

# 20 strategies for keeping clients

**K**eeping clients and keeping them happy amount to much the same thing. Here are some proven techniques – some work better for private clients, or entrepreneurs, others are equally applicable in the argy bargy of corporate law.

# (happy)

with Linda Julian



**1 Represent your clients well** – Clients hire you for your knowledge, for your clout, and for the fact that you will negotiate more strongly on their behalf than they can for themselves. But just doing this isn't enough – that's why there are lots more strategies . . .

**2 Thank clients** – Don't take clients for granted. Thank your clients for their business – by letter, fax, in person, and with the occasional tangible gift or lunch.

**3 Return clients calls A S A P** – This is a meaningful way to show your client just how important he/she is to you. If you aren't around, arrange for someone else to return the call on your behalf.

**4 Keep your clients informed about progress** – Your clients have every confidence in your ability to solve their legal problems, but they feel a whole lot more comfortable and secure when you keep them informed frequently and regularly throughout the process.

**5 Ask clients what they expect, then do it** – You'll never be absolutely certain that you are going to please a client unless you ask them exactly what they expect, and then act on it.

**6 Be completely discreet and loyal** – Make it abundantly clear to your clients that you respect the confidentiality and commercial sensitivity of the information you come across. Reassure them on this point. Be loyal to your client; whatever you think of their behaviour, remember that in the end, they are paying the bill. Without them, you wouldn't have a job.

**7 Be creative and innovative** – Clients want your bright, new ideas. They want you to show leadership. Use all the creativity you can muster to come up with innovative solutions to their problems.

**8 Be really involved in your client's industry** – Make sure you really know what's going on. Be apart of the 'bigger picture' of their industry – not just by socialising with other industry people, but by participating in conferences, industry bodies, and educational activities. Read their industry press.

**9 Constantly seek feedback** – Always ask your client how you are going. Ask how you can do better. And listen to what they have to say.

**10 Get to know your client's business** – Show a genuine and sincere interest in client companies. Read their annual reports, internal magazines, and staff newsletters. Watch for their names in the press. Talk about your client's company, and its activities, with their people.

**11 Help your client train their personnel** – Help your contacts to do a better job. Help your clients to train their staff to do a better job. Offer any education or guidance that you can.

**12 Be available after hours** – Give selected clients mobile contact numbers so they can get in touch in a crisis. Be available for early morning or early evening meetings with clients – if that's what they want.

**13 Be flexible** – Try to do things the way clients want, rather than your customary or convenient way. Adopt your client's terminology, wherever feasible. Become more flexible and easier to deal with than any of their other advisers, especially other lawyers.

**14 Meet with other client advisers** – Always be ready to join forces with the other advisers to get the best solution for your client. In



the interests of your client, be prepared to form genuine multi-disciplinary working partnerships with other experts.

**15 Introduce clients to other helpful products and services** – If you come across something that's really great, and could be of benefit to your client – even if it's miles away from your professional engagement – tell your client about it. This always goes down well.

**16 Help you clients to network** – Introduce your clients to other contacts in their industry, or other expert service providers who could be helpful to your client. Most of all, if you can spot a business opportunity for a client, point them in that direction. This earns lots of brownie points.

**17 Provide a constant stream of relevant information** – Through all of the independent surveys, and all of our research, everything points to your client placing a high value on relevant and concise information. Keep up the information flow. Remember, you'll get extra points for brevity!

**18 Publicise your client's news** – When one of your clients has a big win, or when there is an important new appointment at a client, publicise it within your practice and throughout your network. Make sure everybody knows about the new market your client is entering, about their recent acquisition, or whatever else is important to the client. Give your client a copy of what you have circulated in the group, or tell them about it.

**19 Keep your client informed** – Your clients are interested in what's happening within your firm. Do your best to keep them abreast of who's who, and initiatives within your group.

**20 Care about your clients** – There is no substitute for genuine concern and a sincere interest in your client. If you don't care, it will show. If you do, it makes all the difference. ■

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