

selling point

Getting Off on the Right Foot

Use these five tried-and-true relationship management techniques with clients .

The financial services business is much more than executing buy/sell tickets. It is about forming solid, long-term relationships with individuals to help them achieve their financial goals. Here are five tips for establishing good client relationships:

1. **Listen**—Let your clients share their hopes, dreams and fears. People love to have a chance to tell their story in their own way. Keep eye contact and use body language to indicate your interest (lean forward and don't cross your arms or legs). Don't interrupt or cut them short.
2. **Ask open-ended questions**—"What's been your best/worst investment experience?" "How do you feel about money?" "What do you picture yourself doing in retirement?" Probing questions that can't be answered with a simple "yes" or "no" are the best for drawing people out. And remember to use five of the most powerful words in the English language: "Tell me all about it."
3. **Embrace objections**—Don't just "handle" objections; welcome them! Objections are your client's cry for additional information. Listen, support and answer the objection. For instance, "I already have a broker" might be met with, "I'm glad that you've already sought professional help with your investment decisions. People often come to us for a second opinion on their portfolios. Let's schedule a meeting to review your holdings to see if we can spot any room for improvement."
4. **Set the stage**—Describe your future services: quarterly financial reviews, regular phone calls, monthly newsletters, and occasional seminars—whatever your communication plan is. Let your clients know that you don't consider this a one-time transaction, but rather the beginning of a long-term relationship. Encourage them to contact you between regularly scheduled appointments should any questions or concerns arise.
5. **Follow through**—Actions speak louder than words. If you have promised to send additional information, do so the next day. Return phone calls within 24 hours. Look for opportunities to make an additional contact, such as delivering an annuity policy in person.



Relationship management is a skill all its own. Building a sound foundation with your clients today will ensure your business success tomorrow.