

Law Firm Business Development: Establish Objectives for “Sales Conversations”

By [LawVision](#) on July 11, 2014

For many of you, your business clients have become personal acquaintances or maybe vice versa. In any case, summertime presents a fair amount of opportunity for connecting; an outdoor concert, a cookout, a lobster bake on the beach, a baseball game, or any number of children’s activities. These casual, non-business settings are actually great opportunities for deepening or broadening your business relationships. To paraphrase from my holiday blog post from last year entitled “Holiday Networking,” I’m not suggesting that you ruin the spirit of the social event by attending these gatherings with only the notion of business development in mind, but rather you not ignore this opportunity altogether.

I encourage all of my coachees (and you) to approach each of these settings with some objective related to business development in mind. At first blush, it may seem crass (or even downright dishonest) to some of you to have what might appear to be a “hidden agenda” going into these otherwise pleasant, airy, non-business type events; an agenda that, on its face, may be self-serving in nature. Here’s another way to think about this. Consider the objective of having the primary focus on delivering benefit to your contact. These categories range from making introductions (professional or personal), to getting to know their organization better if the talk turns to business (what are their department goals, who do they report to, how are they measured, their definition of value, etc.?), to giving them a gift because of a recently celebrated anniversary, birthday, peer recognition, promotion, etc. The possibilities are endless and, if you spend just a few minutes focusing on it, coming up with a productive objective should be relatively easy. Always start from the position of giving something and your feeling of “hidden agenda” will quickly vanish or may never even materialize in the first place. Establish an objective for every business development setting, whether it’s a formal pitch meeting or a casual beer around the beach campfire, and you’ll make the most out these “sales conversations” to deepen and broaden your most valuable relationships in the process.

Have a great summer, everyone!