

The 7 things clients need to know to be committed to you

Most professionals say they want strong relationships with their clients. But what these professionals usually really mean is that they want their clients to have a strong relationship with the professional – for the client to be committed to the professional. What are the seven beliefs (based on experience) a client has to have about you to be committed to working with you whenever possible?

The client needs to believe, based on experience, that:

1. You (the professional) know me (the client). You understand what I am trying to do, and why. You understand what I am good at. You understand how I learn. You understand how I make progress, and what my stumbling looks like
2. You care about me. You are interested in my success. You are happy when I make progress, and feel for me when I don't. You are interested in how things turn out for me, and even more importantly, in *how I turn out*.
3. You value me. You appreciate the role I play in your life. You appreciate my talents. You value the opportunity to work with me.
4. You have faith in me. You believe that I can be successful, and that I can achieve my goals. You hold that faith in me even at times when I doubt it.
5. You are committed to me. Sometimes I may not be the best relationship partner. Things will come up that make me do less than my best in this relationship. As a client, I may fail to fully implement your recommendations– even when I agree with them. I may sometimes fail to retain you for some work, even when you would be the best choice. But you don't go away when I am not perfect, and you don't have a negative attitude about me. Rather, you keep your eye on the big picture, on what we could *become* together – and strive to get us back on track.
6. You are interested in learning more about my situation. There is always more to learn about me. Every day the world changes, and so does my situation. You stay up-to-date. Every time we work together you learn more about how best to work with me, and take advantage of what you know, to advance my interests.
7. You change what you do, sometimes, as a response to interacting with me. Sometimes, what is needed is not that I do something different, but that *you do something different*. If I am having trouble hearing something, you work hard at figuring out a different way to communicate. If I need something you could learn to provide, you learn to provide it. We are not talking here about slight customization – which is part of all professional work. Rather, we are talking your willingness to change who you are – your self-conception – in response to my needs. Not always, but often enough for me to see that I am affecting you, along with you affecting me.

Something to try this week

Think about your three best clients. For each of them, consider how strongly they'd agree that you meet each of the seven points, and what's the evidence they have. Where you are doing well, congratulate yourself. Where you are falling short, think of what you can do to improve the situation.

Now think of one other client, where you'd like to improve the relationship. What actions can you take to improve which dimensions of their perception of you?

What are these tips?

These monthly tips are intended to help professionals create more business and enjoy their work more. We focus on how to start relationships, how to build relationships, and how to convert those relationships into sales.

Can you answer my questions about business development?

We'd be delighted. Please send any questions you have to questions@bridgewellpartners.com and we'll do our best to help you out. Or call us at 312-863-3489. Or visit www.bridgewellpartners.com to learn more about how we coach and train professionals to be better at business development and to enjoy it more.