

Having been in business for nearly 30 years, there are certain practices I uphold and live by religiously, to ensure success for both client and myself. Even with all the new ways of doing business, a multitude of webinars and virtual events, along with all new technology available, my practices have been steadfast and grounded me for many years. They provide me peace of mind at the end of the day. So, why fix what isn’t broken?

**1. Communication: the key to ultimate success.**

Whether it be with a client, colleague, or supplier, **communication** and **honesty**are vital for ultimate success. I can’t stress this enough!

When communicating to clients and colleagues, one must be very clear with instructions and share every detail as it pertains to that specific order. Inform your team of any big or small nuggets of information about the client. All communication is valuable. Clients must be updated, and suppliers must know the entire scope of the order as it relates to their task. If this doesn’t happen, we inadvertently set up our people to fail. Wasted time, energy, and money. Precious commodities you cannot get back, and you can’t “make it up”. It’s gone forever.

**2. Honesty is the best policy.**

Do your part to be **forthcoming** and **honest** with your clients and team. It is crucial to be honest in your ability to meet your client's needs.

There have been times when a client’s request was completely unrealistic and I knew it. But, I didn’t listen to my gut feeling. As a result, I set myself up for failure.

Some clients are very strong and adamant as to what they think they want, however, it is not necessarily correct. Remember that you are the expert, not them. That’s why they came to you in the first place. You must **articulate, explain,**and**ask/tell**in your discussions.

**3. Preparation.**

Preparation is key. You NEED to do your research **before** you reach out to a client. Research their target audience, competitors, vision, mission, values... There is nothing worse than missing the mark, or trying to pitch a product or service for which they have no need. The client will know if you have done your research first or not. If not, it illustrates laziness and lack of preparation. Do your homework.

**4. It's not personal, it's business.**

**Remain neutral and never take anything personally.** My mentors always taught me that when a client is having a bad day, it’s something on their end, not what I’ve done. We tend to blame ourselves. Do not jump to conclusions or be quick to react. One slip can destroy your entire career and business.

**5. Keep to yourself.**

**Do. Not. Gossip.** Do not gossip or speak badly about anyone or another company. It’s none of your business, the business at hand is your business. Focus on yourself.

**6. Time is Money.**

**Stay on Task, Focus,** and expedite the request efficiently. You will soon realize efficiency is a huge component of profit. If you’re not making money, ask yourself; how much time do I spend on an order? Phone calls, texting, doodling, and social media are huge distractions, and should be avoided during work hours. Set aside short time blocks for social media breaks if needed.

**7. Proofread.**

**Spelling and Grammar**are key for polished first impressions. There is nothing worse than fumbling over your words, or sending out an important document with grammatical or spelling errors. If you are unsure how to spell a word, pronounce a name, or if a sentence is grammatically correct, ask an expert. Don't be afraid to ask for help. For instance, there are several writing tools available. One of my favorites being Grammarly. Find tools and resources that work for you and make you shine.

**8. Use appropriate language.**

**Address the Client Appropriately!** Never use “Hey”, acronyms, or abbreviations when speaking to clients! Always maintain a level of professionalism even if they don’t.

**9. Stick to your schedule.**

**Create a routine that works for you.**Start and end your day at a specific time. Plan your week. Craft a schedule that works for you, and that you WANT to stick to.

**10. Never make assumptions.**

**Do you know what they say about assumptions? They make an ASS**-out-of-**U**-and-**ME.**Neverassumeanything, always assume nothing. Assumptions are business killers!

**11. Consistency = Trust.**

Be consistent, reliable, and trustworthy - always keep your word, stick to your promises. If you make a promise, then realize that it wasn’t a good decision for whatever reason, you still must follow through and learn for the next time. Your clients will trust you because you’re viewed as stable and steady. They can depend on you and know they’re taken care of. Trust is everything.

No Trust, No Business.