

# BULLETPROOFING YOUR LIFE: HOW TO EXPECT, PLAN FOR, AND HANDLE THE WORST

by Victoria Lukachik March 22, 2022



Every job has its own challenges. Teachers face a shortage of supplies, executives experience budget cuts, and agents can face downright strange transactions. Life, and work, are inevitably difficult sometimes.

However, we can set ourselves up for the best chance of success, no matter the market or the situation. In *SHIFT* this process is called “Bulletproofing the Transaction.” If you’d like to follow along, you can find this on page 262. In the book, Bulletproofing the Transaction is intended to counter the issues faced in a difficult real estate market but, the truth is, these strategies can apply to any job. Heck, we’d wager they could apply to any challenging situation. The two

key bulletproofing strategies can help us expect, plan for, and handle issues that arise with tough times.



## Bulletproofing **Strategy #1 — Proactive Prevention**

As Gary Keller and Jay Papasan write in *SHIFT*, “The advantage always goes to the ones who keep their head up and anticipate where everything might go wrong.” This is Proactive Prevention. Being proactive, we understand what the end goal is. When it comes to our professions, we know what we want to accomplish and we take intentional steps toward achieving it.

Proactive Prevention includes several different sub-strategies. These strategies ensure that we not only anticipate problems, but we communicate this information to others. Beyond that, it also shows that we are confident that we will overcome any challenge.

Imagine a real estate agent who is working with a first-time home buyer named Maria and they are about to make an offer on a condo. This agent knows that Maria is, more than likely, full of anxiety about making her biggest purchase ever. The agent can bulletproof her role as the agent of choice to this nervous buyer with Proactive Prevention. She can recognize her client’s feelings as

reasonable and strive to put them at ease by keeping their path forward clear and realistic.

Using the Proactive Prevention strategy, the process may look like this:

**(A. Outcome Framing)** *“Maria, I know that you’re feeling nervous about the investment you’re about to make, but remember that you’re actually investing in yourself and your future — this condo would be yours, your home, and that’s priceless!”*

**(B. Set Expectations)** *“Now, when we craft your offer, I will use my knowledge of the market and this type of property to make sure that you’re paying a fair price. Even then, if you really want this condo, we may want to consider offering a little more than the asking price or seeing if there are any other incentives we could give the buyer, like a lease-back option.”*

**(C. Preparing Alternatives)** *“If the seller declines your offer, don’t forget that there are other nearby developments that we could tour, and I think you’d find they offer similar amenities and floorplans.”*

**(D. Reassurance)** *“Don’t worry, Maria, we will make sure that your offer is strong, and if we don’t get this one, we’ll learn and make sure our next offer is even stronger.”*

Each step of the way, the agent is communicating that she is doing everything in her power to get Maria the end results she’s looking for. And this communication is key, both for creating trust and a sense of security in her client.

These strategies can be applied to other careers and experiences, too. When we are upfront and straightforward about the good and the bad we may experience during the course of a project, transaction, or assignment and have ideas in place to mitigate potential pitfalls, people know that we are paying attention. This sense of involvement will likely trickle down and help alleviate fears and worry. This, of course, is a pretty positive way to bulletproof your role.



## Bulletproofing Strategy #2 — Early Response

Unforeseen issues do arise, no matter how much we try to plan. This is when being able to have an Early Response is necessary. Being aware of and handling problems right away will keep the ball moving forward, even when unexpected things come up.

There are a few key sub-strategies that belong to Early Response. These tactics help us recognize that the unexpected has happened and communicate with the people affected. In stepping up and recognizing that we're facing some difficulties, we are accountable. This builds trust so we can then figure out a new win-win solution. And like Proactive Prevention, Early Response is a bulletproofing technique that is helpful to anyone who has ever had issues arise in their day-to-day job. (So... everyone.)

Picture, in this case, a dog groomer. Not unlike other careers, relationships in the pet glamor industry are highly important. Now picture the dog groomer's new client, Larry. Larry is a fluffy yet unexpectedly excited dog. He's in for his first haircut and he is very, very curious. Although the groomer may be an expert in animal behavior and his craft, Larry — oh, sweet, silly Larry — somehow finds himself inexplicably muzzle-deep in a tub of blue fur dye. The

beautiful golden coat the dog owner left in for the groomer's care is now bright blue.

While most of us would rather go hide in the storage closet and pretend this blue snafu never happened, the dog groomer who wishes to bulletproof his role takes a very different stance. Instead, he employs the Early Response strategy to handle the issue immediately, with as much care, accountability, and problem-solving as possible. The process could look like this:

**(A. Constant Communication)** *"Hello, this is your dog groomer. I'm calling to let you know that Larry is safe and healthy, but has had an unfortunate accident. He somehow got into some fur dye and is now quite literally a bit blue."*

**(B. Inspecting Expectations)** *"I know when you leave your pets in my care, you are trusting me with their welfare as well as their grooming. Although this was an accident, it happened under my watch, so I take full responsibility. I will also not charge you for any of the grooming your pup received today."*

**(C. Problem Solving)** *"If you'd like me to try and remove the blue from Larry's fur, I can try a few different shampoos. However, these may not be enough to get the pigment out. We could try a few different sessions, all free of charge, over the next few weeks until you're satisfied."*

**(D. Contract to Close Tracking)** *"Either way, please let me know how we can keep you and Larry happy. I look forward to helping Larry look his best. See you soon."*

(Full disclosure: this fictional Larry is inspired by a [real colorful canine](#).)

Note in the communication with the client that the dog groomer involves the client in both the problem solving and decision-making process. This is an important part of bulletproofing for any profession. After all, as Gary and Jay explain, "people almost always support those plans and ideas they had a hand in creating."

It's important to remember that no matter the job, issues come up. However, being prepared to deal with whatever problems may come our way ensures that our jobs, projects, deals, and clients are there for the long haul.

Put these bulletproofing strategies to action in your own roles. Take a step back, think through the various points where something may go wrong and anticipate how you'd handle these problems. You might even create a task-by-task outline for the project at hand. We may think we are able to do our work with our eyes closed, but referring to a checklist allows us to identify potentially hairy areas and pay extra attention. When you follow this approach, you're making sure you're prepared to act in the best interest of your assignment, while also taking steps to prevent problems from taking place.

Remember, when an issue does arise in your profession (or your life!), your willingness to face it head-on shows that you are committed to doing the right thing. Being proactive and responding quickly shows that you hold yourself accountable. And communicating at all points ensures that everyone should be happy with the outcome. These strategies are a surefire way to not only bulletproof a successful project outcome, but also create trust that can help you secure your relationship with your clients and colleagues.

How have you bulletproofed your transactions and overcome challenges? Do you agree that *SHIFT* might secretly be a manual for life? Let us know on the [KellerINK](#) Facebook page and [subscribe](#) to the KellerINK Newsletter!

