

# **Breaking the Service Mould**

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*Client Relationship Essentials*

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## **BREAKING THE SERVICE MOULD**

We have all had that dreaded experience. Out on the town shopping, checking onto into a hotel, eating at a restaurant, visiting your bank – it can happen anywhere. And it happens far too often. I am talking about a bad customer service experience. It seems these days that businesses invest more in TV ads telling us how great they are than they do in actually being great. With all of the focus on sales growth, differentiation, marketing, and competition for customers why is it that every business does not provide exceptional customer service? One would think that this would be critical for success. I would argue that businesses generally focus on what they do and fail to pay attention to how they do it. And when we look at professional service firms, we are not different. So to break the service mould we need to think a bit differently about what we do. “It’s not about the service; it’s about the service!”

Lawyers provide a range of “services” to clients. Your clients expect that you know what you are doing when you offer those services and they are generally correct. What I will address is not legal service – my focus in (is) on customer service. And while I would venture to say that most lawyers are pretty good at providing legal service, they fall short when it comes to customer service. Why is this? Because lawyers receive huge amounts of technical training, are required to attend professional development to maintain their skills, invest great amounts of time and effort to ensure that the legal services they provide are accurate, and take pride in the fact that they are a profession rather than a business. Attention to customer service is usually an afterthought at best. So if you want to grow your business, differentiate yourself from your competitors, have clients who constantly refer you to others and create pride amongst (y)our employees – follow these five strategies to provide not just great legal services but awesome customer service!

### **TRULY CARE**

Do you care about your client? Of course you do. Does your client know you care? Maybe not. Research indicates that “perceived indifference” is the biggest reason that clients switch professional service firms. Think about how you interact with your clients and how they might perceive your actions. Do you have a personal relationship with them? Do you spend time to find out what is happening in their lives? Do you understand that not all of your clients communicate and think in the same way? Theodore Roosevelt said “People don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care”. Was he thinking about lawyers when he said this?