

9 ways to build unbreakable trust with your prospects and clients

Creating a positive perception around the service you provide is essential. Jonathan Pressman offers nine ways to make sure your brand is synonymous with integrity



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According to the National Association of Realtors (NAR), honesty and trustworthiness ranked second on the list of top criteria buyers consider when choosing an agent. Unfortunately, despite our fiduciary duties, we're still mentioned in the same breath as telemarketers, used car salespeople and advertising professionals.

While there are certainly some unscrupulous agents out there, the vast majority of us genuinely want to help our clients. Though we can't change public opinion with the flip of a switch, we can do our very best to consistently earn the trust of buyers, sellers, renters and landlords. Here are some tips on how to do that.

1. Exercise patience

As an agent, you've probably had your fair share of time-consuming clients who weren't serious. Nevertheless, it's important to give each prospect and client the benefit of the doubt and to exercise patience with them while they come to terms with what, for many, is the single most expensive purchase of their lives.

2. Offer your honest opinion (when you can)

You're an expert in your craft, and while you can't tell your clients what to do, you can offer your opinion on a property's price and condition or the terms of an offer.

What might seem obvious to you could be news to your clients, so take the opportunity to point out a home's features—just make sure to avoid voicing your opinion about a neighborhood to ensure you steer clear of any potential Fair Housing Act violations.

3. Respect their price range

I've heard countless stories from people about how an agent tried to push a home on them that was way out of the budget. In my experience, the easiest solution is to simply ask your client up front whether their budget is firm or if they'd like you to send potential options that might be priced a little higher.

Your clients appreciate you being mindful of their finances, and this is a great opportunity to learn more about how much they're really willing to spend.

4. Communicate early and often

Communication is a critical part of every relationship, professional and personal. Even when you don't have any updates, clients will appreciate a follow-up message.

Let them know that you're still searching for that off-market house for them, reverse prospecting or following up on an offer. Try and remember that while you might be working with half a dozen clients, each of those clients may be eagerly awaiting an update from you.

5. Follow up after closing

Many agents never follow up with their clients after closing the deal, which can (understandably) lead your clients to believe that the agent was only interested in earning a commission. Following up with your clients when you've already gotten paid shows that you're still thinking about them and that you care about their well being.

Even a quick text to check in on your buyers and their new home can go a long way. In addition to building trust, regular touchpoints are also a boon for your business, helping generate referrals and repeat business.

6. Ditch the phone

Real estate agents are on call 24/7, but in most cases, that text or email can wait until after the showing or meeting.

Fiddling with your phone while you're with customers or clients can give the impression that they're not a priority. Instead, put the phone away and give them your undivided attention.

7. Exercise empathy

Sometimes, it's hard to put ourselves in our clients' shoes. For example, if a client gets upset when the seller rejects their offer, showing a little empathy can go a long way.

You know they're likely to find another house, but if you can comfort them and encourage them to stay positive, it can lead to an even stronger working relationship.

8. Show up on time

Punctuality is important in every business and demonstrates that you respect others' time. When you consistently show up on time, your prospects and clients will know they can depend on you to respect their schedules and keep your promises.

9. Attend showings personally

Most of the time, your clients choose to work with *you*, not a random agent on your team. While you might need coverage from time to time, it's important to accompany your buyer clients to showings. Your clients could've worked with any one of thousands of other agents, but they committed to you, and it's only right that you return the courtesy by personally touring homes with them.

It's more than real estate

When you only speak to your clients about real estate, it might lead them to conclude that your only objective is a commission. Though your focus will probably still be on real estate, you can still talk to your clients about their hobbies, work or even their favorite restaurants.

By opening up the conversation and getting to know prospects and clients, you can help establish and strengthen a relationship built on mutual trust.