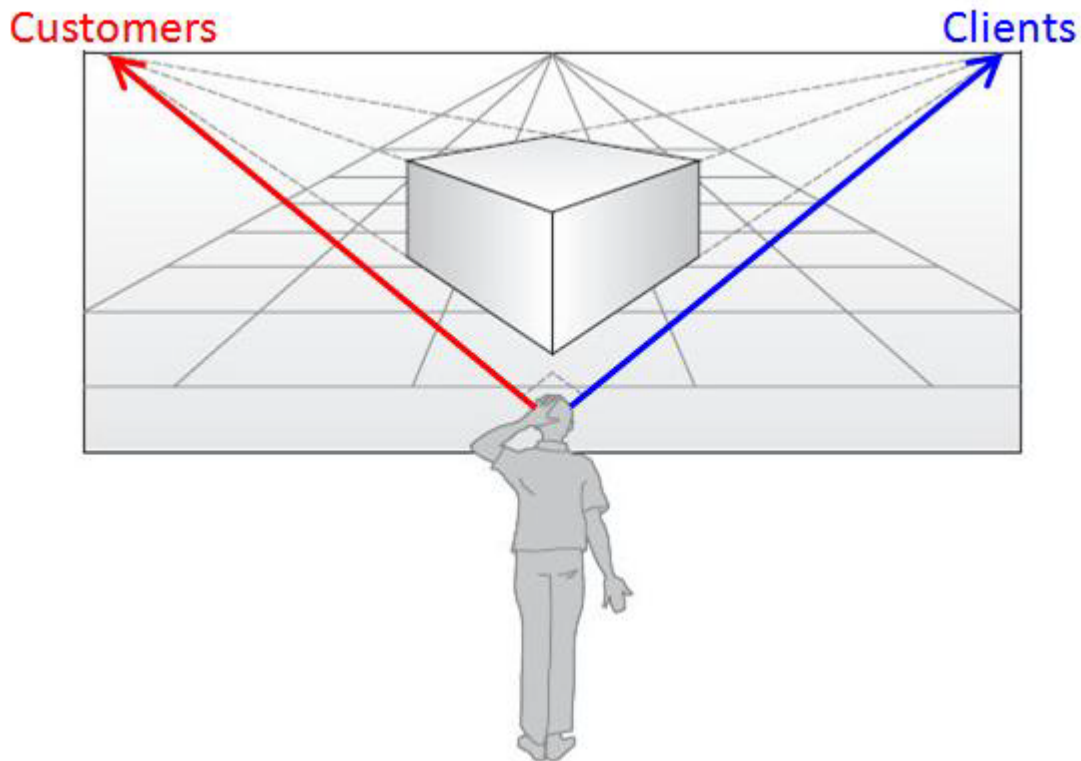




Achieving radical and sustainable improvement in top line performance

Q: Do you Have Customers or Clients?



A: It Depends on your Perspective.

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The Challenge:

There is hardly a client in our practice that has not adopted a "consultative approach" to selling and marketing. The chief distinguishing characteristic of a client is a value-to-price orientation that favors value. A customer, on the other hand, is generally oriented towards price. The trade-off a client makes when accepting a higher price in return for added value can be expressed something like this:

"We will accept your high prices as proof of your added value. But in return for the extra cost that we will incur, we want extra

service. We will insist that you recognize and respond to certain demands which we will feel free to make on you. We will consider these demands to be our *Rights of Clienthood*."

The following list of fifteen characteristics summarizes the approach (though we generally refrain from long lists, this is an exception):



"There is hardly anything in the world that someone cannot make a little worse and sell a little cheaper, and the people who consider price **only** are this person's lawful prey."

...John Ruskin, circa 1850

"What is a cynic? A man who knows the price of everything and the value of nothing."

... Oscar Wilde

1. "Cure Me" - Get things done. Respond to my needs. Produce results fast because I have more needs.
2. "Talk My Language" - Speak to me in profit-improvement language. Show me you identify with me and that you know my business.
3. "Don't Surprise Me" - Install a control system so I can be comfortable. Let me share in evaluating our work together.
4. "Level With Me" - Tell it like it is. Criticize constructively. Tell me what's wrong, but let me know what's right, too.
5. "Get Into My Business" - Become a part of my team. Be around - ask questions. Don't be disruptive.
6. "Be Responsible" - Give a superior value in relation to your superior price. Superior service makes a high price reasonable.
7. "Be Competent" - Give me the best you have. Be a real professional.
8. "Teach Me" - While you sell or perform, teach me how. Share some of your experience and expertise with me and my people.
9. "Take Leadership" - Get out in front of my problems. Roll up your sleeves and get your hands dirty in my operations.
10. "Worry for Me" - Think hard about my problems. Let me know what you think even without my asking. Give me immediate access to you when I am worried. Be available. Put my needs first, never mind anyone else.
11. "Be Innovative" - Give me something that's better than you give anyone else. Make me proud - make me stand out. Apply yourself in a way that transcends normal boundaries. Offer me options.
12. "Be Faithful" - Keep our business confidential. Make your relationship with me personal and continuous - don't pass me along to others.
13. "Be Motivated" - Show a strong desire to achieve our objectives. Be really interested in my problems. Don't leave a single stone unturned in looking for solutions.
14. "Be Flexible" - Compromise with me once in a while but don't give in on what you know is vital.
15. "Treat Me Like a Person, Not Just a Client" - Treat me like an equal - deal with me one-to-one. Don't talk down to me. Throw in a few "little extras" every now and then. Advise me on closely related matters even if you're not being paid for them.

What Works:

Treating people as clients rather than customers requires conscious competence.

- You achieve 'conscious competence' in a skill when you can perform it reliably at will.
- You will need to concentrate and think in order to perform the skill.



Conscious Competence

- You can perform the skill without assistance.
- You will not reliably perform the skill unless thinking about it - the skill is not yet 'second nature' or 'automatic.'
- You should be able to demonstrate the skill to another, but is unlikely to be able to teach it well to another person.
- You should ideally continue to practice the new skill, and if appropriate commit to becoming 'unconsciously competent' at the new skill.
- Practice is the single most effective way to move from conscious to unconscious competence.

Just Try It:

Rather than trying to think about all 15 *Rights of Clienthood*, focus on a few until they become automatic.

What's Next:

If you would like to explore additional ways to treat your customers as clients, we would welcome a call. If you have additional best practices we would welcome hearing those as well. You can reach us at kappainfo@kappaeast.com

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