

Tips & Reminders from the Business World for Successful Consultation Sessions

Here are some tips from the business world worth applying to our work as writing consultants. I found these tips in [50 Powerful Ideas You Can Use to Keep Your Customers](#) (2002) by Paul R. Trimm, Ph.D. and adapted them for our purposes.

Try substituting the word student writer for client or customer in the following and see what you think!

- Greet clients and establish instant rapport.
- Say please and thank you.
- Enjoy people and their diversity.
- Exceed customer expectations.
- Look for ways to improve.
- Make the last part [of a session] positive and motivating.
- If necessary, practice conversation openers and closers.
- Be well read.
- Smile.
- Understand the cost of a lost customer.
- Master recovery skills.
- Make comments positive and upbeat.
- Be supportive.
- Give the benefit of the doubt.
- Compliment freely and often.
- Disarm a chronic complainer.
 - Actively listen to get at the real source of grievance.
 - Establish facts to counter over-generalizations.
 - Ask questions that seek to solve the problem.
e.g., Would another appointment solve the problem?
- Stay current.

Ask clients open-ended questions rather than questions that can be answered with a simple yes, no, or one-word answers. Open-ended questions let people express their ideas.

Instead of	Ask
<i>How was everything?</i>	<i>What else can I do for you?</i>
<i>Can I get you something else?</i>	<i>What else can I get for you?</i>
<i>Did you find everything that you need?</i>	<i>What else can I help you find?</i>
<i>Will that be all?</i>	<i>What else can I do for you?</i>
<i>Was everything satisfactory?</i>	<i>What else could we do to better serve you?</i>
<i>Did we meet your needs?</i>	<i>How else can we be of help?</i>