The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Employment: Service Provider & Client: At First Sight and Forever

By Galina Dmitrieva

October 01, 2013

The Employment section did not involve the reporting or the editorial staff of The Moscow Times.

Galina Dmitrieva
Marketing Director
Ventra Employment LLC

Every company strives to be the market leader and "conquer" new customers. We are not speaking about just increasing the number of customers, but attracting the clients. You need to captivate your clients. What is more, you need to put your employees up to that.

How to Make a Good Impression

A loyal customer who has worked with your company for many years is the result of the huge work on building a relationship and constant interaction with the client. But where to start and how to succeed?

1. The first point — common rules: nice appearance, literate speech, businesslike manner of cooperation and expertise. These basic rules should be observed by everyone, starting from the secretary in the reception zone. It is obvious that if the secretary answers the call in a rude and inappropriate manner the client will be lost, and most likely, forever. Each employee carries the ideology and image of the company.

Keyword: business etiquette

2. Focus on the client's goals and objectives. This means if your client has a question, even the most insignificant, each employee of the company is interested in its quick solution. If the employee is not competent to solve a particular problem, he or she addresses the question to a more competent colleague. In other words, the employee should take care of the issue. The staff should handle the client's problem as if it were their own.

Keyword: concernment

Case: "Floating" request.

An employee from the client company (de jure our employee, as we provided the outstaffing service) sent a request to our accounting department concerning the date of the next payroll. The accounting staff somehow missed the request and the employee hadn't received the proper answer.

If your client has a question, even the most insignificant, each employee of the company should be interested in its quick solution.

After a while he addressed his question to the HR-department, where he promptly received the information. This insignificant detail could lead to a disagreeable situation with the client, as the employee could justifiably complain to the client company and relations would be damaged. However, the problem was solved.

3. Kindness and willingness to help are able to remove 95% of negative emotions. When your client comes to you with any problem, perhaps even unsolvable, a sincere desire to help, a reasoned statement of the situation and suggestion of other ways of solving the problem form a solid basis for further cooperation.

Keyword: desire to help

Customer-oriented approach: how to explain to your staff the importance

Client focus is the company's ideology and corporate culture. Client-oriented ideology should be translated to the employees by the managers of the company.

1. To demonstrate by personal example. It's impossible to demand a customer-oriented approach from your employees when managers don't follow this ideology. By personal example you show the effectiveness and profitability of such interaction. Therefore, the leaders and top managers of the company should be the most customer-oriented.

2. Translate the ideology top down. The top management passes the client-focused ideology to line managers, who in turn translate it to frontline employees.

It is extremely important to track the passing information in this chain in order to prevent it from getting stuck. This is carried out by trainings, supervision and motivation, which are discussed below.

3. Customer-oriented approach: inside and out. It's not so easy to capture your staff with the principles of client-focused ideology, but it is possible. You need to explain in an easily-accessible form to your employees what it is.

Tools: regular trainings, blamestorming (including your personal cases — keep in mind the necessity of personal examples), sharing experience, tips, business vocabularies, useful books and periodicals, encouraging the employees to share their own ideas on developing the system of interaction with the clients.

3. The carrot and stick approach. Education is not the keystone to success. As practice shows, constant supervision should be provided. As a "stick," you can use the same blamestorming where you can discuss a difficult situation. Why did it happen and what is there to do?

The purpose of such a discussion is to make adequate conclusions. It is also possible to reconcile indicators of work with clients with the KPIs. Depending on the quality of work and customer interaction you have the opportunity to increase or decrease the variable part of the KPI.

What do you receive?

As a result you'll get good service, a long-term and trust-based relationship, the company's image as a professional, loyal and reliable partner. It's really worth giving it a try!

The Employment section did not involve the reporting or the editorial staff of The Moscow Times.