

A-List Client Worksheet

No one wants to work hard for a client and not get compensated. Furthermore, very few people I know enjoy working for clients that are a PITA. Here's a tool that can help you make the most of your business development. You can do it yourself, or get help from a professional:

I. Current Client List

- a. Start with your current clients. List them out, flesh out as many details as you can and then group them into tiers (see below). Here are some of the details you should flesh out for each client:
 - i. Annual revenue (\$ and % of total)
 - ii. Profitability (\$ and %)
 - iii. Tenure (months)
 - iv. How they became a client
 - v. Complexity of matters/engagements
 - vi. Reliability of the client
 - vii. Do they pay on time
 - viii. Estimate of wasted time managing them
 - ix. # of/value of referrals they have provided
 - x. Potential for new work in the coming 6-12 months
 - xi. Estimate of "relationship value"
- b. Tiered List
 - i. Tier 1/A-List – these are your most profitable, most valuable and most reliable clients. They make you money, but they also make working more enjoyable. You typically have stronger and broader relationships with these clients
 - ii. Tier 2/B-List – these clients are usually fairly valuable, but for one reason or another, they miss the A-List criteria. They could be unreliable, but profitable. Or unprofitable, but strong in referring you other business.
 - iii. Tier 3/C-List – these clients typically cause you some headaches, but still bring in significant revenues or profitability for the firm. Typically they are one-off clients or ones that you tolerate because of their impact on firm growth or stability.
 - iv. Tier 4/D-List- these clients are very difficult to work with and usually don't pay their bills. If they do pay, it is usually late and after much back and forth. They generally don't refer you business, and take up a lot of your time. They should be fired.
- c. Upward Movement Between Tiers
 - i. Just because you have lots of Tier 3 or 4 clients does not necessarily mean your business will suffer. However, more valuable clients are the key to any successful business. What things you can do (things you have control or influence over) that will move a Tier 3 to a 2? Or a 2 to a 1?

II. Define You're A-List

- a. Now that you have analyzed your current roster, define what the ideal (Tier 1/A-List) client looks like. Be as specific as possible. Include as many characteristics as make sense, but don't forget the basics: revenues, type and frequency of matters, size, demographics, relationships, and personalities.

III. Selection Criteria

- a. Time to identify what criteria you will use in the future to select clients. Yes, using these criteria will mean that you won't work with everyone who comes your way.