

How to stop carrying negative vibes from one client to the next.

There's no way to avoid conflict in the business world and with everyone that is involved, there are certain to be disagreements and opposing personalities and work styles. In order to make sure that you don't become affected by these inevitabilities, you want to consider how the client feels when you speak with them. This will help you not only in dealing with the upset client, but also with the next client you speak to.

It's not about you.

Many times the reason that we have trouble interacting with clients is that we tend to feel that we are being attacked personally. Most often, it is the clients' frustration that is the problem, not us personally. We shouldn't take conflict as a direct assault upon our ability to do our job, but rather as an opportunity to do our job better. The client may have had a bad day, or is having troubles at home, or their boss has just spoken with them about their job performance. It could be anything. So try to give the client some space to have their reaction, but don't take it to heart.

Be curious

If you happen to have a client that will not be satisfied, then listen more deeply to their concerns. Many times upset people just want to have someone listen to them, to validate their feelings. Stop your desire to correct them or defend yourself and begin to ask questions. Quite often paraphrasing back to them what you hear them saying can help them feel like they are being listened to. If you do not understand something that they are saying, then ask them to rephrase it or explain it another way, so that you can. Taking the time to listen can be the best solution to calming a situation. Speak in a normal tone and try not to raise your voice even if the client has done so. Just be interested in what they have to say and typically they will calm down and work toward a productive solution.

Take responsibility

If the client has a genuine grievance, and you are the one responsible for the service levels to this client, then apologise immediately on behalf of your company, irrespective of who actually messed up. Try not to pass the buck to a different department, it only makes it worse. See what needs to be done to rectify the situation and do it quickly to recover the relationship and build trust and respect.

Ease the pressure

If a client is demanding that you agree to something that you know is not good for business, then try not to feel pressured to answer yes or no straight away. Let them know that what they are asking deserves some consideration and you will probably have to include your Manager in that decision process. In the meantime you will want to gather as much information as you can. You can then step in to an objective role of being an information gatherer and solution provider instead of the decision maker for the moment. In this mode you can effectively ask everything you need to know to understand the clients' point of

view and what their real needs are, without feeling pressured to come up with an answer immediately.

Moving to the next client positively

It can be tough to suddenly become clear and positive after a client has put you through the ringer. We have all had the experience of being snapped at, or treated aggressively by a service provider when we have done little more than say hello! So we want to avoid giving our clients that experience as much as possible. So when you find yourself in that situation try this:

- ✦ Become an objective and curious solution provider in each client interaction wherever possible.
- ✦ Develop good listening and empathy skills with each client.
- ✦ Try not to be pressured into unprofitable or unworkable commitments that you will regret or that you can't honour.
- ✦ Do everything you can within each client interaction to ensure that everything that needs to be said is said.
- ✦ If you are feeling frustrated and angry, as soon as the conversation is finished with the client, vent it out on some paper or to a colleague (ask their permission first), with the view of clearing it from your system.
- ✦ Never send a communication via letter, email, text or phone when you are frustrated or angry.
- ✦ Once your frustration is clear, ask yourself some questions such as: "what can be done here?" or "what don't I know/understand?" or "what does the client really need?"
- ✦ Do what you need to do for them or note the next steps in your diary.
- ✦ Assess what went well from the interaction and where you could improve. Give yourself credit for what was achieved.
- ✦ Clear your mind and focus on your next client. Think about a number of favourable interactions you have had with them or other clients, so that you open yourself to that possibility again.
- ✦ Create a purpose for the interaction. Ask yourself; "What value will I be able to add to them with our communication today?"
- ✦ Be curious about what the next client will want and step into your objective solution provider role before you speak to them.

To recap

Dealing with clients is part of becoming successful in the working world. And it is part of your job to be sure that you are providing the best service to each and every client. If you carry over negative feelings from one client, then the next client is sure to feel the difference. Take your time to re adjust between situations and clients and you will succeed with whatever is thrown at you.

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About the Author

Erica Bagshaw is the founder of The Alignment Group, an organisation dedicated to providing education and facilitation for individuals and groups to create meaningful direction and develop the resources and energy to accomplish it. Through coaching, teaching and speaking Erica helps clients leverage their energy and thinking to generate the outcomes that they seek. She can help you to get clear on what is important to you or your business, decide a direction, create the steps, clear the blocks and follow through with it. Getting unstuck and opening up to new possibilities can be a liberating experience.

- ✦ Improve your sales performance
- ✦ Clear your fear of presenting
- ✦ Get better at being organised
- ✦ Be motivated instead of procrastinating
- ✦ Build your confidence
- ✦ Banish your fears and insecurities

Erica is a qualified NLP coach and Reiki Master/Practitioner with 15 years experience in the personal development field. With a corporate background in I.T., Business Systems Analysis, Recruitment, Sales and Management, Erica has a broad wealth of knowledge about careers and business. It is her experience and belief that anyone can develop the skills and resources within themselves to be confident, productive and excel at whatever they set their mind to.

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Can we help you? Here are some of the things that people say about our services:

"Erica has the amazing ability to cut through the clutter and cut to the chase with her clients. Her work in goal setting, alignment and finding purpose is world-class - as good as and better than anything else I've seen or read." Gihan Perera, First Step Communications

"When my relationship broke up after 14 years, I thought it was the end of the world, but then I had some Reiki with Erica. The pain shifted and softened allowing me to imagine the possibility of a different future. In subsequent sessions using NLP and Reiki, Erica was able to show me how to move through all of the confusion and grief and come to a place of peace within myself that I don't think would have been possible had I gone it alone." Jan - Secretary

"I learnt how to think clearly. Instead of having life control me, I learnt the skills to control my life by no longer rushing from one emotional response to another. I was shown a tool kit to be able to look at things objectively and make responsible decisions. It made me understand that I am in charge of my life and all that is in it, I have set it up. I have the choice of how I view it and only I can change it." Natalie - General Manager

"I believe that change comes about as the result of consistent daily actions. The Alignment of the Mind is the only course I have done in 25 years of personal development that causes me to stay aware of my behaviour on a daily basis." Margaret - Transformation Specialist

"Working with Erica and the Alignment Group has been a truly life changing experience in my development as a person and in my professional endeavours. Erica's style, both professionally and on a personal level, is firmly based around the principles of honesty, integrity and a genuine desire to assist you in finding clarity, no matter what your situation. A wonderful coach and a wonderful person." Andrew Hill-Male, Owner, @HM Website Design

If you'd like to work with us

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