

Over the years we have dedicated a few of these columns to ways to improve life in design offices. We have written about how to be a good intern (No. 13), a good employee (No. 8) and a good boss (No. 18).

So, we thought it was about time for us to set up some guidelines for the mother of all lessons. We suggest you casually leave this issue around, open to this page, when a client is coming over for a meeting. Or you

can clip it out and anonymously mail it to any client who has a little to learn.

NOTE TO OUR CLIENTS: All of these examples came from other designers' experiences with their clients. You are perfect.



HOW TO BE A REALLY GOOD CLIENT

(AND MAKE DESIGNERS LOVE YOU, WHICH IS ACTUALLY GOOD FOR BUSINESS!)

- Understand that **NOTHING** takes 5 minutes. Or in other words: everything takes time.
- Additional work means additional pay.** We do LOVE what we do, but we don't love it that much. So when you are asking us to go above and beyond (last minute or not), understand why you need to pay us for it, as you would when working with any other professional.
- Make up your mind.** You can take a while to decide, but once you have, own it. If you must change your mind, understand and appreciate the implications of that.
- Tell us what you'd like to convey, not how to convey it.** For example: "I'd like the design to feel sunnier," not "make it yellow."
- Good design is not done by committees.** It is done by good designers.
- Never, ever be rude to one of our employees.** They are not YOUR employees. If you have a problem with something someone did, tell us (without yelling), and WE will yell at them. (NOTE TO NO. 17 EMPLOYEES: JUST KIDDING!)
- Respect creates good feelings** all around, which in turn makes the work better.
- Conversely, disrespect creates bad feelings** that, subconsciously, might give one pause before going the extra mile to make a job truly spectacular.
- If you call a meeting at lunchtime, **serve lunch.**
- Give credit where credit is due.** "Thank you," or "good job" or "we appreciate your efforts" works wonders.
- Pay invoices on time.** And if you can't, tell us why, and just let us know when to expect the check. "The check is in the mail" really does not fool anyone.
- Be sober in meetings.** If you have to drink, at least share.
- If you've bothered to hire us, **don't have anyone else secretly working on the project.** When the truth comes out, it's demoralizing for all of us. Open relationships are fine only if all the parties are in on it.
- Next time you come to our office, please **bring back our bathroom key.** It's such a drag to get a new one.
- Know what you want.** The clearer you are, the stronger our solution will be.
- We need a contract to protect ourselves.** It's not personal, just business. And you should read it before you sign it, because "but I didn't read it" doesn't hold up in court. (Clients have really said that. A surprising number of times.)
- And as our employees once advised us, we too advise you, dear client: **TRUST US.**