

A Post-Pandemic Law Firm Sales Checklist

By [Steven M. Bell](#) on May 24, 2021

During the disruption of 2020 and early 2021, no law firm put its sales efforts on hold; most discovered and implemented new techniques, including, of course the pervasive Zoom sales meeting. Now, as business normalizes a bit, it is time for law firm leaders to take up once again some developmental initiatives that were overdue even before the world turned upside down. Here is a list of sales considerations for the days ahead.

- The creation of serious high-level roles, up to and including ownership shares of the business, for business professionals who are not lawyers. Despite some movement along these lines in Arizona, Utah, and in a few other jurisdictions around the world, bar associations largely still prohibit equity ownership on the part of individuals who do not hold law licenses. As a result, law firms are deprived of some of the biggest sales brains, who simply will not consider allowing the constriction of their potential because of arcane and outdated rules. Many talented sales professionals are making progress at law firms; many more self-select out of the opportunity and thus deprive the profession of businesspeople who could even more profoundly drive progress and growth.
- As a corollary, it may be time to stop equivocating when it comes to titles of business professionals who bring home the bacon for law firms. If a staff professional is responsible for engineering exchange of products or services for money, he or she is selling. Buyers buy. Sellers sell. Even when other titles such as business development, client service, revenue, or market director are used, buyers know that the person in front of them is selling, and few are offended by an activity that, after all, drives their own businesses. The opportunity here is for a more authentic description of a legitimate and valuable business activity.
- Sales automation. In the last 16 months, the sellers who sold the most were those best at automating purchasing and delivery. Of course, legal services are different from tangible products, but still there is a lot that law firms could and should learn from sales visionaries such as Amazon.
- Law firms also have the opportunity to do more to “understand the business” of clients and potential clients. It starts with a more robust approach to business research and analysis. Vast amounts of information are available, but few firms are expert at using it. Sales professionals could get a leg up on the competition by spending more time analyzing this data and using it as a springboard to match up client needs with law firm capability.
- No doubt, the best way to understand a client’s business is to ask. According to one poll conducted prior to the pandemic, the vast majority of law firms claimed to have robust client-feedback programs, while, at the same time, only 16% of clients reported having experienced a client service interview from the primary outside law firm. Something doesn’t add up here. Even if the disparity is just a perception on the part of clients, they are, in essence, inviting more of this activity. No matter how much they believe they do right now, law firms should continue to ramp up client feedback even more.
- Finally, law firms will be wise to re-evaluate and invest more significantly in the creation of strategic-account programs, elevating this sales activity to levels that have for years produced dramatic results for global accounting

and consulting firms. Most law firms have key-client programs, but much more could and should be done as law firms engineer their post-pandemic futures. This is a priority important enough in the view of LawVision principle's Silvia Coulter and me that we spent a good portion of the pandemic shutdown writing a book on the topic: ["SAM-Legal: Turning Key Clients into Strategic Accounts."](#)

These are just a handful of post-pandemic or coming-out-of-the-pandemic opportunities to revisit sales strategies and help drive the new levels of revenue growth. We're always ready to brainstorm these and learn about other innovations from those working inside law firms to create the future.