

## Why Be on Time for a Business Development Meeting?

The answer would seem to be so obvious – so why mention it? We accept that it is a real generalisation, but at PACE we have a huge amount of collective experience working in all manner of markets and that experience convinces us that professionals are among the worst time managers in industry! Even when it comes to making sure of arriving at client / business development meetings in good time! Strange for a profession which only has its time to sell.

The outcome is that lateness becomes habitual. Internal meetings never start on time, they never finish on time, people are perpetually behind the clock. The real problems start when this behaviour is visited on the client. One client we worked with some time ago is a large insurance company. A new MD joined the organisation and early in his tenure he and his fellow directors were kept waiting on one occasion by one of the Partners from the auditors. When he 'sounded off' about this behaviour, one of his fellow Directors remarked that their auditor's people were always late and that they were forever sitting around waiting for them to show up to meetings. At this point the MD charged his people with counting every minute of management time that was wasted by the auditors. When the auditors sent their next invoice to the company for time spent working on various tasks, the new MD sent his own back in response - based on management time lost through the auditor's tardiness.

A very embarrassed and chastened Senior Partner finally settled the potentially explosive situation by negotiating a large reduction of the audit fee for the following year. Lateness can cost!

Some take the view that 10 or 15 minutes here or there is OK. The attitude is that after all we have to deal with the M25 and tube strikes etc etc. Some of our clients and potential clients don't see it that way. A 10 o'clock meeting to many means a meeting that starts at 10 o'clock - not a professional who rushes into reception at 10 o'clock. If the very first impression (even before we have met) is one of a person who can't even organise himself to get to a meeting on time we should not be surprised to have our credibility questioned. At the very first opportunity to deliver as promised we have failed.



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