

# Setting Professional Standards and Boundaries

By Maria Marsala

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Professional standards are strong guidelines for how you treat yourself within your business or career. They can include a code of ethics, guarantees, how many hours you work, etc.

Professional boundaries are about how you want your clients to treat you within your business. They can include requesting to be paid on time, honesty, how to cancel appointments, how often they can contact you, etc. As each of us evolve, it is common to "raise" our standards and boundaries. January is an excellent month to review your "Professional Standards and Boundaries". 10 Keys To Understanding Boundaries and Standards is one of my favorite articles on this subject <http://www.topten.org/public/BJ/BJ28.html> .

Professional standards and boundaries create a professional atmosphere around your businesses. Sometimes they help you attract a higher caliber of clients. Other times they reflect that your time and effort are now worth more than they previously were . Whatever reason you have for creating standards and boundaries, make sure that you can stand by them, no matter what!

Your new or updated standards and boundaries may - and will - annoy people. You may lose clients. Any time you set a new "rule", someone is bound to be annoyed - and they'll let you know, too! You are bound to hear things like "X" does that for free, I'm only asking for 15 minutes of your time, guess you don't want clients, among a variety of other things you'd prefer not to listen to.

Learning to not take things personally maybe difficult, however, it's a very necessary part of evolving. One of the other big lessons of setting boundaries - whether business or personal - is that you don't owe anyone an explanation on the changes you're making. We humans seem to think that when we say "no" we have to explain ourselves. Yet, when we say

"yes" we never explain ourselves! When someone asks you why you've made a business change, it's OK to give a simple answer like "it's a business decision" or "it's best for me this way".

If your business is to continue to evolve, then now is the time to review your Professional Standards and Boundaries. I've set some hefty ones myself within the past 12 months and will share some of them with you as examples, as well as to let you know how my services have changed. I challenge you to create or update your professional standards and boundaries this month, too.

~~ I provide my clients with the highest level of services in a professional manner. And then I come up with ways to make those services even better.

~~ I continue to provide one free 30-minute consultation to individuals who are interviewing coaches as part of the process of hiring a coach. I have a new form for my potential clients to complete at [www.coachmaria.com/consultation.html](http://www.coachmaria.com/consultation.html) .

~~ I no longer provide a free 30-minute consultation to everyone who requests a consultation. I do however, provide Free Friday's for these individuals (more info is at [www.coachmaria.com/consultation.html](http://www.coachmaria.com/consultation.html) )

~~ Every teleminar or class taught in 2002 now costs "something". \$5 is still something! A complete events, speaker and teleseminar listing has been updated at my site and can be viewed at <http://www.coachmaria.com/events/index2.html> .

To see more of my standards and boundaries, and get some ideas for yourself, visit [www.coachmaria.com/articles/professionalstandards.html](http://www.coachmaria.com/articles/professionalstandards.html)

Professional standards and boundaries help our businesses most often by adding a new level of consistency and structure. Michael Gerber, in his book "The E-myth Revisited" says, "The business development process is not static. It's not something you do and then are done with. It's something you do all the time."

This month, take a look at your Professional Standards and Boundaries and raise them to the next level.

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