

# Bringing the Focus Back to Clients

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We all get busy with a multitude of marketing tasks, but it's important to find ways to step back from all the deadlines and think about bigger picture issues that affect our businesses. For me one of those issues is trying to remember the important role that client service plays (or should play) in most every major marketing decision I make during a work day. Ideally I try to always ask myself:

- How will this impact our clients?
- How will our clients benefit from this?
- Can we do better?

But because I cannot always ask myself these questions, every month I spend 30 minutes in a solitary brainstorm session to ask myself how client service issues might be considered for each project my team is working on. I actually schedule this brainstorming session on my calendar and try to get out of the office to do it so that I am not interrupted. I print out my project/task list, and next to each item I leave a blank column for client service ideas. I try to come up with answers as quickly as possible so I don't get stuck on any one task. For example, here is a snippet of my list:

## Upcoming webinar on tax issues

Client Service: We have done so many webinars. Let's call 20 of our clients and ask them what topics they want for webinars this year – then at the same time see if we can get some to commit to being guests speakers on the webinars.

## Launch web site

Client Service: Let's beta test with a handful of clients before we go live and in return give them something as a token of our appreciation for helping us test the site. They may notice things we would not.

## Holiday card

Client Service: Ugh it's that time again.

It was during one of these sessions that I forced myself to think about the dreaded holiday card. Every year it's the same thing – no one wants to think about it, but then we realize we have to think about it and we usually put together the same old message and card – probably no different than most holiday cards, whether they are electronic or traditional paper.

But this year we are taking a different approach and choosing to focus our message instead not on ourselves, but on the successes of our clients. Rather than spending hours agonizing over the right image that will please everyone (in other words, one that will offend the least number of people), or trying to be too clever, we are instead highlighting several successes that our clients have had this year and getting them to help us craft a message to all of our clients.

The point is this: it's important to slow down every so often and think about that long list of projects on our lists. It is easy to forget who we are working for. When thinking about ways to improve the end result, often thinking about it from a client perspective can drastically improve what may have been a rather dull and tedious activity.