

## **How to Build Client Trust**

Clients work with professionals whom they trust. Building trust is an ongoing process. Here are 10 ways to build trust with both old and new clients.

### **1. Keep your agreements with your clients**

If you promise delivery on a particular day, make sure to deliver when it was promised. Even something as small as the time you have scheduled an appointment is an agreement. Each time you break an agreement with a client, you break the trust.

### **2. Create realistic client expectations**

Help the client to understand exactly what you will do for him or her. Put boundaries around what is included in your service and what is not. What will create extra charges? How and when will you be billing the client? Living up to the expectations you create helps your clients to take you at your word.

### **3. Help client to understand the process**

If your client understands how you and your office works the client can then know what to expect and when to expect it. 4. Explain your plan and strategy - Not only does the client need to understand your office procedure but also what the plan and strategy is for his/her particular case. This will help client to know what to expect and when to expect it. Trust comes when the client feels confident and comfortable with the plan and the strategy.

### **5. Never over promise**

It is tempting to promise whatever the client requests without consulting a schedule or asking if it is doable. Over promising often causes broken agreements and thus broken trust.

### **6. Carefully explain the client's role**

When a client is clear on what his or her role is then the client gets clear on what progress can be made without his or her involvement and what needs his or her input before moving on. Getting really clear on what the client needs to do to move his or her case forward, helps you work as a team and builds trust.

### **7. Discuss potential pitfalls**

Nothing disturbs the trust of a client more than when something unexpected happens. (If it is good of course you can celebrate! Whew!) Guard against something negative happening as a surprise by discussing the potential pitfalls with the client.

### **8. Review the agreement in detail**

Any agreements that the client is going to have to make should be discussed in detail. Trust is built over a long period of time but it can be broken easily. A surprise that results from an agreement the client made but is unaware of breaks that trust quickly.

### **9. Avoid making the client feel stupid**

No one likes to feel stupid. If clients feel that you think they are stupid they will no longer entrust you with their ideas or thoughts. Clients who don't feel valued by the professional may stop trusting that person. Professionals probably don't set out to make a client feel stupid. In fact it may be an attitude, an inadvertent comment, or a look that gives the client that impression. Be aware of your inner thoughts. They show up without your noticing. Use careful language.

### **10. Don't allow interruptions at meetings**

If you take interruptions during meetings with clients it makes them feel they are not important to you. Eventually you erode the good will and trust that you had with them.

Alvah Parker is a Practice Advisor for attorneys and Career Transition Coach as well as publisher of **Parker's Points**, an email tip list and **Road to Success**, an ezine. To subscribe send an email to [join-roadtosuccess@go.netatlantic.com](mailto:join-roadtosuccess@go.netatlantic.com). Parker's Value Program © enables clients to find a way to work that is more fulfilling and profitable. She is both a Practice Advisor and Coach to attorneys, sole practioners, and works with people in transition to find a fulfilling career. Alvah is found on the web at [www.asparker.com](http://www.asparker.com). She may also be reached at 781-598-0388.