



HOW TO BE AN AGENT'S DREAM CLIENT

By

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An agent works very hard to guide a writer's career. We help them with their material, we set up important meetings for them, and we see that their material is read by the right people, we negotiate their deals, we share information with them and we even listen to their personal problems. Is that enough? OK, we also show an interest in their spouses and children, we try not to hurt their feelings when their work is rejected; we are loyal and often very caring. We keep our eye on the ball and an ear to the ground. We know what's going on in the business and who's buying what. Is that enough?

But.....then we must let the writers go out into the world by themselves and we pray that they do not do themselves harm. This is the most daunting of our tasks.

Here are ten (10) things that clients mustn't do:

- 1. Getting stuck on one idea. I've had clients that have written the same basic story in novel, screenplay and theatrical play form. This is an incredibly huge waste of time.**
- 2. Thinking everyone is wrong, except you. When your project has been turned down by more than five (5) companies, chances are it won't sell. This can happen with a pitch or a completed novel or screenplay. Right or wrong, they aren't buying and there's nothing you or your agent can do about it.**
- 3. Ruining a meeting. Are you talking too much or not enough? Are you listening to the principal person in the meeting? Did you arrive late? Did you dress inappropriately? Did you argue too much? Did you stay too long?**
- 4. Missing your big chance. I've represented many writers who really wanted to direct. In one specific case the writer became a producer on various TV series over the years. I kept telling him to direct some episodes, but he said that he was too busy. He never became a director.**
- 5. Calling your agent too often or not often enough. If you don't seem interested in your career, why should your agent. If you are calling every day without new material or ideas, you are nagging. Big no-no.**

- 6. Not showing appreciation to your agent, manager, and lawyer.**
Yes we all get paid, but sometimes that isn't enough. Everyone wants to feel approval. We all want someone to simply thank us for a job well done. Take them to lunch; buy them a simple birthday or Christmas gift. Say "thanks."

- 7. Changing agents.** Most of the time when clients change agents it's because they aren't getting work or selling their material. Is that really your agent's fault or are you not doing your job very well? Have you brought in new ideas and scripts? Are you keeping up relationships with people you've met via your agent? Are you doing everything you can to further your own career? Remember, you get to keep 90% of the money.

- 8. Moving from a small agency to a very big one.** Bad idea. If a small agency has worked hard to build your career, you can bet a larger one will come along and make tremendous promises to lure you over to their client list. Invariably, you will be ignored, forgotten, mistreated and overlooked.

- 9. Demanding too much.** This can mean time from your agent, producer, development person, manager or lawyer. It can mean money for your project that may not warrant as big a deal as you want. Once you earn it....you'll get it all.

- 10. Drugs and alcohol.** They will ruin your career.

Getting into the world of screenwriters and published authors is difficult enough. Making the mistakes listed above is a sure-fire way of losing any toe-hold that you may gain, at any time. All too often I've seen successful writers fall off the "hot writer" list in Hollywood because of any of the above errors. Don't let it happen to you.

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