

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

Part 4: Finishing

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Finishing

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I heard this from one of our clients: "What I like about Clientek is that you have people as clients, not companies." My last few posts have covered some of the factors that led to such a compliment. I covered "[caring](#)", "[listening](#)", and "[trusting](#)". In this, final part four, "finishing".

If you are like us, you have many projects running simultaneously. Most are complex and all involve many players: stakeholders, leaders, managers, doers, and users. When you are in the thick of it, it can be easy to overlook something simple: you must finish.

How can I make such a crazy claim? Of course you finish. You finish every project, maybe even on time and on budget. Think about some recent projects that have wrapped up. Your client has taken delivery and you've been paid. Have you finished?

Start by holding a project retrospective session. Our CCO, Jesse LaDousa, has written about the measurement phase included in our [Value Focused Delivery](#) methodology. This discipline is applied on a regular basis to help keep projects on track. Repeating this upon completion of the entire project is key. It forms the framework to facilitate an honest assessment of *The Finish*.

- 1) *Do the stakeholders know that the project has completed?* Not all the stakeholders have attended status meetings and demos. While likely aware of the timeline, they did not watch closely as the project neared completion. How will they know when you've finished? When you tell them so. Then remind them of the value the project will bring to them.
- 2) *Have measurable objectives have been achieved?* You'll find a number of other Clientek posts about [defining success](#). During the retrospective, discuss the objectives –



explicitly and how they will be or have been measured. Some objectives will take time to mature. Discuss the ways that they will be measured going forward. There may have been changes to objectives adopted during the course of the work. Highlight any of those and remind everyone, briefly, of the discussions that lead to decisions.

- 3) *Have you agreed on how to handle follow-up questions and issues?* Even if a written follow-up plan was one of the project deliverables, walk through it anyway. If such a plan was not appropriate for this project, discuss the ways that you'll be there to support your client. Remind them that you are proud of your work and stand behind it. You are ready to help ensure they'll realize all the planned value.
- 4) *Have you discussed and summarized the leftovers?* During the course of complex projects, many small decisions are made to refine the end result. Choices between options are made. Some ideas are sidelined, or perhaps removed entirely from the project plan. Ideas are discussed about future refinement that might be possible. You've tracked all of these, of course, in order to maintain clear agreement on the [solutions developed](#). Walk through the list. This might lead to a whole new engagement for you.

Finally, this session will give you a formal way to **thank your valued client for the opportunity to work with them.**

How you finish is how you will be remembered. Plan from the beginning to finish well.