

2. The designer will be in a constant process of discovery to identify flaws in the work product and project process. This process will equip the designer to take immediate steps to solve problems in current projects. And, perhaps even more important, the designer will know where to make process improvements that will benefit projects and clients in the future.
3. The designer can substantiate his or her value with tangible measures of performance linked to business strategy, and can communicate these measures to clients, prospective clients, and counterparts.

CONCLUSION

If designers and clients

If designers and clients carefully attend to and nurture client relationships, they both gain immediate and long-term benefits.

- *Diligent relationship management is likely to produce a positive experience for all parties involved in the project at hand. And there is great value in that intangible sense of pleasure and accomplishment. For design firms, for instance, an individual designer's sense of personal satisfaction adds value because a satisfied employee translates to low employee turnover.*
- *Experiences that not only satisfy but also delight the client engender a sense of loyalty that keeps the client coming back for more. Because it is easier and less costly to develop business with current clients than to find new ones, the designer benefits financially.*
- *In the ultimate client relationship, a delightful experience—or a series of them—converts the client to an apostle: an uninhibited, credible, no-cost marketer for the designer. In addition, apostles contribute to a firm's long-term viability because they bolster the designer's reputation and attract new customers, not to mention continued business from the apostle itself.*

Even though relationship management may not be the designer's craft, it certainly is an art form worthy of study—and mastery—by designers who are serious about creating a sustained, lucrative business that delivers meaningful results and meets human needs or, better yet, creates human delight.

Notes

1

Heskett, James L., W. Earl Sasser, and Leonard A. Schlesinger, *The Service Profit Chain*, The Free Press, New York, 1997, p. 81.

2

Schneider, Benjamin, and David E. Bowen, "Understanding Customer Delight and Outrage," *Sloan Management Review*, Fall 1999, p. 35.

3

Heskett et al., *The Service Profit Chain*, pp. 86–87.

4

Heskett et al., *The Service Profit Chain*, pp. 84–85.

5

Schneider and Bowen, "Understanding Customer Delight and Outrage," p. 38.

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