

Law Firm Business Development: “Dig Your Well Before You’re Thirsty”

By [LawVision](#) on August 29, 2013

Although Harvey Mackay’s bestselling book by the same name focuses on networking, I submit that each of us take the notion of “digging our well before we’re thirsty” to heart more broadly as part of our business development efforts. The economic malaise is having a continuing negative impact on many law firms and lawyers; manifesting itself in the form of a struggle to keep busy. As one might suspect, lawyers who need work are great students of what we teach related to fundamental business development skills. These lawyers have a major incentive—most typically in the form of compensation—to be effective developers of business or, at the very least, meaningful relationship development activity. These lawyers are particularly attentive and are enthusiastic participants in our training and coaching conversations.

Conversely, some of my clients are in the enviable position of being extremely busy. Generally speaking, these fortunate few are less motivated to invest the time learning and applying the basic fundamentals of business development. They focus on service delivery, are compensated handsomely (for now), and rely more on their “instinct” and “gut” as it relates to business development, expecting that the telephone will continue ringing, much like many of you who are reading this Blog did a decade ago. My advice to these individuals is to “dig their well before they’re thirsty.” The underlying message is to focus on building and internalizing business development basics to fall back on when the phone stops ringing; we all know that it will at some point.

If you are a Professional Development professional and are challenged by getting your superstars of today to enthusiastically participate in business development training, reference the points raised in this Blog post, but also mention to your superstars that are on the path to become the leaders of tomorrow. As tomorrow’s leaders, they must be prepared to offer guidance to the next generation. This guidance will take many forms, but certainly includes imparting the wisdom of basic fundamental business development skills to the next wave of superstars. If the superstars of today are incapable of sharing this knowledge with the next generation, they may be passed over for leadership roles in the future. Now is the time, irrespective of how busy they are, to learn these essential skills.

So, the message is to “dig your well before you’re thirsty”. As we share with all of our students, it isn’t difficult to do. It is a great investment in your future and may very well have an impact on the future of others, too.