

THE CURIOUS CASE OF VANISHING CLIENTS

We are in the business of [adding value to consultants](#); hence we strive to understand their pain points. Losing a client or account is one of the most painful things that can happen to any consultant, from an associate consultant to a managing partner. However, since we repeatedly hear from our customers and consulting industry connections about the factors contributing to client loss, we believe that the curious case of vanishing clients is one that can be solved. Here's a roundup of the top 10 reasons why clients stop working with a consulting firm.

10. Failing to build a bridge to new business

In spite of their best efforts, program managers and engagement leads can hit a wall when it comes to expansion of their projects. They probably did a stellar job on a project and sorted every conceivable issue lying within the confines of their expertise or niche, but they may have failed to set the client up for additional engagements. This is another area where helping in small ways could act as a bridge to more business.



9. Inflexibility to help in small ways

You could end up losing clients by being inflexible about taking on small and micro projects for them. By proving your ability to help your client in small ways, you show genuine interest in your client's business and win their trust. Not every client problem or project is large – go for small wins whenever possible, because it could lead to big wins. Also remember that when you don't have the ability to help in small ways, but face pressure to expand your accounts, you could end up identifying and trying to solve for nonexistent problems!



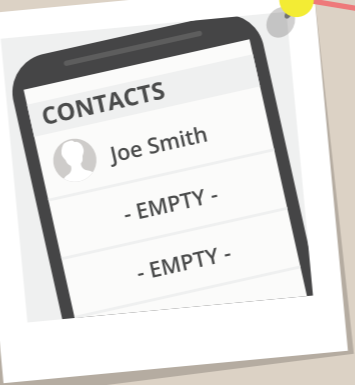
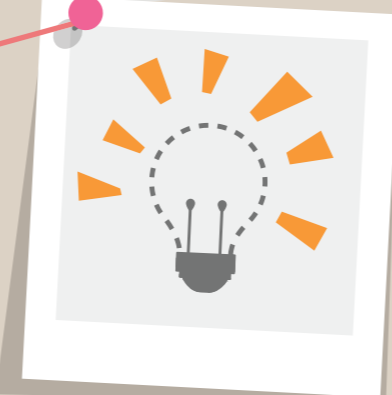
8. Not being sensitive about timelines

Be it the time required for [client discovery](#) or the time taken to produce results, clients want consulting engagements to move quickly and smoothly; hence consultants need to use technology and innovate to be as efficient as possible.



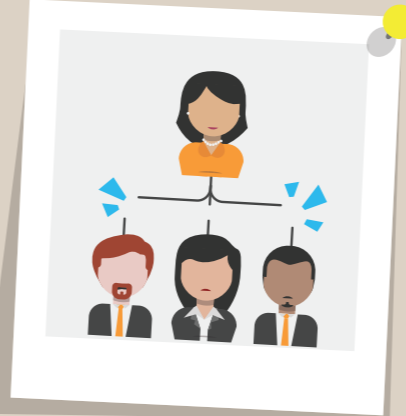
7. Not innovating

In the age of [asset-based consulting](#), not being innovative with your consulting approach, processes, and technology is inexcusable. For instance, both engagement leads and their clients have grown weary of inefficient data [collection and analysis in spreadsheets](#).



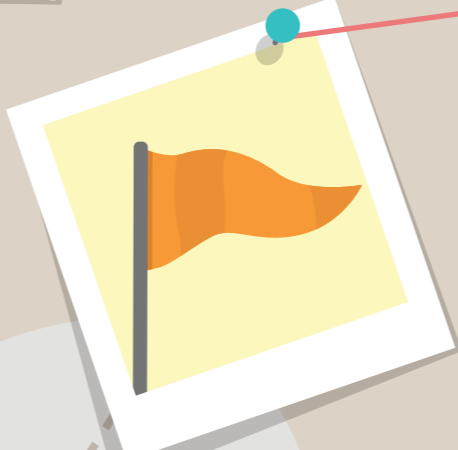
6. Not developing a wide network of contacts

Be it a deliberate career move or a reorg, a key point of contact moving from an existing account can make it difficult for any consultant to continue working on a project and expanding the scope of work. As tricky as it is to work with and manage the expectations of two or more points of contact, any consultant needs to learn that they cannot put all their eggs in one basket! Every consultant needs to be a networking ninja!



1. Breakdown in relationships

Relationships came up as the top reason why clients walk away from a consultancy. Interpersonal challenges within consulting teams, client teams, and between the client and consultants can sabotage an account. Consciously working on improving one's emotional intelligence quotient and breaking down communication silos is crucial in the consulting industry since it is [heavily driven by relationships](#).



2. Not communicating expectations

As clichéd as this sounds, “when you fail to set expectations, you can expect to fail.” Communicating expectations about scope of work, the consulting team a client will work with, timelines, and expected results is just the tip of the iceberg. Remember that [for every minute not spent on setting expectations, others are setting them for you](#). When a consultant and a client have varying expectations, it is a recipe for disaster.



3. Not balancing expansion and delivery

Too often, engagement leads or program managers are spread thin between good delivery on an existing account and pursuing opportunities to expand the scope of work (hey, everybody has sales quotas to meet!). If clients get a whiff of your [desperation](#) for more business and a lack of focus on current projects, they will look for better alternatives.

4. Failing to define and redefine your value proposition

Two things happen when clients fail to understand the [value you bring to the table](#):
– You often hear the “no budget” excuse from current and potential clients
– You lose out during re-compete (this happens when you do not proactively redefine and realign your value prop for the client)
Engagement leads and program managers need to refine their value proposition and clearly communicate how they [differentiate](#) from the competition.



5. Underwhelming delivery

Doing an [underwhelming job](#) is never good, but in the consulting industry, it is the kiss of death. According to more recent statistics, [consultants need to navigate 400,000](#) potential competitors. Don't create valid reasons for your clients to abandon you.

