

**HOCHSCHULE OSNABRÜCK**  
UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES

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# **Beschwerdemanagement**

Osnabrücker Baubetriebstage 2020

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Die Seminarunterlagen sind urheberrechtlich geschützt.  
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# EARNING AND KEEPING HAPPY CLIENTS

Providing Your Clients  
with Extraordinary Service



## Who Am I?

### Christopher Wick

1998 – 2003: West Coast Sales Director – Brightview Landscape (San Diego, CA.)

2003 – 2010: President / COO – The Continental Group (Miami, FL.)

2010 – 2018: Director of Sales and Marketing / Mergers and Acquisitions – Gothic Landscape (Los Angeles, CA.)

Aber in May, 2018....





...I left the USA to pursue my dream.

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# AND GOTHIC?



Gothic Landscape is the largest, 100% family-owned landscape company in North America.



300 million in annual sales



2,600 employees



4 states (California, Nevada, Arizona, Utah)



*"We develop long-term relationships through team members committed to a culture of extraordinary service."*

# WHY DO WE LOSE CUSTOMERS?

Landscape Management Magazine interviewed 1,000 customers and asked them for the MAIN reason why they fire landscape service companies:

7%: Lower price

9%: Poor service quality

14%: Poor communication

**70%: Indifference (Gleichgültigkeit / Desinteresse)**



# WHAT CONSTITUTES A BUSINESS RELATIONSHIP?

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- Win-Win
  - Personal
  - Active
  - Sacrifice
  - Genuine Concern
  - Trust
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## A LONG-TERM RELATIONSHIP

A genuine relationship will “bridge” periods of reduced service quality.

Building relationships is *cultural* within a company.

Both sides must feel that they are “winning” in the relationship.

“People do not fire *friends*; they fire *companies*.”



# GOOD VS. GREAT

- Good companies have *customers*; great companies have *clients*.
- Good companies have *business transactions*; great companies have *partnerships*.
- Good companies encourage their customers *to buy*; great companies become *trusted advisors* to their clients.



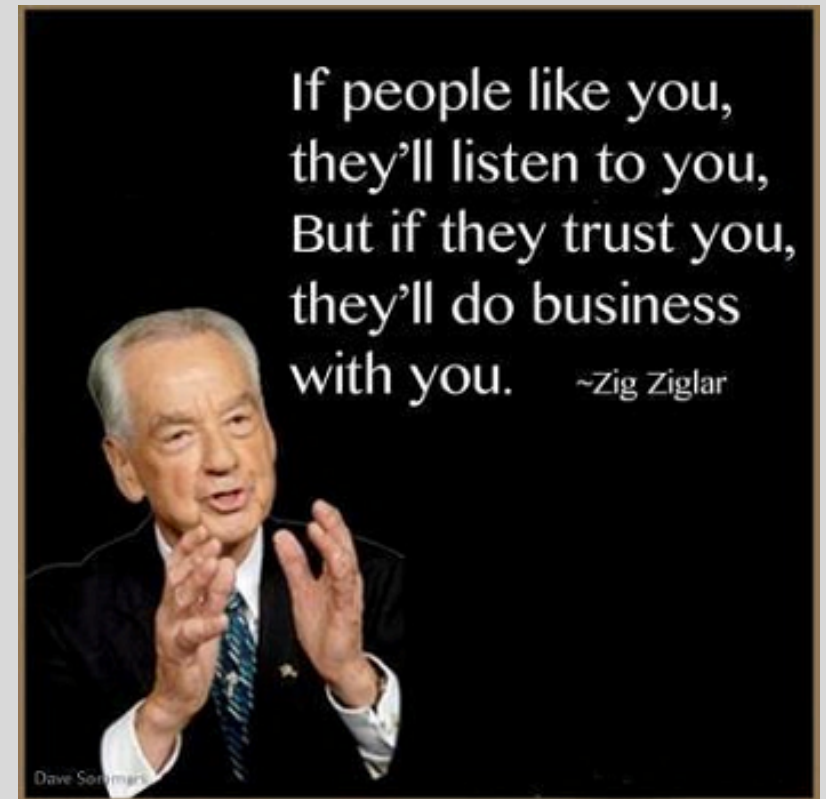
# WHAT KIND OF “SELLER” ARE YOU?

## Undesirable

- Content Seller
- Price Seller
- “One Suit Fits All” Seller

## Desirable (“Trusted Advisor”)

- Needs-Based
- Focused
- Consultative



# A CLIENT-BASED SELLING STRATEGY

- Based on *needs* (selling a “pen” in the sales interview process)
- W.A.I.S.T.
- Probe with thoughtful questions
- NEVER, NEVER badmouth a competitor
- Never overpromise and under-deliver
- Determine “buying motive”
- Value Proposition
- Be honest if you can’t meet the client’s needs (sometimes the best decisions are the business that you turn down)

**Many future client complaints can be avoided through a “clean” sales process!**



# REMEMBER!!!!

**Whatever sales strategy you use to WIN new business is the same strategy you will have to use to KEEP that business.**

For example, if you win business by offering a low price, then pricing is always going to be the DEFINING POINT (Zentralpunkt) of your business relationship.



# (NOT SO) FUN FACT

Do you know:

50% of your company's auto accidents will happen in your yard / shop!





# HOW TO HANDLE CLIENT COMPLAINTS

First, develop the right mindset regarding client complaints:

1. They will happen.
2. A customer that tells you what is wrong is better than one who does not.
3. AND MOST IMPORTANTLY, STOP BLAMING PRICE FOR EVERYTHING.

EVERYTHING  
BEGINS INSIDE  
YOUR MIND.  
**WITH THE  
RIGHT MINDSET  
YOU WILL  
SUCCEED.**

[GYMQUOTES.CO](http://GYMQUOTES.CO)

# A WORD ABOUT PRICE

- There is a difference between *price* and *value*.
- Your clients will pay a higher price if you can deliver better *value*.
- When we do not close a deal or when we lost a contract, the motivating reason is rarely a lower price.
- Remember that you are choosing your clients as much as they are choosing you.
- If you sell at a higher price, you must be ready to deliver at a higher level than your competitors.

**PRICE**  
IS WHAT YOU PAY  
**VALUE**  
IS WHAT YOU GET

WARREN BUFFETT

# ARE YOU READY FOR A CLIENT COMPLAINT?

Fact: Most service complaints happen because one or both sides does not have a **CLEAR UNDERSTANDING** of the contract or service terms.

Question: Does your client view you as a business transaction or as a **TRUSTED ADVISOR**?



# YOUR CLIENT IS ANGRY...NOW WHAT?

- Show *empathy* (Empathie, Einfühlungsvermögen)
- *Cushion* (Kissen)
- Do not use negative *trigger* words (Nein, aber, müssen)
- If you are even 1% wrong, you are 100% wrong
- Maintain *composure* and stay calm (Rudyard Kipling – “If”)
- Focus on *partnership*, never on Us vs. Them.



# DE-FUSING AN ANGRY CLIENT

- First priority is to remove the ANGER from the discussion.
- Even if you feel that you are right, apologize to the client because of the way that they feel.
- Sometimes the best way to do this is with a “diversion” question (Relationship!)
- Remember Napoleon Bonaparte!





# POSSIBLE ACTIONS FROM AN ANGRY CLIENT

- Negative comments about your company to friends, family, and business associates (professional trade groups).
- Negative social media (Facebook, Instagram, Yelp, Google).
- Termination of business relationship.
- Potential legal / lawsuit.



# MAKING IT RIGHT FOR THE CUSTOMER

*"Do the right thing, and the money will follow."*

Mike Georgio – Founder / Gothic Landscape

If your company has (some) responsibility for the problem:

1. Apologize and show empathy to the client.
2. Put in writing exactly how you are going to fix the problem.
3. Communicate with the client throughout the process.
4. Obtain a final confirmation from the client that the problem is resolved.

**\*\*It will almost always cost you far less to make it right for the client than it will if the client decides to attack your company's reputation.\*\***



*"All we stand for and all we have built,  
come from doing what's right.  
For our clients. And our family."*

**- Mike Georgio**

*Founder, Gothic Landscape*

# WHEN YOU ARE 100% RIGHT

- Still apologize and show empathy to the client.
- Focus on facts and reality, and not on your personal feelings.
- Do not take even partial responsibility for the problem, if you are not to blame.
- Offer a small concession to help the client feel that he/she has “won.”

**\*\*If the client proves to be somebody who just wants “free stuff,” this is not the kind of client you want to partner with.\*\***

