

HONOR COMMITMENTS

Do what you say you're going to do, when you say you're going to do it. This includes being on time for all phone calls, appointments, meetings, and promises. If a commitment can't be fulfilled, notify others early and agree on a new deliverable to be honored.

In my first year in the business 32 years ago I went on a sales call with my then mentor Ward Brehm. It was a tough appointment to get with a big time business owner and it was my very first meeting with a prospect of this stature. It took many calls and favors from common friends calling him on my behalf to get Mr. Big to book the appointment. Finally, we got it on the calendar and when the big day came I was ready, but very nervous. We got there 10 minutes early for an 9am appointment. The receptionist said, "Mr. Big is on an important call, it could be a few minutes." So we waited and waited for what it seemed like an eternity. I looked at my watch and it was actually only 9:10am. Ward turned to me and said, "The 15 minute rule is in play. That means if he doesn't come out in 5 minutes, we are out of here." "Out of here?!" I said. I was thinking to myself if need be I would stay here all day to meet this guy!

Ward said seeing my distress, "Look Ken, the guy either has an emergency or he's not taking us seriously. If we leave, and he's a good guy (with a conscience) he will feel bad and owe us. That's a strong set up for the next meeting. If he doesn't feel bad then he's probably a not a good guy and we're wasting our time in any event." To my shock and horror at the time, 5 minutes past and we left. I was mortified and depressed, but Ward was 100% correct. The guy called us the next day, apologized and rescheduled. We came in the new first meeting like champions with our self-respect intact. In the end we got the sale; it was a happy ending. But more importantly, I never forgot this lesson that everyone's time is valuable. If you mess up...clean up your mess. That shows character.

