

The first - and for most service based businesses - the most important is your service agreement. This is the contract that governs the relationship between you and your clients. It defines what you're delivering, when you're delivering it, what it costs, and what happens if something goes sideways. A strong client service agreement covers a few non-negotiables. The scope of work, which should be written clearly that both parties understand exactly what's being delivered and what isn't. Payment terms - when invoices are due, what triggers payment, and what happens if a client is late or doesn't pay. Revision and change order policies are critical. And termination rights need to be inserted for both parties. And one that people often overlook: intellectual property ownership. Who owns the work product once it's delivered and paid for? If your contract doesn't answer that, you may not own what you think you own - or your client may not either.