

LIFESTYLE



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Timely Information for Personal Success

Winning Over Tough Clients – Part I

By Andrew Sobel & Jerold Panas

You're good at your job, but unfortunately you have some existing or prospective clients who are so hard to deal with that you can't prove the value of your EAP to them. Sound familiar? Here are some types of tough clients that EA professionals should be aware of and the strategies for winning them over.

❖ **The insecure client.** These clients are unsure of themselves and it manifests as them being unsure of *you* and your services. They find it hard to trust outsiders and won't let you build relationships with their superiors. Even if they are "on board" so to speak, insecure clients may also have difficulty trusting you to do new and different things for them.

➤ **The solution.** Invest in more face time, reassuring them of your services. Convince this client that you should go *together* to see their boss, so that you will have also have a relationship with him or her. Explain how this will benefit everyone. Ultimately, you will need to frequently reassure this type of client and give them a sense of control.

❖ **The boundary pusher.** Clients like these will call, email or text you at all hours of the day and night, expecting an immediate response. They don't distinguish between something that's truly urgent versus an issue that's just a simple "to do." They leave you feeling overwhelmed.

➤ **The solution.** It's best to explain your boundaries at the start of the business relationship. Even if you did, but the client is ignoring them – you can still alter their behavior *without* direct confrontation. Respond with

simple, but direct statements such as, "*Steve, I'll respond first thing Monday when I'm back at my office,*" or "*Mary, right now I have to get that analysis done that we discussed. Can this wait until Thursday?*"

❖ **The aloof client.** Some clients treat you like a vendor and resist all efforts to build a real relationship. They are professional and pleasant, but it's purely an arm's-length relationship, which limits how much you're able to help them achieve.

➤ **The solution.** Learn more about this client's agenda and help them accomplish it. What's important to them right now? *Everyone* has a hot button – have you discovered what it is for this executive? Once you do, you'll be in a better position to help them and go "above and beyond" your contract.

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Healthy Recipe: Chipotle & Orange Grilled Chicken

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 tbsps orange juice concentrate, thawed
- 1 tbsps finely chopped chipotle peppers
- 1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar
- 2 teaspoons unsulfured molasses
- 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
- 1 pound boneless, skinless chicken breasts, trimmed
- Salt to taste

NUTRITIONAL VALUE:

- Calories per serving: 150
- Carbohydrates: 7 g.
- Protein: 23 g.
- Sodium: 227 mg.
- Fat: 3 g.
- Saturated fat: 1 g.

DIRECTIONS:

- ➊ Preheat grill or broiler.
- ➋ Whisk together orange juice concentrate, chipotle pepper, vinegar, molasses and mustard in a small bowl.
- ➌ Lightly oil the grill or broiler rack. Season chicken with salt and grill or broil for 2 minutes. Turn, brush with the glaze and cook for 4 minutes, brushing occasionally with glaze. Turn again, brush with the glaze, and cook until the center is no longer pink, 1 to 2 minutes longer.

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Questions and Answers

Is 'Going Vegan' a Good Idea?

Q: *I'm thinking of adopting a vegetarian or vegan diet. What recommendations do you have?*

A: Vegetarian and vegan diets can be healthy, but they may lack certain nutrients. You may have to use a little creativity to ensure you get enough protein, calcium, iron, and vitamin B12. You can find many of these nutrients in eggs and dairy if you're vegetarian, and from plant sources if you're vegan. But you may need an added boost.

"Because vitamin B12 is found only in animal sources, if you're a vegan you might consider taking a supplement," says Kathy McManus, director of the Department of Nutrition at Harvard-affiliated Brigham and Women's Hospital.

Also, keep in mind that going vegetarian doesn't give you carte blanche to eat whatever you want — especially if you're trying to control your weight. Go heavy on fruits, vegetables, and whole grains but limit foods high in saturated fat, such as ice cream, whole milk, and cheese. ■

Additional source: Harvard Health Publications.

Winning Over Tough Clients

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NEXT MONTH: More different types of tough clients, and tips for winning them over are presented.

Summary

- **Assess** why the person is behaving that way. What's behind the behavior?
- **Make an action plan.** Identify what you can do to address the situation?
- **Meet and discuss.** If appropriate, talk about the behavior with the client.
- **Finally, "fish or cut bait."** Decide what your boundaries are, and if you've really had enough, move on and focus on more productive relationships. ■

Andrew and Jerold are consultants and authors of "26 Irrefutable Laws for Building Extraordinary Relationships," www.andrewsobel.com. A free planning guide is available for customers who buy their book.

Face Time is Still Key

Dependence on virtual communication like Skype, etc., is *ok* to a degree... but it can stunt social skills, too. The following are a few reasons why face time is still important:

- A time investment shows you really care.
- You're better able to give personalized attention.
- Facial expressions help get your point across.
- Your vulnerabilities show — but that's a good thing, as imperfections make you appear more believable and sincere. ■

Source: Michael Houlihan and Bonnie Harvey, authors of "The Barefoot Spirit" (www.thebarefootspirit.com).