

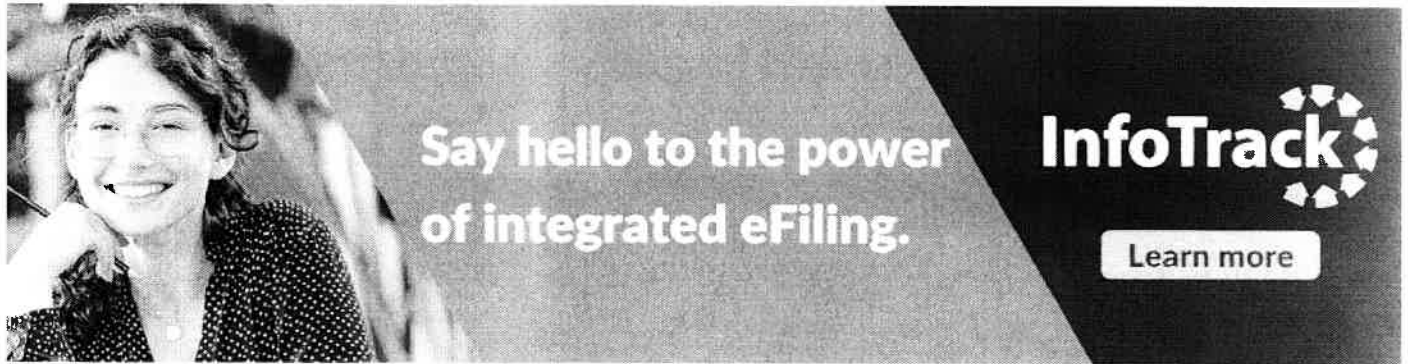
Make Every Interaction with Your Client an Experience, Not Just a Transaction

By Christopher Earley

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One of the mastermind groups I belong to recently convened at the TWA Hotel in New York City for our quarterly two-day meeting. All the sounds and sights you encounter at this particular hotel are clearly designed to provide a time-shifting experience that brings you back 60 years to a much, much different world. This heavily-themed hotel does a crackerjack job of making you *feel* like you are in 1962. They clearly take this seriously, and it's obvious they are very intentional about the experience they provide to their guests. I truly felt a unique experience at this hotel and did not feel at all like it was merely a transaction. The approach and feelings evoked by this hotel can be very instructive for law firms.



When we pay money to a business, none of us wants to feel like a number or transaction. That leaves us feeling unimportant. Here are some ways to provide a great and memorable experience for all your clients so that they always feel good about the services your firm provides.

- **The office visit.** Treat your clients' visits to your office as opportunities to impress them. Whenever clients come in for scheduled appointments, we have a whiteboard in the reception area that has the name of the client with a message such as: "Welcome, John!" This creates a personal connection and primes clients for a good experience during their time with us. Take advantage of the moment when clients come in, and make it an experience they

will not soon forget. Also, never, ever let them leave your office without giving them office swag and merchandise.

- **Phone calls.** When my staff speaks with clients on the phone, that is another opportunity to provide a great experience. During these calls our clients are not just updated on the status of their case but, more importantly, asked how they are doing. This reminds the client that we care, and this creates for the client an experience of feeling love and concern from our team members. This is really important, and clients remember this.
- **Handwritten cards.** Similarly, sending out birthday cards adds to a great experience for clients. Additionally, when we find out a client had a big life event, we send out a congratulations card. We send sympathy cards and send flowers when our clients suffer a death in their family. These touches reinforce for the client that our firm listens and cares. Handwritten cards always leave a positive impression and enhance the client experience. Use blue ink as opposed to black ink as it has been shown to leave a stronger impression.

Providing a great experience must be an integral part of the culture of a law firm. That is only carried out and made possible by full and comprehensive training of all new team members. Make sure that all new team members are properly onboarded and trained on how to provide a great client experience, and make sure they know *why* it's so important to provide a great client experience. New team members should also be tested to ensure they are up to speed on client service policies and procedures. We use Trainual.com at our firm, but there are other similar programs that you can use with new team members to reinforce the nuts and bolts of how your office serves clients.

A great client experience that evokes strong and visceral feelings is also an indirect yet highly effective way of encouraging client referrals. When clients are made to feel really good by a service provider, they will almost certainly want their friends and family to enjoy such an experience. The more vigorously you focus on giving the very best and most personalized client service, the more prosperous your firm will grow by way of referrals. This is the kerosene on the fire, and you always want to add more.

Existing team members need to be consistently encouraged and reminded of the importance of providing a top-shelf experience so that nothing falls through the cracks. When a team member does a great job with a client, praise him. If he fails to do so, privately meet with him to discuss

what happened and how it can be avoided next time. Tying everything to your firm's core values is so very important.

If you have other client service techniques you use at your firm, I would love to know. Email me at cearley@chrisearley.com and tell me about them.

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