

Five reasons why a Sales professional at your law firm can work

By [Jim Cranston](#) on August 29, 2022

The CFO called me and asked if we could schedule our initial meeting to discuss the project. I was surprised that he had called me and not the partner I brought to the pitch meeting. Then it occurred to me. The CFO thought I was the lead partner on the engagement!

I spent 10 years in sales at Big 4 firms. After my first few years in legal, I had expected the trend of law firms hiring sales professionals to take off. It didn't. But many years later, we're finally there. Today, a new era in the industry includes professional sales executives driving new business with both clients and prospective clients.

Based on my own experience, here are five reasons why hiring sales executives makes sense for your firm:

1. **Sales professionals have more time to sell than your lawyers.** My partners would bill between 1,400 – 1,600 hours a year. While they were doing billable work, I was selling. That's a lot more time dedicated to bringing in business.
2. **Sales professionals leverage partner time.** I'd put in countless hours of phone calls, research and even initial meetings before bringing one of my partners into an opportunity. That equated to a tremendous amount of time that the partners didn't have to invest on the front end of the sales process. A good sales executive can find and pre-qualify opportunities.
3. **Sales people can open doors.** When I closed big deals, my partners were always amazed that I was able to get past the "gatekeepers", get meetings and eventually get business (because they had tried for years without success). Sales people know how to sell, period.
4. **Sales executives are persistent.** For years I've heard from my coaching clients that "the guy never called me back". So that's it? One try and you give up? A sales person would not only try several times, but also figure out another way to get in. If you're interested in gold, Fort Knox has many doors.
5. **Sales folks are agnostic as to what they want to sell.** Let me explain. Most practicing attorneys are most interested in, and most comfortable, selling their own service. Corporate lawyers will focus on selling corporate work and so on. I don't blame them . . . it's what they know best. But a sales person will first assess the client's needs before determining whom to introduce to the prospect.

Building a sales team at your law firm will have many rewards. While the lawyers will be intimately involved in closing the business, teaming up with sales professionals on the front end of the sales process will save a significant amount of lawyer time. Thus ultimately freeing up your lawyers to do what they do best ... practice law and serve clients.

[Jim Cranston](#) is a founding Principal of LawVision where he consults with clients on revenue growth, business development and key client management in the professional services industry.