

Work Life... Verbal contract cancelled

S i t u a t i o n :

I'm furious! I'm an independent graphic artist. Recently I spent a considerable amount of time working with a client. After a couple of in-person meetings, a few phone calls and emails, we agreed on the project and price.

The contract was supposed to be signed on Monday. It's Friday afternoon and I just picked up a voice mail saying that the client changed his mind, does not need my services and is hiring someone else to do the work.

This would have been a great account to add to my resume. I was really counting on getting it. I thought this one was mine for keeps! Please help me calm down.

A n s w e r :

There's a fine line between expecting the best in your life and being prepared for disappointments. In a very real sense you're playing two roles: graphic artist and salesperson.

Nobody likes being disappointed, especially when it has to do with money coming your way. But for your sake, professionally and emotionally, you're doing the right thing in looking for ways to move beyond this incident.

One way for you to help cool down your emotions (anger) is to look at the situation sensibly & rationally. Let's extract the facts: Before someone signs on the dotted line, he's a "potential" client not a client. A verbal contract is more of an "estimate" of time, effort and dollars or to use another term it's an "offer."

Besides being miffed, annoyed or angry at what happened outside of you, I suggest you take a few minutes to check to see if you have any inner-directed anger – any "I shouldn't have...", "I was wrong..." thoughts.

If you're beating yourself up for putting so much time and effort up-front – stop. Give yourself an "A" for effort. You had no control over this man's final decision. You can influence people, you cannot control them. If you're in a position to, next time you may want to charge an initial consulting fee. If it's not customary in your line of work, you'll have to get used to the idea that you're not going to win them all. No one does!

You could take the positive thought that all is not wasted. You've gained experience in this encounter: The time spent brainstorming on what needed to be done to accomplish the final goal, those ideas the two of you came up, with may "fit" with another project in the future. You never know. Even the idea that were rejected may be a perfect fit somewhere else.

If you're questioning the integrity of the person who chose not to accept your offer and blaming yourself for not seeing "that side of him" – stop! You didn't do anything wrong, and neither did he. In your eyes you saw it as a verbal contract. It very well could be that the other person saw it only as a step in the negotiating process. You have a right to your opinion/interpretation and he has a right to his interpretation.

One important fact of life we all have to keep in the forefront of our minds is that we're not always going to agree with what people think or what they do. And remembering that one fact can move us from to feeling crushed to feeling calm.



WDIDW1405

© 2001 Rose VanSickle
PLJ Unlimited, Inc.
www.pljunlimited.com