

SOME GOOD WAYS TO LOSE CUSTOMERS

Don't make quality your top priority. Good enough is good enough.

Miss a deadline every now and then if you need to. Don't stop to contact your client to say you'll be late – keep working!

Be defensive, cranky and maybe even downright surly if you want – you're an artist!

Once you have worked with a customer a few times, there's no need to read each purchase order. If there is anything new, such as special instructions, your customer should point that out in an email. Plus you probably want to do things your way anyway.

It's perfectly okay to make it a little hard to find you. Maybe you disappear occasionally or don't return emails or calls sometimes. So what? You're worth it! That's why you became a freelancer.

SOME GOOD WAYS TO KEEP CUSTOMERS

View your relationship as a partnership. What's good for one of you is good for both.

Focus on quality. It's much more important to deliver good quality than to do fast work or cheap work.

Do a project audit. This can be a simple process of asking your customer what specific areas can be improved in your relationship and offering the same in return.

Stay in touch, but don't be a pest. Let your good customers know of your major comings and goings and of any significant change in your work environment (such as ATA certification or acquisition of translation tools).

Keep your customer's style requirements and pet peeves in mind – tailor your product to your customers' needs.

Ask questions. If you are not sure about something, ask early. Try to ask as many of your questions at once as possible to avoid interrupting your customer several times a day with new issues.

Know your limits and learn from your mistakes. Be open to accepting criticism that will help you improve your work.

Be easy to work with. Try to be someone your partners look forward to contacting.