

Top Ten Tips for Winning & Keeping Clients

Build relationships

A strong client relationship built on credibility and trust is the basis for winning more business. Work on developing a rapport with the influencers and decision-makers in your client organisations.

Do your research

You should know and understand your client's organisation, their environment and industry. This is essential preparation to establish trust and credibility and to ensure your client gets what they want.

Identify client needs

Aim to assist your client in defining their problem(s) and establishing their needs. The discussion should be wide ranging in case there are opportunities for others in your company. You **MUST** focus on what the client wants and needs, not what you can most easily provide – forcing your solution onto the problem is unlikely to be successful.

Question & listen

In your discussions with clients focus on asking the right questions and listening carefully to the responses. Open and exploratory questions are most effective in encouraging your client to reveal their interests and needs.

Closing

At some point you have to ask for the business and get commitment. This is easier if you have prepared, asked the right questions and established a need with the client. If you wish to avoid asking the direct question (“Will we get the business?”), there are other closing techniques. For example: “How would you like to proceed?” or “So if we can reassure you about (x) are you happy to proceed?”

Network selectively

Select some key events at which to network. You may even wish to host an event for this purpose. Do some preparation in advance of events to establish who you want to meet and what you would like to discuss with them. Show interest in people you meet and ask questions. Follow up immediately after events by passing on information to colleagues, sending information to a new contact, emailing or making telephone calls if appropriate.

🔗 **Use social media networks**

If you don't enjoy attending events, social media networks are a very effective way of establishing contacts and keeping your ear to the ground. LinkedIn is the most well known online network for professionals but there are others. Get your profile up to date and aim to connect with one or two new people on LinkedIn each week.

🔗 **Position yourself as an expert**

If writing or presenting is something you enjoy, seek out opportunities to contribute articles to publications or websites. Offer to speak at events, training sessions, networking meetings etc. By establishing yourself as an expert in your field you extend your networks, raise your profile and increase the chances of picking up new business.

🔗 **Set yourself targets**

Realistic and measurable objectives will help you to assess your success and motivate you to win more business. Objectives might include setting up a database of prospects or meeting with three new clients in the next three months.

🔗 **Decide what works best for you**

Be honest about where you and your team's strengths are and choose approaches and techniques which build on those strengths. If you are not comfortable in a marketing role consider whether another member of staff can take on more responsibility in this area.