

Quick Guide: Meeting Clients' Needs

When we're a customer in a shop or a client of a company, we like help, respect, understanding, satisfaction, value for money, action, friendly service ... need I go on? So whether you're dealing with a colleague's or a multi-million pound client's request, you will have to satisfy their four basic needs: the need to be understood; the need to feel welcome; the need to feel important; and the need for a comfortable environment.

So here are the **top ten tips** to help you meet those needs and guarantee that they remain clients:

1. **Listen carefully** to what they are telling you. Put aside any negativity or previous experiences of them, and focus on their situation and issues.
2. **Remember your clients' names** and points about them to refer to next time you meet or speak on the telephone. This will help build a positive client relationship.
3. **Always be pleasant** to them, even if they are not pleasant to you. Most times it is not you personally they are being unpleasant to; it is simply that you are the person who is dealing with their needs on this occasion.
4. **Graciously receive** and handle any concerns, complaints or problems. Use positive feedback words like "I understand" or "Yes, I see" to show you are really listening.
5. **Provide service "above and beyond"** what they expect of you. So rather than "It doesn't work like that", try giving them some other options to consider.
6. **Smile**, even during the times when you don't feel like it. The mark of a professional is to be able to be positive, friendly and helpful in every situation, even when your personal life is driving you over the edge!
7. **Accept their changes** to plans and bad news, positively. Consider what you *can* now do rather than what you can't.
8. **Be proactive** by providing suggestions and guidance. It's not the one thing you do 100% better that will meet your clients' needs: it's the hundreds of things you can do for them, just 1% better, that will keep them coming back for more.
9. **Always do what you say you're going to do**, and do it on time. And if you can't keep to an agreed deadline, keep them informed of what is going on.
10. **Remember:** clients are not the icing on the cake - they are the cake!

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