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been beaten nearly enough!

Perhaps I feel the way I do because of my upbringing. My Dad was a manufacturer's rep who sold ladies all-weather coats to small Mom & Pop boutiques throughout Texas, Oklahoma and Eastern New Mexico. OK – he was a salesman, but he put two kids through college and never really had to borrow much more money than the original mortgage on the house. Quite a success story – but the one thing that stuck with me while he was working (he's now retired and 85 years old) was that he treated each and every customer with huge respect, but more than that, he made each one feel as if he or she were his ONLY customer.

Quite a feat. Unlike today, there were no business books on customer service or anything about a mouse moving cheese that helped him accomplish this. He did this on his own by using common sense, yes, but even more so, he figured out what his customers wanted before they actually knew they wanted it.

He used to tell me this was the number one rule of sales – and now, some 40 years later, I still believe it.

What I don't believe, however, is the way firms treat their clients. Instead of constantly staying in touch with them, accountants wait for the client to call them. I can see the accountant now, eyes glued to the phone waiting for it to ring.

Ok – that's an absurd scenario, but I think you get my point. Firms should make client service their #1 priority by paying attention to the needs and wants of the clients, but also anticipating what else the client wants. It's an age-old example, but if a client has a capital gain or loss on his or her return, it's quite likely the client might need some estate planning consultation. Did the client acquire a business during the past year? Is there a business valuation required? What about simple

advice for the really small business client who is on QuickBooks. Shouldn't you

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