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Delivering a Top-Notch Client Experience

By Christopher Earley

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There are few things more important to the success of any law firm than the delivery of great client service. But clients must get more than just top-notch service—they need a top-notch *experience*. This is what truly elevates a law firm from being a mere commodity. Below are some ideas my law firm has implemented to provide the best client experience we possibly can.

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Hiring. This is where providing the right experience to your clients truly begins. No extraordinary team was built on the backs of average team members. If you want to provide a top-quality client experience, you need to hire people who have positive, upbeat personalities. They need to truly enjoy interacting and helping people. Personally, I look for people who are empathetic, able to follow systems, and smart. I don't care where people went to school or even where they worked previously. If I can hang my hat on some part of their past work experience that shows they understand and agree with the need for top-quality client service, then I look at them closely to see if they would be a good fit. Take your time when it comes to hiring—slowing down will greatly increase your chances of getting the right team member into the right seat.

The phones. This is where many firms drop the ball. To me, the telephone is the single most important element in any law office, and it needs to be treated as such. It starts with the greeting. What do potential clients hear when they call your law firm? Do they hear the off-putting and cold "Law Office of John Smith"? That is an immediate turn-off and gets things off on the wrong foot. Making sure the caller hears something like, "Welcome to the Law Office of John Smith. This is Henry. How can I help you?" will result in a much different experience for the caller. Keep in mind, you want to "stop the shop." Chances are, this person is calling numerous other law firms and trying to decide who to hire. By giving potential clients a first-class experience when they first call, you will gain a significant advantage over your competitors. And getting this all-important phone greeting right doesn't cost a single penny.

Communicating with clients. Once the person becomes a client, how good is the communication? Do clients need to call your office to get updates about their case, or are they getting regular, periodic calls from your office? At my office it is a requirement that clients

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For even more feedback, both during and at the conclusion of a case, clients at my firm are given written questionnaires so that we can pinpoint areas needing to be corrected. Your clients may be frustrated by something regarding the service they receive, but you will not know what it is until you ask them. Ask them what they like—and don't like—about the level of service they receive. This information is golden, so be sure to ask for it.

Continuing the conversation once the client's matter concludes. Once the case settles, are you staying in touch with your clients? The client experience does not need to end once the case is over. If you want these clients to become raving fans and refer to your firm in the future, you need to stay in touch with them. "Doing good work" and hoping they think of you when they encounter someone who could benefit from your services is not enough. You must stay in touch with former clients through newsletters, email blasts, birthday calls, etc. I recently started doing quick videos from my desktop to check in and say hi to former clients. These videos only take about two minutes to make. Regular communication touches with former clients ensure that you are top of mind when they need you or know of someone they can refer to you.

Providing a top-notch client experience takes time and experimentation. Above all else, creating a great experience requires a very deliberate approach. Putting the time and intentionality into providing a top-notch client experience can make your law firm truly great, and the clients will love you for the experience you give them.

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