

Law Firm Business Development: The Cross-Selling Conundrum

By [LawVision](#) on November 1, 2013

Cross-selling is one critical component of a successful business development strategy at professional services firms. As any law firm CMO/CBDO knows, cross-disciplinary cooperation is one of the most challenging climbs that many face internally. Most cross-selling initiatives are premised on the belief that it is easier to expand business with an existing client than to bring in a new one. While true, simply making introductions between partners in different practice areas is not enough. The most successful cross-selling initiatives are aligned with clients'/prospective clients' business strategies to showcase the firm's depth, not just as a way to generate business, but as a way of helping clients run their businesses better. Many cross-selling plans—while steeped in good intentions—fail because they are not properly aligned with client needs.

The best way to align with client needs is to first understand their business;

- What is their business model? In other words, how do they make money?
- What are some industry trends? Where's the industry going?
- What are their business goals and objectives? What are your key contacts' personal goals and objectives?
- What are their risks? What are some obstacles that may get in the way of them achieving their objectives?
- How are they organized? (HINT: get a copy of their org chart); Who from the business units is influential in hiring outside counsel?
- What is their definition of success? How about their definition of value?
- Which legal solutions can we bring to them that we've brought to others just like them to help them overcome the obstacles that are getting in the way of them achieving their objectives?

Perhaps by sharing these thoughts with your partners and aligning your department's priorities with answering the questions in the list above, you may be able to maximize your chances for cross-selling success.