What Kind of First Impression Are You Making?

It will only take seconds for your clients to judge you, so you should never underestimate the power of those initial interactions with them.

If you make the wrong impression on a client, you could set your relationship off on the wrong foot—or even lose the person’s business. Beyond that, it is incredibly hard to change a person’s negative perception of you.

However, make a great first impression, and you will start off on strong footing. Clients will be more likely to trust you—and give you the benefit of the doubt should you make a mistake later.

Using this checklist, see through potential clients’ eyes and take an honest look at the first impression you leave on them:

Assess your phone voice and manners

- Do you answer right after the second ring?
- When you answer, do you focus solely on the caller? If you try to multitask, you could come across as distracted, rushed or even rude.
- Are you pleasing to listen to? If possible, record yourself talking to a friend or family member. Listen objectively to the sound of your voice and pace. Do you talk too fast or slow? Do you insert a bunch of “ums” and “likes” or other distracting words? Do you tend to talk loud or too quiet? Pinpoint and then work on areas you can improve, starting with your volume, pitch, tone, and pace.
- Do you always get right to business? Offering a few pleasantries helps to make clients feel more comfortable with you.
- Is your voicemail message friendly and upbeat?
- Does your message provide another way for callers to contact you?
- Does your message inform people when you will return their message (e.g., within 24 hours)?

Take a look at the overall appearance you present

- Is the reception area/office clean, neat and organized?
- Is your desk clean, neat and organized?
- Is your car clean, neat and organized?
- Do you dress to impress?
Evaluate your online presence

☐ Do you market your services through social media? It’s one of the smartest ways to connect with current, past and potential buyers.
☐ Are you posting daily? To build a following, frequency is key.
☐ Are your posts always promotional? If you only post house listings, people won’t follow or engage with you on social media. For every piece of promotional content, you should share three pieces of educational or informative content. You can also mix in some personal—but business appropriate—posts that let clients learn more about you. They can make the feel more comfortable working with you.
☐ Have you posted anything that could be deemed as offensive, sexist, racist, ageist and so on?
☐ Have you posted anything political? Avoid taking sides, because no matter who you choose, you are bound to alienate clients.

Consider whether your customer service is truly exceptional

☐ Does somebody greet clients as soon as they come into the office?
☐ How long do they have to wait either in the office or for you at a property?
☐ Do you return calls, emails, and texts within 24 hours?
☐ Have you asked initial questions so that you can do your homework and prepare in advance of the meeting?
☐ Have you compiled a current listing inventory to show them the type of properties you specialize in?
☐ Are you knowledgeable and informed about the types of properties or neighborhoods in your service area?
☐ Have you set aside enough time to fully commit to answering all the clients’ questions?

Prove that you are a credible, trustworthy agent

☐ Have you shared testimonials from happy clients, or even provided contact information so that potential clients can speak to them?
☐ Can you provide your state board records if the client asks for them?
☐ Have you shared with clients any industry designations (e.g., Certified Residential Specialist or Accredited Buyer’s Specialist)?
☐ Have you proven that you know what you are talking about?