

## ***FIVE FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE GREAT CLIENT SERVICE***

*BY HOLLIS R. CHASE*

It is not just about getting the business - it is about maintaining it! There has been a great deal written on the issue of client services and client services programs for professional services companies, including boutique environmental consulting firms. Based on the size of your company and the types of services you provide to your clients there are various levels of sophistication for developing a clearly defined client services program. Even without a formal program there are everyday issues that all consultants and staff who interact with clients should consider. The following are just a few of the factors that will raise awareness and build stronger relationships with your clients:

- 1. DEFINE CLIENT SERVICE-- WHAT IT MEANS TO YOU!** ... Spend some time thinking about how well you know your clients and their needs- what is important to them and how well you can deliver. Set expectations - be clear about theirs and set yours appropriately.
- 2. LISTEN!** ... Listening is an art not a science. Being a good listener is an active- not - passive activity. Develop these skills and make them your best asset. Pay attention to personality types -recognize various types of personalities and use your knowledge to develop effective relationships with each client.
- 3. USE ENGLISH not LEGALESE...** Use plain language in both oral and written communications.
- 4. STAY IN TOUCH...** Communicate with your client on a regular basis. Make it about them. Be genuine, consistent, proactive and informative.
- 5. OBTAIN FEEDBACK...** Get feedback on how you are doing and make the necessary adjustments. Do not be afraid to ask - clients appreciate your interest.

In closing, remember that clients are not always able to evaluate and control the quality and end result of your work, but they can assess the experience they have working with you. As I have always said to my clients about their business development: if they are your client, they are someone else's prospect! Keeping clients happy in this competitive business environment is all about building lasting relationships.

To find out more about building a client services program that works for your company please contact [Hollis@HollisChaseAssociates.com](mailto:Hollis@HollisChaseAssociates.com).

Hollis Chase is President of Boston based Chase & Associates. She has been consulting to professional services firms for more than 20 years. Hollis provides facilitation, business development, retreats, project specific strategy planning, and client focused coaching for firm principles.