The Baron Group, Inc.

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The Time Contract

One of the things that clients often complain about is how salespeople do not show enough respect for their time. Everybody is so busy these days and when our time is not used well, we become very frustrated.

That is why the "time contract" is so important. We believe that in every client meeting, as early as possible, it is important to confirm how much time the client has.

Notice that we use the word confirm. Hopefully the time allotment is determined when we make the appointment and reviewed if we send a confirmation letter. So when we arrive, we are confirming how much time is available. If we haven't done that previously, then we establish it once we are there.

The time contract shows the client respect. It is another way to focus on them, and increases the likelihood that they will stay engaged. It can also keep you out of trouble.

That is right, it also protects you. We have heard so many stories about situations in which salespeople thought they had more time than they actually did. Just as they were on a roll, the client told them they were out of time. The result is a less effective meeting. If they knew how much time they had, it would have allowed them to plan accordingly, or if it had changed, they would have known.

Don't be afraid to look at your watch. Just be sure to tell the client why you are doing it so as not to give the wrong impression. "I want to make sure I don't stay longer than you anticipated…" or whatever feels comfortable to you makes looking at the watch a positive move instead of an insulting one.

Remember that it is all about respecting the customer's time. Find out how much time they will give you when you make the appointment. Confirm it when you start the meeting and stick to it as the meeting happens.

You will be pleased with the results. More importantly, so will your customer.