

Owning the Client Relationship

Australian and Filipino workplace culture, and what actually builds trust

TeamUp
now



Team Up Now · 9 September 2026

**Our clients don't want staff.
They want a colleague who
happens to sit in Manila.**

OPEN

What changes after today

You reply faster, with less

You stop calling anyone Sir or Ma'am

You say "I don't know" out loud

You flag problems on day one, not week three

01

THE CORE IDEA

The core idea

The gap

WHAT FEELS RESPECTFUL IN A FILIPINO WORKPLACE

wait until you have the answer

never contradict

use titles

apologise often

say yes to everything

WHAT AN AUSTRALIAN CLIENT ACTUALLY READS

nothing's happening

she has no opinion

this feels awkward

she's not confident

I can't trust the yes

**Politeness that hides
information is not politeness.**

02

ACKNOWLEDGE FIRST, FIX LATER

Acknowledge first, fix later

Silence doesn't read as 'working on it'. It reads as 'ignored'.

ACKNOWLEDGE FIRST, FIX LATER

The rule

Within one hour

reply — even with nothing

Name a time

you'll come back

Come back at that time

even if the answer is “still going”

The second message is the answer.

The first one protects the relationship.

ACKNOWLEDGE FIRST, FIX LATER

What it sounds like

12 WORDS

Got it — looking into it now,
you'll hear from me by 3.

12 WORDS

Seen this. Need to check with
Marian.

Back to you before COB.

12 WORDS. 12 WORDS. THAT'S THE WHOLE JOB.

03

THE DEFERENCE TRAP

The deference trap

THE DEFERENCE TRAP

Kill list

Sir / Ma'am

first names only. Always. Including the owner.

Dear Michael

Hi Michael, or just Michael,

I hope this email finds you well

delete

Kindly be advised / Please be informed

delete

Noted with thanks / Revert back to me / For your perusal

delete

'Sir' puts the client in a role they never asked for. It makes them uncomfortable, not respected.

Over-apologising

READS AS...

So sorry for the delay,

apologies again,

sorry to bother you

Apologise once, for things that are actually your fault. Then move on.

DO THIS INSTEAD

Thanks for waiting —

here it is.

04

NO, AND I DON'T KNOW

No, and I don't know

NO, AND I DON'T KNOW

Both are strengths

"I don't know —

I'll find out and come back by 2." → confidence

"That'll work,

but it pushes Thursday's report to Friday." → ownership

"I'd do it the other way,

here's why." → a colleague

Bad news on day one

beats a polished surprise in week three.

WATCH YOUR YES

**If 'yes' means 'I heard you',
the client will hear 'I'll do it'.**

05

SHORTEST VERSION THAT LANDS

Shortest version that lands

SHORTEST VERSION THAT LANDS

Five rules

Subject line does real work

"Invoice 4021 — approval needed Thu"

Answer or ask in sentence one.

No wind-up.

Bullets beat paragraphs

One ask, one deadline

Stop typing

Before

55 WORDS

Good day Sir Michael,

I hope this email finds you well. Kindly be advised that upon checking the report, I noticed some discrepancies in the figures for last month.

May I kindly request your guidance on how to proceed regarding this matter.

Thank you very much and looking forward to your favourable response.

Respectfully yours,

SHORTEST VERSION THAT LANDS

After

40 WORDS

Hi Michael,

March report has two line items that don't reconcile — about \$1,400 out.
Looks like the Feb credit note was counted twice.

I can fix it my end. Can you confirm the credit note was \$1,400 by
Thursday?

Thanks,

SAME INFORMATION. ONE OF THESE SOUNDS LIKE SOMEONE WHO OWNS THE PROBLEM.

YOUR TURN · 3 MIN LIVE ACTIVITY

Open your last email to a client. Cut it by half. Read it out.

06

WRITING AND READING AUSTRALIAN

Writing and reading Australian

Spelling and format

organise

not organize

colour, favour

Australian spelling

centre, metre

Australian spelling

licence / license

noun / verb

enquiry · analyse

preferred forms

3 Apr

never 03/04

Melbourne time

always stated

FY

runs Jul–Jun

Words we use

annual leave

not PTO

public holiday

not holiday leave

mobile

not cell

fortnight

two weeks

invoice / GST / super

everyday finance

roster

the schedule

uni

university

CV

not résumé

Decoding the client

Are you across this?

do you know about it

Chasing that report

following up, not angry

No worries

genuinely fine

Yeah, nah

no

Not bad

good

When you get a chance

today

COB

close of business, their time

07

OWNING IT

Owning it

OWNING IT

Five behaviours

Send the update before they ask.

Friday summary, unprompted.

Have an opinion.

"I'd recommend B because..." beats "whatever you prefer."

Flag risk early, in writing.

Speak in meetings.

Silence reads as no contribution.

Close the loop.

They should never wonder.

THE TEST

Would the client describe you as someone who does what they're asked, or someone who's part of the team?

ONE COMMITMENT • GO AROUND THE ROOM. WRITE THEM ON THE BOARD.

**Name one thing you'll
do differently in your
next client email.**

CLOSE

CLOSE

**Acknowledge fast.
Say less. Say no
when you mean no.**

TeamUp
now

Team Up Now

