

# Seven Ways To Minimize The Value Of Your Services As A Real Estate Consultant

1. *Pump your client thoroughly.* Find out what your client wants to be told. Then deliver the desired answers properly rationalized and supported. This procedure insures a high level of client satisfaction and reduces the chances of delivering a valuable service.
2. *Take on only assignments for which you are not qualified.* This improves your chances of an interesting learning experience without increasing the risk of useful results.
3. *Avoid forcing the client to think through his situation prematurely.* This is often done inadvertently by inexperienced consultants. Stay general so that the client won't be able to quibble about your choice of things to be done in connection with the assignment. Precision is difficult in the best of circumstances, and often painful.
4. *Don't set fees beforehand.* This only shocks the client and creates unnecessary ill will at the outset. Your bill when it comes will be a nice surprise to the client, creating opportunities for downward adjustment that are almost certain to make you feel virtuous and self-sacrificing.
5. *Promise impossibly early completion dates.* Clients like to be told things will be done quickly and don't particularly mind when you miss deadlines if you are nice about providing reasonable excuses. Impossibly short deadlines also prevent you from preparing a realistic job schedule, doing the work in an orderly fashion, perhaps even delivering a useful report.
6. *Make sure that the thought processes expressed in your report are neither continuous nor particularly intelligible.* An unbroken logic chain will only intimidate the client or provoke a skeptical reaction. Reality is disorganized and confusing; why try to paper it over? Remember, it pays to bumble.
7. *Keep a tight shirt at all times and wear your vest buttoned.* Nobody likes to see a relaxed consultant. Careful attention to the details of intimidation will pay you back many times for the small efforts required. Let there be awe in the consulting room and there will be jingle in the britches without endangering the First Rule of worthless consultants, which is "Nothing for quite a lot."

## Seven Ways To Get Less For Your Money In Real Estate Consulting

1. *Tell your consultant the answer you want before you grant the assignment.* Strong hints are good, too. This will minimize the work done by the consultant and can often assure a valueless result.
2. *Pick a consultant who knows less about the subject matter than you do.* Ease your mind by satisfying yourself beforehand that the consultant doesn't know enough to challenge your preconceptions—or your ignorance.
3. *Don't bother to define the problem.* We all know that a defined problem is no problem at all. Be vague. The consultant will do a lot of work but there is little risk that much of it will help you.
4. *Underpay.* There is no substitute for inadequate compensation as a guarantee of poor performance. Set fees low and pay them late. You'll be richly rewarded—with nothing.
5. *Demand instant service.* This works particularly well with overburdened consultants and may even lead to complete breakdown. Be sure to maintain a high urgency ratio at all times. The urgency ratio,

Client's Urgency

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Adequacy and Speed of Payment for Consulting Services

is the key to poor consultant performance. High ratios practically assure a poor result. Also of interest is the formula,

$$VCS = f\left(\frac{UR}{P}\right)$$

where VCS stands for value of consulting service, UR stands for urgency ratio, and P stands for the consultant's desire to swim, sail, play golf and eat long lunches.

6. *Tolerate no mistakes.* A consultant who knows that only 100 percent passes will be careful to avoid positive statements, thereby relieving himself of any responsibility for correct answers to your actual problems.
7. *Don't hire a consultant who doesn't leave you feeling intimidated and inadequate.* Only the pompous can be relied upon to fog the issues, finesse the work and confuse the client adequately. Fortunately, they only cost a little more.

**Editor's Note:** The preceding lists were pushed through the transom by a Counselor seeking anonymity. While we ordinarily require that our authors identify themselves, we have decided to make an exception in this case.