

Implement Emotionally

How do you make your clients feel? How well do you engage with them emotionally? Nick Marson provides some tips.



By Nick Marson

A middle aged, well off white South African lady found herself sitting next to a black man on an airline flight.

She called the cabin attendant and demanded to be found another seat. The attendant returned to announce that there was one seat available in first class.

"It is most extraordinary to make this kind of change", the attendant continued, "but the captain felt that no one should be forced to sit beside such an unpleasant person."

The attendant then turned to the black man and said,

"So if you would like to follow me, Sir, I have a seat ready for you."

Years after, one passenger still felt really good about how they were treated and the other still felt really bad even though the detail of the incident had faded from both their minds. The moral of the true story is therefore this:

- People will forget what you said;
- People will forget what you did;
- But people will never forget how you made them feel.

Worth thinking about... don't you think? How do you make your clients feel? How well do you engage with your clients

emotionally? And what about your attitude? As Martin Luther King said:

"If you are called to be a street sweeper, sweep streets as Michelangelo painted or Beethoven composed music, or Shakespeare wrote poetry. Sweep streets so well that all the hosts of heaven and earth will pause to say, here lived a great sweeper who did his job well."

In his powerful book, *The Fred Factor*, Mark Sanborn recalls the true story of Fred, the postman who passionately loves his job and who genuinely cares about the people he serves. Where others might see delivering the mail as monotonous drudgery, Fred sees an opportunity to make a difference in the lives he serves.

We've all encountered people like Fred in our lives. So what makes these people different? Well, for me it is down to one thing: They choose to care.

"Whatever you are, be a good one."

Abraham Lincoln

ATTITUDE

*It is the advance man of our true selves
Its roots are inward but its fruit is outward
It is our best friend or our worst enemy
It is more honest and more consistent than our words
It is an outward look based on past experiences
It is a thing which draws people to us or repels them
It is never content until it is expressed
It is the librarian of our past
It is the speaker of our present
It is the prophet of our future*

John Maxwell

THE FRED PRINCIPLES:

- Principle 1: Everyone makes a difference
- Principle 2: Success is built on relationships
- Principle 3: You must continually create value for others
- Principle 4: You can reinvent yourself regularly

"We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit."

Aristotle

So how can you engage emotionally with your clients? The answer is to use your emotional intelligence which, popularised by Daniel Goleman, can be described as the capacity to create positive relationships with ourselves and others.

Why is Emotional Intelligence (EQ) so important? According to research from Stanford University a massive 80% of people's effectiveness comes from their interpersonal skills.

Only 20% is down to their technical skills. The good news is that you can, unlike your IQ, improve your EQ. You can modify your behaviour and develop your engagement skills.

FOUR DIMENSIONS OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

1 Knowing me

The fundamental principle of Emotional Intelligence is that you have to connect first with yourself before you can connect with others. Be comfortable with who you are and you will be able to see the best in your clients. Be sensitive to your emotional state of mind and the mood of your clients. Listen to your heart. The heart is the seat of intuition.

2 Managing me

You need to tune into your emotional state – to be consciously aware of your feelings

Intelligent client service

so that you can adjust your behaviour. Your impact on others is then likely to be more positive.

3 Knowing your client

Showing empathy is the key to establishing rapport and building trust.

4 Connecting with your client

You should try to understand what makes your client tick and make sense to them as a person.

EMOTIONAL CONNECTIVITY

Emotional connectivity is a two-way process of giving a bit of yourself, showing your feelings and absorbing feelings from others.

It occurs when two people are able to express, share, appreciate and understand their genuine feelings. To connect emotionally you need to tune into the emotional state of your client. Mirror their body language and tone. Create an emotional resonance. Tune into their frequency so they see themselves and hear themselves speaking.

So what do emotionally intelligent people do? They:

- Understand trust is the issue
- Are authentic – know who they are and show who they are
- Seek first to understand and then to be understood
- Go beyond communication to really connect with their clients – they engage emotionally
- Demonstrate a healthy curiosity without being intrusive
- Have a learning frame of mind
- Pair emotions (anxiety / reassurance)
- Treat clients the way you would wish to be treated
- Make a difference by being the difference
- Treat different people differently

TRUST BUILDERS

- Communicate openly and honestly with their clients
- Listen to them and value what they say
- Keep promises and commitments
- Put their interests first

- Look for ways to help them get what they want
- Show sensitivity to their clients' feelings

TRUST BUSTERS

- More concerned with their own issues than their clients
- Send inconsistent messages
- Make excuses or blame the client when things don't work out

LISTEN

Listen to learn

Investigate with your heart

Shut up – you never learn anything when you are talking

Tone reveals the feelings behind the words

Empathise with what they are saying

Neutralise your feelings

Clients want above all to be liked – try:

- Smiling spontaneously makes people feel good and creates rapport
- Empathising – get out of your shoes before stepping into theirs!
- Finding something to like about your client
- Using your client's name
- Being enthusiastic
- Taking a real interest
- Making good eye contact
- Disclosing something about yourself to build trust
- Use the clients' context, their world
- Take personal risks in order to find solutions
- Exceed the clients' expectations
- Listening to who the client is not just what they say

DEALING WITH COMPLAINTS

When dealing with complaints the guiding principle is that there are no difficult clients

only difficult client situations.

Clients just want to be fully heard and fully understood. So the best thing you can do is just listen. Understand that their perception of reality is their truth. We see the world as we are. Listen to understand. When you have confirmed back to them their reality ask them what they would like you to do. Don't dive in with solutions. The clients' solutions may be far cheaper and better than yours! Never say you will try. Trying is perceived as negative. Say what you are going to do. Never make assumptions. Never be a slave to routine. If the client still needs help, be creative. Explore all the options: "One can't believe impossible things" said Alice. "I dare say you haven't had much practise," replied the Queen. "When I was your age, I always practised for half an hour a day. Why sometimes I've believed as many as six impossible things before breakfast." Lewis Carroll, *Alice through the looking glass*.

A SHORT COURSE IN CLIENT RELATIONS

The three most important words:

"I was mistaken"

The two most important words:

"Thank you"

The most important word: "We"

DEALING WITH COMPLAINTS ON THE PHONE

How many of you have taken a day off for the tradesman who never calls or the parcel that never arrives? We get on the phone only to be put into a queue with piped classical music no doubt designed to calm us down before the poor unfortunate call centre operator has to absorb our anger.

So if you are on the receiving end of the call what are the most emotionally intelligent do's and don'ts?

Don't:

- Tell people to calm down
- Sound like you are reading a script
- Interrupt
- Get the client's name wrong
- Think that the client cannot hear your

- body language
- Take it personally – not easy!

Do:

- Smile down the phone
- Introduce yourself
- Repeat the clients' name
- Listen, really listen
- Ask open questions
- Check understanding
- Summarise
- Let the client express how they feel and acknowledge their feelings
- Make the client feel special
- Try and put yourself in the clients' place
- Go the extra mile

OVERCOMING DESTRUCTIVE EMOTIONS

The bottom line according to the Dalai Lama is to train your mind! Mindfulness is a fort against destructive emotions. If you can hone mindfulness and awareness in your dealings with your clients you will see things as they are. You can act with neutrality in their best interests.

DIVERSITY AND CULTURAL ORIENTATION

People are different. People come from diverse backgrounds and cultures. Their values are different. They believe in different things. They feel different. They have different heroes. Different symbols. Different rituals. They behave differently. Culture is hard coded unconscious behaviour. Be aware of the differences. Gain an insight. Be sensitive. So adjust your behaviour to orientate your service culturally but never patronise your clients or be judgemental. Show respect and be magnanimous (generous and noble).

Cultural Flight Path

Awareness – Insight –
Sensitivity – Behaviour

BE YOUR OWN BRAND

What are you committed to? What do you stand for? How do you represent that to your clients? Personal branding is about becoming more of who we are. Your brand is a perception or emotion, maintained by your client that describes the total experience of having a relationship with you. Everybody is a personal brand.

Personal brand characteristics

- Distinctive
- Relevant

- Consistent
- Consistency is the hallmark of all strong personal brands

Personal brand dimensions

- Our relationship with our client
- How we deliver our service
- How we relate to our clients

Personal brand authenticity

- Purpose
- Vision
- Values

By creating a strong personal brand your client experiences more of who you are – bringing personality, your personality to the client experience.

So it's all down to you. How do you want to make your clients feel?

"Every one of us renders some service or another. If we cultivate the habit of doing this service deliberately, our desire to serve will steadily grow stronger, and will make not only, for our happiness, but that of the world at large."

Indira Gandhi

And finally, I want to turn client service on its head and look at it from the service provider's point of view. How do they want to feel? Well treated of course. As a client you get the service you deserve! If you treat the person serving you well you are more likely to be treated well. Empathy is the key. Show a genuine interest. Engage emotionally. If you want five star service in a three star hotel make the waiter feel like a five star waiter!

And don't forget to smile, its contagious!

A C E T S – A MODEL FOR EMOTIONALLY INTELLIGENT CLIENT SERVICE

Authenticity

The more authentic you are the more credible you are. Speak as yourself and use your own words. Don't hide behind the organisation. Show the real you. Be genuine.

Complete communication

Communication is the truth that the other person takes away. Make sure you get feedback. Look for feedback in their body

language and their tone. What are the feelings behind the words? Ask for feedback. Summarise your understanding of the situation.

Emotional engagement

Emotion is at the heart of sincerity. It builds confidence, creates intimacy and increases the sphere of influence. People have emotional hot buttons – find out where they are and press them!

Trust

Relationships are based on trust. Trust is based on common values and understanding. The greater the trust you enjoy the greater the co-operation you will receive.

Smile

Smile a lot. Spontaneously, genuinely, warmly. Go on force yourself! It costs nothing and is priceless. "Smile though your heart is aching..."

"A person who does not smile should not open a shop."

Chinese Proverb

RESOURCES

AMED

Cooper & Sawaf – *Executive EQ*

Stephen Covey – *The Eighth Habit*

Daniel Goleman – *Emotional Intelligence*

INSEAD

The Dalai Lama – *Destructive Emotions And How We Can Overcome Them*

McNally & Speak – *Be your own BRAND*

The Parallel Mind Handbook

Mark Sanborn – *The Fred Factor*

Stanford Institute

Weisenger – *Emotional Intelligence at Work*

Nick Williams – *The Work We Were Born To Do*

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