

## A Former Client's View: The Client Side of Business Development

By [Silvia L. Coulter](#) on December 5, 2013

Recently I was at a client coaching meeting with a very savvy rainmaker who, prior to his return to the law firm side, had been a GC for 15 years. He told me the last time he was at a firm was as a junior partner. He commented how he doesn't take anything personally when he prospects for new business, particularly when it comes to clients or potential clients not returning calls or responding to emails. His in-house experience taught him a few things which have reminded him to be patient. He listed them out for me and I thought our readers would find them helpful (from the client viewpoint):

- My time is not my own—I have many busy business people with whom I work and they schedule many meetings for me. I also have my Board and C-Level peers requiring my assistance on a regular basis;
- What is urgent to you is not always urgent to me—It's OK to keep trying to reach me. I appreciate the proactive nature of some of the calls and outreaches. You're on my mind even if I don't get back to you as quickly as you or I would prefer;
- I receive a lot of emails and alerts—I realize the time that goes into these. If they are not delivered the day of an important decision or prior to an important new ruling or change in the law that you are following, then remember, it's most likely too late and many of your competitors have written about the same thing. While I appreciate the effort, the ones which are immediate and really speak to the impact the law/decision or new update will have on our company, will get my attention;
- Stay in touch—it's OK to call to say hello; yes I am busy but I do like catching up about things that interest me be they sports; cooking; gardening. Visit me once a year in person if I'm really important to you. Find out what is going on from our perspective and how you might help me;
- Ask for feedback—about your team—partners and associates; really try to understand how we think about outside counsel and what is important to me and to my business colleagues.

After he stopped, he sighed and said, "OK, it's not so easy when you're impatient like me. I do know what clients and prospective clients are dealing with on a daily basis and how many directions one gets pulled into. So now that I've said this out loud, I need to remind myself to take a deep breath and stay connected and most important, be patient."