



I have always had an issue with the term Business Development – what does it mean? Does it mean sales – because that seems worse? Let’s consider the role of Business Development. Does the job description include developing a business? Maybe. Or, is it more likely the person in this role is responsible for building relationships and setting the foundation for a memorable client experience?

When we put the client first and build the relationship around trust, we find ourselves in a unique position as a trusted advisor to our clients. In our ever-changing and disruption-filled world, we need to take better care in nurturing these relationships. When we provide transparency to our clients, they learn they can rely on us for the most current and accurate information. Our goal is not self-serving, but rather client-serving.



Communication is the foundation for Environmental Design Group’s new Client Experience program. With the new increased rate and severity of disruption, the need for empathetic communication to be instantaneous is more critical than ever. Gone are the days when we wait until the end of a project to earn our client’s trust and get feedback. Our clients want to connect with us and give us feedback on a consistent and regular basis. We are listening and setting up a more formal process for them to do just that. Our new Client Experience program will shape and re-define Business Development as we once knew it and will allow us to provide experiential service to our clients and our clients’ clients – delighting everyone along the way.



As our economy and business climate have been disrupted, now is the time to focus on the skills needed for best in class client relationships and experiences:

1 Empathize.

Put yourself in the shoes of your clients, what do they need to hear from you? What can you provide that will make their day better?

2 Communicate, communicate, communicate.

However, I caution – not communication for the sake of communication, but rather provide your clients with the information they NEED.

3 Understand.

You may not agree or align with your client on an issue, but you need to understand their perspective and act according to their needs.

4 Connect.

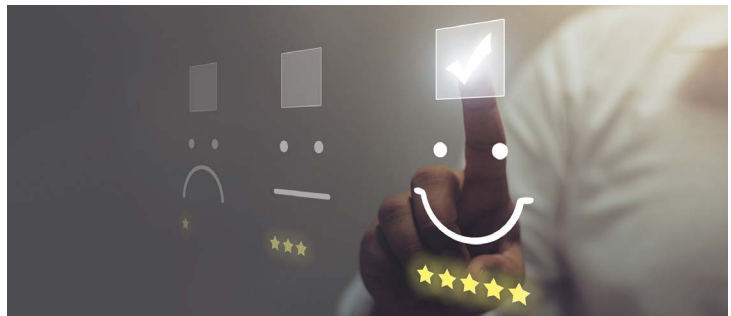
Develop a relationship that is easy and comfortable because you have trust and understanding.

5 Advise.

Once the relationship has these other components, you are now able to advise your client on the next steps that are mutually beneficial.

6 Feedback.

Be receptive to two-way communication. This is your opportunity to delight your client with experiential service. Client experience is about creating pleasant memories, and your role in this experience revolution is key.



Develop your skills in these areas, and we could use titles like Growth Consultant, Client Relationship Manager, Opportunity Connector, Client Advisor, Partnership Manager, Solutions Consultant, or ***Client Experience Specialist***. The last thing you want is for people to refer to you as the Business Card Collector.