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6 Ways to Create Longevity with Your Temp Clients

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An agency's long-term success depends on creating and maintaining lasting relationships with your clients. Incorporating a few simple habits will enable you to have a steady client base that will keep your agency busy for years to come. Client relationship experts and clients themselves share their insight in these tips to help you grow, develop and maximize client relationships for the most successful staffing agency.

1. Be Transparent. It's better to be honest and build trust than to lie—even if lying may seem like an easy way to avoid confrontation. One little lie, even about something small, may be all it takes to shatter a relationship, says Julie Melillo, life and business coach.

Make sure to listen to your client and validate their thoughts and feelings. Have honest conversations with clients and be prepared to deal with their frustrations, she says.

2. Don't be Flaky. That's a great way to destroy a business relationship, Melillo says. If you promise something, deliver it. Being reliable proves you are trustworthy, and clients will place their trust in you. If you are unsure if you can meet an expectation, reframe the expectations to be more realistic. You can stand out among the many disorganized people today by being a pillar of predictability.

3. Make the Time. You might be busy, but you must take time to maintain and improve business relationships, says John Lewis*, a California staffing firm owner and TempPay client.

Get involved in every aspect of a client's business. "Be there when they need you," he says. "Make their issues your issues and resolve them." Go beyond doing "just enough" to care for the welfare of your clients and employees. Send a thank-you note after receiving feedback or a compliment from a client, or send one just thanking them for being clients. When people are remembered and respected, they are more willing to go the extra mile with your business.

4. Connect Personally. Building deeper, more meaningful relationships with your clients

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enhances the chances your relationship will become long term. Know and recognize important events in your clients' lives. Daniel Jarrod*, an Ohio-based staffing firm executive and TemPay client, knew a client was having open heart surgery. The night before the surgery, Jarrod called the client to wish him well. The simple gesture was something the client would always remember.

Be purposeful and genuine. Sharing outside the office requires a delicate balance of understanding who your client is and responding genuinely. You don't need a sickness to connect with clients. Learn about their interests and passions. If you know they are die-hard sports fans, you know whom to call when you have tickets to the game. Or if you see an event related to their hobby, you can let them know.

5. Communicate Regularly. Your client base may be such that personal communication with each client every month is impossible. Leverage other tools to talk to them—use social media such as Twitter and Facebook, send an e-mail or give them a call, says Diane Conklin, president of Complete Marketing Systems. Go even broader by creating a monthly newsletter. Consider mailing it so the newsletter doesn't get lost in the spam folder and stands out among the direct mail and bills in the clients' usual mail.

6. Be Positive. Optimism is contagious and should be spread whenever possible, says Ron Orleans, CEO of GiftsOnTime.com, a web-based client appreciation management platform. Those with positive attitudes naturally attract, motivate and energize others. Being excited about your services will transfer to your client, exciting him or her, too. When providing a client with feedback, such as on communicating employee concerns or even discussing late payments, make sure to say something positive before delivering criticism. When you do deliver criticism, be both tactful and honest and avoid personal attacks.

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