

HOW TO MANAGE CUSTOMER EXPECTATIONS

"I really struggle to manage my customers' expectations especially around realistic timeframes for finishing work"

The above comment is a very common one for people in business, here are my top 5 tips that might help you achieve this.



1. **"Honesty is the best remedy"** – when we are honest with our customers regarding what we can achieve and by when we set the tone for our relationship going forward. Honesty carries through into all stages of the customer experience, if you make a mistake – own it, if you are not going to be able to meet a deadline – let them know before the deadline. Honesty builds strong reputations and you can't put a price tag on reputation.
2. **"Under promise and over deliver"** – though it feels like we must tell people what they want to hear in order to get them to use our service, stop and think what overpromising really achieves. Firstly over-promising puts a lot of pressure on you and your team to deliver, most times this makes a job unenjoyable and leaves room for short-cuts and errors, not the kind of experience that you or your customer would like. Then when you don't deliver on your promise to your customer, what is the likelihood that they will do repeat business with you? Flip it on its head and through taking control you make the experience a positive one for all involved!
3. **"Two ears, one mouth"** – make sure that you listen and understand what outcome your customer wants, sometimes customers think what they need is one thing but then when you ask questions and listen you will both find it is actually something else. Once you understand what your customer really wants and needs, set realistic timeframes on achieving this outcome. This will make the path to success very clear.
4. **"Regular communication in the format your customer wants"** – at the beginning of a project ask your customer how often they want to be kept up to date on progress, what 3 key things they want to be updated on and how they would like to be updated, fit this into your time budgets and make sure that you deliver.
5. **"Educate your customers"** – on how you work. The process that you follow, potential risks that need to be managed, what it is that you are going to do and what they can expect during the project. This puts both parties on the same page and aligns your perspectives.

Hopefully these tips give you some ideas that you can implement into your business – Kath Dorrans