Do you deliver the minimum required but never go beyond?

Sorry to say it, but if you are falling short on the little things like this, then stellar results may not be enough to salvage your client relationship.

Think about it. Figure out your weak link(s), and find a way to strengthen them. Little improvements can make a big difference.

What can you do to make your clients happier?