



**The Elite Adviser**

## **INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTH INTELLIGENCE**

**The pursuit of excellence demands groundbreaking practices, acute insight and expert skills. Backed up by decades of rigorous study and practical application, the industry leaders at CEG Australia deliver precisely the tools and strategies you need to reach the elite level.**

### **Put Yourself in Your Clients' Shoes**

*By Jim Stackpool  
Managing Director, Strategic Consulting & Training*

Elite advisers know that a top business priority is cultivating their relationships with their quality clients. An important part of this is to periodically find out from your clients what they like—and don't like—about their relationship with you.

An excellent vehicle for this is an annual client survey. By using a survey, you give your clients permission to point out what you could do better. It sends a clear message that you care about them and their feedback, which will make them more willing to open up and explore how you can serve them better.

Design your survey questions to help you do three important things:

- **Identify where you can really excel.** Ask clients to tell you what they see to be your strengths.
- **Understand your weaknesses.** Ask what they would like you to do differently.
- **Anticipate future needs.** Ask about what is changing in their world. Let them tell you about the changes they anticipate in their personal financial situations, in their businesses and in their industries over the next year.

Keep the survey brief and concise, and include with it a letter that explains that you rely on client feedback to help you constantly improve your service. The letter should specifically ask clients to complete and return the survey, and should thank them in advance.

Once you've gathered and organised the survey results, share the information with your team. Get their reactions and input on improving systems in response to survey comments. You won't always get positive responses, but every response you get can be used in some way to your advantage. Pinpoint action items that will address the concerns raised by your clients. Then communicate the results back to clients. Let them know about any changes you're making as a result of their feedback.

By focusing on what your clients really want and using that information to help shape your firm's systems and employees' awareness, you'll create a truly client-driven practice. Your customer focus will not be expressed simply as a motto on your wall, but as concrete actions that your clients will understand and appreciate. And by setting yourself up to do business your clients' way, you'll give yourself a genuine advantage over your competition.