

BETTER FOR BUSINESS

HOW YOUR EMPLOYEES CAN HELP BUILD CLIENT TRUST

FAITH IN A COMPANY'S WORD, a belief in its promises, and a sense of fair play are what keep associations happy. But building trust doesn't happen overnight. It's an ongoing process that takes constant attention and lots of time. According to top customer-service consultants, however, there are some simple steps your employees can take to start earning trust immediately.

Communicate often. Encourage your employees to keep board members, residents, and contractors informed of their progress when working to meet goals or resolve problems. If your employees are running into unforeseen obstacles, they should be up front about it: "I wasn't able to get the information you needed during the time frame we discussed, but I'm working hard to get you an answer by the end of the day." To the person waiting for an answer, this sounds much better than a loud silence.

Publicize hard work. Employees should let clients know when they've gone the extra mile to comply with a request: "Good news! I made a couple of extra phone calls, and was able to find someone who can work on Saturdays."

Show confidence. When something goes awry in a community, managers can be the last to know. But don't let that stop you from sounding informed. When your employees field calls about the latest crisis, an air of competence can help bolster a lack of information: "I don't have the answer to that in front of me, but I'll be happy to find out for you. Can I call you right back, or would you prefer to be put on hold?"

Be honest. Encourage your employees to own up when they make a mistake. Just make sure they also have a proposed solution. Likewise, if they're faced with a request they can't handle, they should be candid about their limitations. Being straightforward about risks and downsides, without overemphasizing them, is not only ethical, it's better for business.



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