

## Law Firm Business Development: Turn the Client's Strategy Into Your Business Development Strategy

By [Silvia L. Coulter](#) on February 6, 2020

Ask your clients for a copy of their strategic plan, or at the very least, a copy of the executive summary of the strategic plan. No client has ever said “No” when we’ve asked them if they would be willing to share this information with their top outside counsel. It is a straight-forward ask. Simply, “To continue to serve the company at the highest levels, we would like to have a copy of the strategic plan/executive summary of the company’s strategic plan.” To develop a strong client relationship that will carry well into the future and facilitate client retention, it will be important to align the client’s goals with firm offerings to truly deliver value, and to help the client to achieve its goals.

For example, a firm in California is working with a large Japanese company with U.S. offices. The lawyers asked for a copy of the company’s strategic plan. The company provided an Executive Summary of their plan. A key highlight was one of the company’s divisions had a significant amount of budget to acquire North American based medical device companies. Having this business intelligence allowed the firm to proactively assist the client with identifying potential companies for acquisition. The firm was then legal counsel for the M&A work.

One could argue that perhaps the firm would have received this work anyway; but I say it is not guaranteed and perhaps even unlikely. By clearly understanding the strategic goals of the company, the firm was key in assisting with implementation of the business goals and thus, began to work on the associated legal needs.

In today’s competitive legal environment, it is important to be proactive, align with clients’ business goals, anticipate legal needs and become a business/legal partner with the client. Be bold—ask for information, be interested—learn about the clients’ businesses, and be successful.