



TURN YOUR WORK INTO A LOVE AFFAIR

To celebrate the spirit of love, Ian Middleton, Masthead managing director, shares key relationship tips focusing on renewing your commitment to yourself, your business and your clients to ensure many mutually beneficial and sustainable relationships over the long-term.

Tip #1 – love yourself

To be a broker of choice takes skill and determination. You must exercise discipline and perceive your work as a professional career in which you provide an essential service. This way, you also start believing that you run a business that provides valuable service and support to your customers.

For this mind-shift to become permanent, planning is vital. Set aside time to plan your strategy for the next day, week, year, and even the upcoming three to five years. Know where you are going, then regularly review your goals to check they are still realistic and attainable, and to determine your progress. Celebrate when you achieve milestones.

Tip #2 – be approachable

Think about how attractive and accessible your practice is to clients. Does your corporate identity portray professionalism? Does your website give clients appropriate insight into your practice and provide the information they require? Are you a member of a credible broker organisation? Consider that image is reflected in many other ways too, including how you conduct business, tone of communication, dress, support staff involvement and track record in keeping commitments.

Make sure your business image is an asset to your practice. If any aspect of your image does not measure up, take action now with a practice management 'work out'. Masthead, through many of its members, has proved that such interventions make businesses fitter, faster and more profitable.

Tip #3 – know your strengths

Be yourself, be honest, and do only what you do best. Know your core services and make sure the practice has what it

takes to deliver the best service. Outsource functions that are non-core to your business, such as IT. It's tempting to want to do everything yourself, thinking it will save money. But, the trick lies in knowing the difference between an expense and an investment in your business. Invest money to make money, but spend money on the right things. You can also gain assistance from Masthead, which has supported brokers to grow thriving practices for the past five years.

Tip #4 – get involved with the right people

Form the right relationships upfront. Ensure you have contracts in place with reputable product and service providers, including the services of a reputable compliance officer. Proudly display your Masthead membership. In this way, as an ethical, competent and qualified broker, you can give your clients access to all the products and services they require to reach their financial goals – either directly or through contracted strategic partners. Also remember you have the right to choose which customers you want as clients.

Tip #5 – show that you care

Keep your focus on long-term relationships. With a succession plan in place, you can assure your clients' that their needs will always be looked after, even if you are no longer with your practice. Introduce them to your staff so they are not only dependent on you for service and support.

Now go ahead and romance your clients. Issue personalised client communication and 'date' them through regular client review meetings. A birthday card, year-end wishes or a call on an anniversary will spice up the relationship!

For further tips on how to bolster your self esteem, meet the right people or love your clients, contact your regional Masthead consultant or visit www.masthead.co.za.