



What Does the Client See? How to Elevate the Client Experience Checklist

Almost three-quarters of clients and prospects have heightened anxieties when they visit a financial advisor. Use the checklists below to help put clients at ease and set up for a productive and successful meeting.

Pre-meeting Email or Letter

Help clients prepare for your first meeting and arrive comfortably. Your pre-meeting note should include:

- Day, date and time of the meeting
- List of documents to bring (e.g., tax returns, brokerage account statements, etc.)
- Map and directions to your office
- Parking instructions
- Directions once inside your building
- Your contact information

Reception Area

Ensure that clients feel comfortable when they first enter your office and make any waiting a pleasant experience.

- Have the receptionist greet each client by name upon arrival
- Make sure seating is worthy of a reception area, not a waiting room
- Add décor, such as live plants, fresh flowers and artwork
- Offer Wi-Fi and visibly post the password
- Provide current issues of lifestyle-oriented magazines such as traveling, cooking or architecture
- Tune the TV to lifestyle-oriented channels
- Play soothing music, run a small fountain or install an aquarium
- Offer clients a beverage

Your Office

Create a welcoming environment that is friendly and professional.

- Personally greet clients in your reception area and walk them back to the meeting
- Clear file folders and stacks of papers off all surfaces to avoid looking disorganized or overwhelmed
- Ensure other clients' information is put out of sight
- Limit use of sticky notes—these may indicate a lack of technological skills
- One coffee mug is fine, nine are not
- Avoid displaying too many branded tchotchkes or toys
- Take the garbage out after eating to remove any lingering smells
- Use your office to showcase your professional skills, not your hobbies and opinions
- Display neutral artwork rather than something that might be off-putting to a client

Creating a Welcoming Environment Checklist

- Use plants to make your space refreshing
- Swap out sales awards with your degrees and advanced certifications to show you have the qualifications to solve their problems
- Limit the number and turn any family or travel photos to face your clients
- Minimize distractions by turning off notifications on all computers, tablets and phones
- Minimize barriers like large desks and computers between you and your clients
- If possible, conduct client meetings at a circular table where there is no dominant position
- When meeting in a conference room, use corner seats to minimize the physical barrier to communication

Active Listening

Build trust with clients through actively engaging in conversations.

- Maintain eye contact by focusing on the inverted triangle area made by your client's eyes and upper chin
- Model your client's tone, pace and gestures
- Acknowledge you are listening through nods and short responses such as "yes" and "I see"
- Rephrase what your client has said to confirm understanding
- Say "tell me more," then pause and allow your client to fill the void

Follow-Up Plan

Use a well-defined plan to turn contacts into long-term relationships.

Communication	Timing
<input type="checkbox"/> Send a welcome kit and "thank you" note	Immediately after opening account
<input type="checkbox"/> Communicate the status of any business	One week after account opening
<input type="checkbox"/> Call to go over their first statement and discuss web registration to access self-service options	One week after first statement delivery
<input type="checkbox"/> Send your firm/branch newsletter	Quarterly
<input type="checkbox"/> Host a new client reception	Quarter they become a new client
<input type="checkbox"/> Hold a six-month review, consider conducting a survey to evaluate the onboarding process and discuss how you like to receive referrals	Month 6
<input type="checkbox"/> Provide a list of professional partners to assist in other areas	6–9 months
<input type="checkbox"/> Conduct a 12-month review and send an anniversary card	Month 12