

Law Firm Business Development: Focus on the Fundamentals

By [LawVision](#) on October 30, 2014

Let's face it, the requisite "business development evil" aspect of practicing law isn't typically the most desirable activity for lawyers; income and equity partners alike. Over the past few years, I've heard just about every excuse in the book used to justify why business development and marketing activities are not being executed. These excuses range from "I'm just too busy and don't have the time" to "I don't know which business development activities to focus on." The answer to these excuses as well as for nearly all of the (more creative) others is to, quite simply, focus on the fundamentals. These are:

- Stay top-of-mind-with-the-people-who-matter
- Let technology work for you, rather than you working for it
- Have a plan

Stay top-of-mind-with-the-people-who-matter:

What is more important than your network? Prioritize the contacts and actively manage them. Don't have much of a network? Then build one! The framework for successful network development is 1) meet people (network), 2) get these people interested in you by delivering value (be interesting!), 3) actively manage/nurture that relationship (with discipline), and 4) leverage those relationships into referrals to others. In what is described all-too-often as a "relationship business," it's only logical to think that this is meaningful business development activity. The most time consuming part of this progression is the networking phase. The other phases simply require a little discipline.

Let technology work for you, rather than you working for it:

Don't view technology tools like LinkedIn as a "to do" item that has to be checked off of a list. You have enough things "to do" already. Properly populating your LinkedIn profile will push material to your LinkedIn page that will serve to credentialize you, educate you, and provide content that you can easily "re-purpose." In this case, let LinkedIn remind you to visit the site and, once there, be active by "liking," reposting, adding contacts, etc. By taking a little (very little) time setting up a proper LinkedIn profile on the front-end, meaningful content will be delivered to your technological doorstep, will remind you that it's time to do some marketing, and will save you a great deal of time in the long run. It's easy, so do it!

Have a Plan:

Could this be any more basic? What, you don't have a plan?! Would you ever conceive of building a house with the walls first? Of course not. We know that this doesn't make sense. You need a proper foundation for the walls and roof to rest upon. In business, that foundation comes in the form of a plan. In business development, it's important that your plan be simple and actionable. As you create your goals, don't confuse a "goal" with an "action item" and commit to quantifying your goal by including specific dollars as a revenue target or percentage as a growth goal. Remember, goals are strategic and action items are tactical and granular. Goals without any quantification are simply objectives. I find that this is where my clients typically run off the rails. Create three quantifiable goals and then create action items that tie directly to achieving those goals. These are the fundamentals for a meaningful plan.

For those of you who are “just too busy” or just aren’t sure where to spend your time, focus on the fundamentals with a little discipline and rigor and you’re sure to be successful in business development.