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 of 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

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