

10 Tips for Longterm Client Retention

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Attracting and retaining long-term clients is a powerful strategy for growing your business. Long-term clients are likely to feel more satisfied, are more likely to refer others, and are more likely to purchase additional services from you. The savvy solo professional or small business owner gains big from focusing on these 10 sound strategies for long term client retention.

- 1) Focus your marketing on existing clients. Your current customers have already overcome certain hurdles to doing business with you and are more likely to buy from you again. Focus most of your time, efforts, and resources on better serving your current clients. Go deeper rather than wider.

- 2) Be consistent in your approach and interactions. Treat your clients with honesty, humor, and respect and maintain this over time. Present a consistent, solid, and professional style to your clients - one that they can grow to depend on.

- 3) Follow through on your commitments to them. If you promise to send information or to follow up, be sure to do this. You'd be surprised at how many professionals promise to send information, but then never do. You will gain loyalty and trust by doing what you say you will do.

- 4) Allow yourself to connect with them. Find out about their lives, their hopes, goals, and desired outcomes. Ask questions that encourage a deeper sense of shared understanding. The greater the level of connection, the greater the mutual satisfaction.

- 5) Have fun. It's easy to get caught up in goals, outcomes, deliverable and all of these are, of course, vitally important. Clients do want outcomes. Also, they want to work with people who enjoy what they do. The more fun you can have while providing strong outcomes, the longer your clients will stay.

- 6) Position yourself as a resource for life. I tell all my clients, at the beginning, that I want to be their coach/consultant for life. That means they can always come back to work with me no matter how much time has passed between our meetings. This strategy has worked extremely well as I often get calls from clients from four, five and six years ago - whenever they are in need of a goals tune-up. Clients appreciate knowing they can come back whenever they choose.

- 7) Ask for feedback and input. At some intervals within the working relationship, solicit feedback and input. Ask your clients how they feel about working with you and ask if they have suggestions for how the working relationship or outcomes can be improved. Asking for their ideas shows that you care about their opinions and value their contributions.

8) Share resources. Do you know of a good book that your client might benefit from reading? Tell him about it. Do you have the name of someone who could help your client move ahead on her business plan? Tell her about it. Sharing resources is a terrific way to build loyalty and satisfaction.

9 Reward them for staying on. You might consider implementing some kind of loyalty or perks program, where your long-term clients are rewarded for staying on. You might offer them gifts, products, or services for a certain level of ongoing participation with your business. These work for things like coffee, office supplies, and groceries, so why not in your business, too?

10) Keep learning. The more you focus on gaining new knowledge, new skills, and new experiences, the more you have to offer your clients. The more you have to offer, the more they will benefit. The more they benefit, the longer they stay. Keep focused on your own professional growth and learning - make this a priority. Both you - and your clients - will gain.

Implement these ten tips for client retention, and you too, will have a business that continues to grow now and thrive into the future.

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