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Accounting Practice

Mindful communication is the cornerstone of deep client engagement. When practiced, it transforms routine client meetings into profound, trust-building encounters.

Amy Vetter • Oct. 05, 2023



Jessica, an accountant, sits across from her long-term client, Mrs. Jackson. She's visibly distressed about the recent changes in tax regulations, feeling overwhelmed. Instead of jumping directly to numbers and solutions, Jessica takes a moment, maintains eye contact, and calmly says, "I understand why this is worrisome. Let's

navigate this together.” This simple acknowledgment not only soothes Mrs. Jackson

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The Psychology Behind Mindful Communication

Ever tried to listen to someone while also thinking about what to have for dinner? It doesn't work so well. At its core, mindful communication is about being present, listening actively, and responding empathetically.

Drawing parallels from personality and behavioral psychology, it's a practice that demands self-awareness, understanding of the other's perspective, and choosing responses that cater to [mutual respect and understanding](#). When one is truly present, they're not just hearing words but feeling emotions, discerning nuances, and, in turn, communicating more effectively.

Why Should Accountants Care?

The human element in accounting often gets overlooked in the labyrinth of numbers, tax codes, and financial statements. However, did you know that [effective communication and people skills](#) are considered key factors in client retention? It's not just about getting the numbers right; it's about making the client feel right about them.

The Interpersonal Accounting Ledger – Balancing Give and Take

Have you ever heard of the *Emotional Bank Account*? Conceptualized by Stephen Covey in *7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, it's a [metaphorical account of trust](#). Every positive interaction is a deposit, while negative ones are withdrawals. Similarly, the *Interpersonal Accounting Ledger* is about balancing the 'give and take' in relationships. Every mindful conversation, every acknowledgment of a client's

concern, is a valuable ‘credit’ to this ledger, ensuring the ‘account’ remains in good

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savvy.

Brief Meditation Breaks: What would happen if you pause, step aside, and let the mind breathe? A handful of short, mindful moments to meditate can sharpen your focus, enabling a composed, thoughtful response in discussions and negotiations.

Gratitude Journaling: Positivity – a subtle yet potent tool. Reflect upon the day’s triumphs and make a note of your gratitude. This practice will foster a positive outlook that you’ll exude in your interactions, subtly transforming the fabric of your business engagements.

Quality Sleep: A vigilant mind is the gateway to fruitful conversations. Ensuring deep, quality sleep gives you the alertness to decipher critical cues and respond with care in client interactions.

Subtly introducing these strategies can help navigate the tumultuous landscape of tax season. Keeping stress in check and [enhancing communication](#)—that’s a prospect worth exploring.

Implementing Mindful Communication as a Strategy

1. Forewarned is Forearmed: In the financial landscape, changes are inevitable. However, their impact on client trust isn’t. By proactively informing clients about shifts—whether they’re in tax laws, investment strategies, or even your own firm’s policies—you’re placing a premium on transparency.

2. Speaking Human, Not Accountant: While terms like “accruals” or “amortization” might be second nature to you, they can sound like a foreign language to many

clients. Strive for clarity. Replace technical jargon with relatable analogies and

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words. It's the difference between hearing and understanding.

5. Emotional Currency: Financial discussions, inherently, are laden with emotions—be it the euphoria of a profitable investment or the anxiety of a looming tax deadline. By acknowledging these emotions, you're telling your clients, “I see you. I understand you.” More than any financial advice, this validation can be the [cornerstone of trust](#).

Takeaway

In the world of debits and credits, the true asset is the bond accountants share with their clients. By embracing mindful communication, professionals enhance this bond and pave the way for a more fulfilling, efficient, and human-centric accounting practice.

Next time you're about to meet a client? Take a deep breath, be present, and remember, behind every balance sheet is a person with a story. Take the time to hear it.

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