How to…

Build lasting client relationships

Part of the secret behind Saffron's success is that we go beyond simple client and supplier relationships and instead build lasting partnerships. Here are our top ten tips for building relationships that last.

1 Be prepared

Before the project initiation meeting, find out all there is to know about the client and why they want to use e-learning. Familiarise yourself with any material provided, prepare some key questions and greet the client with a smile!

2 Listen and learn

Whilst you may have some great ideas, take the time to listen to what your client wants. By really understanding why they think a particular solution will benefit their company, you'll be showing them that you're someone they can trust.

3 Remember, it's good to talk

Frequent communication is the key to a strong client relationship. Hold weekly calls to catch up on the project's progress and try to meet face to face as often as possible - we've found it's invaluable in forging trust and confidence.

4 Don't forget - your clients have day jobs too!

It's easy to forget that your client may not be focused on your project nine 'til five, five days a week. Bear this in mind when planning timelines, and work with the stakeholders to build in realistic review times that work for them.

5 Blitz the jargon

A confused client is a concerned client. Always explain terms and concepts associated with e-learning and make sure that the client fully understands the processes you will be using throughout the project's lifespan.

6 Go back to basics

Your client may never have seen a storyboard before and may have no idea how a static PowerPoint slide or Word document translates into interactive material. Explain everything and guide them through your vision of the course.

7 Provide iterative releases

An interim storyboard or Flash release of one unit not only helps the client to see how the content is being brought to life at an early stage but also offers them the chance to make changes without causing delays to the overall project.

8 Involve the right people at the right time

The technology behind an e-learning course can seem daunting for non technical people. Contact the LMS team directly to arrange early testing and try to resolve any technical issues without involving the entire client team.

9 Be close at hand

One of the most frustrating things about project management is not having contact details at your finger tips. Help your clients out by always including yours in your email signature - not only is it useful but it looks professional too.

10 Look to the future

The client relationship shouldn't end when the project is completed. By keeping in touch to monitor how the course performs you're also keeping the door open for any future opportunities to work together again.