

Contracting mindset tips: clients don't care about your career, nor should they

Contractors are hired by clients to work on specific projects where the client lacks the skills or capacity in-house. The contractor has a contract that clearly identifies the deliverables, timescales and fee. When the job's done, the contractor moves onto the next client and a fresh project.

Do you care about your suppliers aspirations?

Alan arrives to mow your lawn every Tuesday morning and then disappears until the following Tuesday. Do you care what he does in-between mowing your lawn, whether he has a thriving business, or do you just check he's also done your borders?

When you're looking for an electrician to completely overhaul the wiring in your house, do you seek out a newly qualified sparks who is looking for a chunky project just like yours to put on their CV?

You need an expert in finite stress analysis. Do you hire a graduate fresh out of university who you need to train and tell which end of the bridge goes on the river bank? No, you hire an experienced and highly qualified professional.

To your client, their employees have careers, not contractors like you

Clients want instant solutions that don't include having to train a worker to complete the tasks required by a project. Training is what clients do for their employees; you, the contractor, are expected to be over-qualified for any role you undertake and to start delivering from day one of the contract.

When the project ends, so does the relationship. The client is not interested in what you do evenings, weekends and in-between contracts when you are not solving problems for them. But if you've proved your worth, they will be happy to pick you up again if they need your skills in the future.

Contractors manage their own careers

When you are a contractor providing a business-to-business service to your clients, you are delivering an instant solutions package based on your existing skills and experience. You take care of your own training and development, paying for courses and Continued Professional Development (CPD) with your time and your company's money. You are enhancing your CV, in your own time and at your own expense, to make your business-to-business service offering a more valuable proposition to clients.

Responsibility for securing an ongoing stream of well-paid contracts is yours; once you have fulfilled your contractual obligations, your relationship with the client is over and you move onto the next contract.

Contractor mindset tip:

Clients are not interested in helping you develop your contracting career. They are looking for an instant solutions package.

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