

Why practicing exceptional prospect engagement will win you more clients

Part 1



It is fair to say that exceptional engagement will significantly boost your chances of winning a new client and, over time, of retaining them. There are many things that you can deliver that will dramatically improve your prospect's experience and will truly differentiate you from thousands of other advisers. In Part 1 of this article I will share some of a plethora of things you can do to create an exceptional experience.

So how different are you and how often do you delight your prospects?

Perhaps to help give this question context, it would be useful to recall the last time you were delighted by someone or by a business providing a service. An experience that you have raved about to your friends ever since. Chances are there aren't too many - if any at all.

Maybe you are already delighting your prospects every time, or maybe you aspire to. Over the course of this 2-part article I will share some insights that I believe will enhance your prospect's experience and win you more clients, including:

- Preparing your prospect for the best possible experience
- Benefits of a clear agenda
- If the client says it, it is the truth

- Walking a mile in your prospect's shoes - together
- The cycle of commitment

CREATING ENGAGEMENT

Preparing your prospect for the best possible experience

It would be fair to say that your new prospect would be feeling an array of emotions and might have built specific expectations based on a previous experience, or the never ending barrage of articles and media in relation to financial services.

Perhaps they have never seen a financial adviser before and will most likely have formed a view on financial advisers. It is also highly likely that they will arrive underprepared, not having spent any demonstrable, quality, time considering what is truly important for the rest of their life. And they will most probably fall very short in relation to knowing all of the factual information that you must acquire.

All of which will diminish the likelihood that this will be an exceptional first meeting or that it will be the best use of time for either of you. Consequently, this may also reduce the chance of any sort of 'advance'.

But you can create an entirely different outcome, though, by first calling your prospect, then following up with a pre-meeting discovery tool. I have always found something like this to be highly effective:

"Hi Brian, the purpose of my call is to let you know that I'm about to send you and Jenny our "Prepare Discovery" tool ahead of our first meeting next week. I understand your time is limited and I find that when I meet people, those who always get the most out of our time together are the ones who have given some specific thought towards what they want to achieve from the meeting, what's really important to them and have gathered together some financial information.

Not only will this save you time, but it will ensure that I can really understand who you are so any advice I can provide is always about what is best for you."

I have seen a number of examples of exceptional advisers who send highly engaging and effective pre-meeting communications that incorporate a range of aspirational, life and financial questions, prior to all first meetings. Some have even set the return of the prework prior to the first meeting as a prerequisite.

Benefits of a clear agenda

Imagine for a moment that your prospect has taken your advice and that Greg and Jenny have arrived excited about the how you can help change their lives.

“Hello Greg and Jenny, great to finally meet you. How did you go with preparing for our meeting today? Did you find it easy or challenging?”

This will generate some great conversation and insights immediately.

“It’s not as simple as many people think and I have made a few notes about some things it would be good for us to explore more, if that’s ok? Firstly, though, I thought you would find it useful for me to share what I propose that we cover today. Great, well.....”

At this point you should present your prepared agenda, which incorporates any aspects of their situation that they have already raised and check for their agreement. Clarity at this point will certainly enable them to relax, get anything on the table that is on their minds and feel that this is really all about them.

If the client says it, it’s the truth. Aspire to always be interested, not interesting

In my previous article I covered the importance of skilfully asking great questions to get your prospect to always tell you, rather than you tell them - then it is the truth!

This was the first and one of the most insightful pieces of advice I have received in 35 years of practicing financial advice - which I have embedded and tried to practice every day.

To further illustrate the power of asking great questions and aspiring to be interested, not interesting, it would be useful to reflect for a few moments to think about times that you have been to a barbecue, a function, or just standing on the sidelines watching your kids play sport and met someone for the first time. There will be probably have been hundreds of such occasions.

No doubt you can fondly recall the people that you immediately warmed to and felt instantly comfortable with. Chances are that they are asked a bunch of questions about you, your family or your life and you couldn’t help but feel instantly connected and a bond began to develop. I am sure that most of us think that we engender this sense of importance in others as we are caring and sincere, but sometimes we are not always as adept as we think we might be.

While some are “naturals” at engaging others and instantly making them feel important, most of us can improve our engagement skills without compromising any of our authenticity or sincerity. In fact, the very art of practicing to improve the experience of the other person is all about them - your authenticity will shine!

The subject that people most like talking about is themselves, so ensure you give them every opportunity.

When it all boils down, it is the quality of the questions that you ask others and your skill at asking more relevant questions in response to the answers you receive. For

most of us these are definitely not skills we are born with or develop to exceptional levels through general experience, without study and practice. These are not skills that most excel at or simply pick up with experience over time.

I have, though, seen highly successful advisers incorporate questions into their agenda under “Questions I have prepared for you”, or similar headings.

Sometimes this is an excellent prompt to use, as you are adapting your questioning skills, to prompt the most effective questions that you want to ensure you ask. This concept is particularly valuable as you are practicing and implementing a new questioning framework that will create “imperative needs”.

To save reinventing the wheel every time, retain the same five questions and tailor one or two specifically for your new prospect or adapt as your skill grows and introduce like this:

“I’ve also prepared some specific questions for you that I wanted to ensure that I asked today, if that’s ok?”

Not only will this send the message that you are well prepared, but it will instil a sense of importance for your new prospects.

Well that’s a wrap for today. In Part 2 I will share how you can most effectively walk a mile in your prospect’s shoes - together and the “Cycle of Commitment”.

The initial elements of exceptional engagement that I have touched on today are all built into the highly immersive one day face-to-face workshop that sits at the centre of our [GROW Adviser Capability](#) program. In this program we explore these topics in greater detail to further build your understanding, together with enabling effective practice and our disciplined implementation program to ensure that you master and embed the skills in your business as a daily core practice.

Jason Dunn has developed, implemented and executed change, engagement, turn-around and transformation program strategies across a diverse range of institutionally and privately owned financial advice businesses over 35 years. While his experience is broad, Jason is effusive about creating exceptional client experiences based on thousands of hours of direct client engagement.

