# "Eleven Client Relationship Considerations" Or "Things Clients Truly Want But Don't Specify"

With hundreds of providers servicing the electronic discovery needs of both law firms and corporations globally, it truly is a buyer's market when considering electronic discovery services.   It also goes without saying that it is absolutely expected that electronic discovery providers responding to Statements of Work or Requests For Proposal should be able to meet the requirements of being able to solve the buyer's stated problem with an affordable and reliable solution.

However, given the current maturation of electronic discovery solutions (i.e. technology is far from mature), there are still many situations where pure customer service makes the difference between an organization's ability to meet or not meet client needs.   With that being said, truly subjective client service requirements may be very difficult to specify.  In fact beyond service level agreements, timeline requirements, project management processes, and work product specifications, many vendors are at a loss when seeking to address the implied but all too real needs of the client.

So, how does one meet these subjective and not always specified customer needs?   I would submit to you that beyond the specific requirements presented by a client, eDiscovery providers need to honestly assess and ensure that they are delivering the following eleven things customers want but don't always specify:

**Attention:**  Observant consideration.  *Not only addressing what the client is asking for, but applying experience to help consider what the client might need (or not need).*

**Acceptance:**  Favorable reception.  *Accepting the client as a partner in the development and delivery of the solution and not just as a requestor.*

**Appreciation:**  Expressed gratitude.   *Sharing through action (helping client) your thankfulness for being considered as a provider who can help the client solve a problem.*

**Affirmation:**  Positive judgment.    *Providing validation of client requests and decisions when you are in agreement and providing constructive/instructive feedback for consideration when you are not in agreement with the client.*

**Affection:**  Strong fondness.   *Genuinely holding the client's best interests as the highest priority.*

**Comfort:**  Lessening severity.   *Seeking to communicate and setting expectations in a manner that keeps the client apprised of project status so as to ensure no surprises.*

**Encouragement:**  Helpful support*.   Being easy to work with by helping people feel positive when in communication with you.*

**Respect:**  Deferential regard.  *Understanding that ultimately the demanding is in charge of their decisions and that having the responsibility to help with such decisions is not to be taken lightly.*

**Security:**  Freedom from risk.   *Seeking to eliminate risk to the client at every point that one can and still meet the client's need.*

**Support:**  Tolerant endurance.  *Providing support by keeping an eye on the desired result instead of the immediate request or response.*

**Understanding:**  Compassionate comprehension.   *Seeking to not only understand what the client is saying, but seeking to understand the context of the requirement.*

If an organization acknowledges that customers are entitled to the eleven "things" listed above – whether or not these are actually specified – then that organization may very well be able to meet client needs even in the face of technology-driven solutions that have yet to fully mature.   Moreover, technology-driven solutions should always be viewed as being part of the "whole solution" provided to a client –a "whole solution" which requires solid customer service to be a truly complete and effective solution.