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# DON'TS AND DO'S IN CLIENT RELATIONS

By RICHARD A. STEMM

**C**ONSIDERING a consulting career or perhaps engaging in some moonlighting activity? If you are, then you may be interested in some of the do's and don'ts experienced consultants have found to be useful in their client relations.

Building a significant clientele is the goal of every independent practitioner; therefore the continual maintenance of good client relations is a must. The following do's and don'ts are suggested as a guideline. They have withstood the test of time, so they can be considered as being standard practice.

#### DO

 Dress according to normal standards of a successful man in your field. Avoid extremes and fads.
 Stay clean and well groomed.

 Act as an independent consultant in objectivity and initiative.

• Enjoy and appreciate other's attempts at humor, but only if it is in good taste.

• Avoid discussions involving internal and external politics.

• Keep all confidences, both business and personal.



• Observe protocal and ethics.

Be sociable on the assignment.
Accept kudos due you.

• Accept kudos due you.

 Refuse to engage in discussions involving commissions, kickbacks, or gifts.

• Be objective in all activity.

• Stay within the confines of your contract.

• Accept luncheon and dinner meetings if there is a valid reason for conducting business at such a time.

 Diplomatically avoid involvement in and discussions of personal problems.

• Be a good listener.

• Do your work in good fashion and respect your client's "time frame."

• Respect your client's resources.

• Refuse a contract if you sense insincerity or a conflict of interest.

• Complete your contract and meet your commitments in full.

 Avoid jumping to obvious conclusions or accepting conclusions of others.

#### DON'T

• Don't act or attempt to conform as an employee in thought, hours, etc.

• Never try to be humorous nor actively join others in their attempts.

• Do not strive for nor lightly accept social invitations or involvements.

Don't solicit kudos.

 Do not violate ethics, protocol, nor compromise principles.

• Don't offer advice or comments pertaining to things outside the scope of the contract and your specialties.

Do not name drop.

• Don't be the first to offer a luncheon or dinner, nor make such an offer merely as a marketing gimmick.

• Don't burden clients nor their personnel with your personal problems, interests or needs.

 Never talk to impress yourself with your own words of wisdom.

• Do not knock other consultants, clients, employers or persons.

• Don't "build" on your contract.

 Do not conduct your business on the client's telephone nor use his resources for such without his prior knowledge and consent.

 Never be used for someone's ulterior motives.

• Do not terminate a contract without a valid and due cause, and never just to assume a more personally rewarding assignment.

• Don't short circuit the sequence of data gathering, analysis, synthesis, recommending, and implementing.

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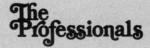


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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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