

Law Firm Sales: Follow some simple scripts to achieve results

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Building business is about building relationships. Every lawyer knows business development is an important part of being a member of the firm. And most understand relationships matter. But what to do and what to say is often the challenge many face with turning contacts into revenue opportunities.

Let's dissect a few of these opportunities. Below we present some tried and true scripts lawyers may use for approaching contacts.

1. For clients with whom you have completed some work but no long-term, ongoing relationship yet.

I've enjoyed working with you/getting to know you [whichever is most appropriate] and would welcome your thoughts and advice on how to continue to build a relationship with COMPANY for potential opportunities to work together. [Then let him/her answer and go from there]

2. For referral sources/potential referral sources who have existing counsel relationships.

We know COMPANY has good options when it comes to referring work to counsel. I'm very interested in hearing from you, what you think our next step should be to continue to strengthen our relationship with COMPANY. [Listen to how he/she responds and think of a next question that leads him/her closer to suggesting a next step for you to take for building the relationship which could include meeting more of the team from COMPANY at their location or at the firm.]

3. For inactive clients/contacts with whom you have not spoken in a few or more years. (The objective is to rebuild the relationship and not discuss BD right away)

It's been a while since we connected and I wanted to touch base to say hello and hear how things are going. [Pause and let them answer or leave this as a message for them to return call]. I would welcome the opportunity to schedule a time to talk with you to hear what's going on with you, your business, etc. OR I would welcome the opportunity to schedule a time to meet—I'd be happy to come over to your office. Let's look at calendars and figure out a good time. Remember, you are back at the beginning stages of the sales cycle—Assess Needs!

4. For connecting with your existing contacts who will introduce you to someone else in their organization.

Thank you for all your support. I would appreciate your advice: Who else in the company do you recommend I meet to continue to build our relationship with XYZ Company. How should I go about meeting him/her?

To follow up on that if they forget to make the intro: NAME, you've been great to offer to introduce me to XXX. I'm calling to follow up on your recommendation about next steps.

Or to connect directly with the individual they suggested: NAME, I've worked with NAME over the past few years on some important projects. He suggested you would be a good person for us to connect with to learn more about your area of work at ABC Corp. What works on your schedule for a virtual/in person meeting?

5. For connecting with your existing contacts who will introduce you to someone else in their business network (outside of their organization).

To approach someone in a different way, you may also want to say, "I appreciate the opportunity to work with you and would welcome your advice about something." "As I continue to build my practice, are there one or two people in your network who you think I should meet?" Sometimes people are not in a position to give you business, but are in a position to introduce you to others.

6. For turning friends/neighbors into potential business opportunities.

At a social outing or neighborhood meeting, you might say: "Cynthia, I'm going to give you a call at your office next week to find out more about your business and to discuss ways in which we might have opportunities to work together."

If you want to address the issue further you may say once you do have a meeting: "Our friendship is of utmost importance to me and I don't want to jeopardize that. At the same time, it seems that we could pursue opportunities for working together. Do you agree?"

Keep these scripts in mind if you are a lawyer who is building a book of business, a BD professional who is helping lawyers build their books of business, or leadership at the firm who are asking others to build their books of business. It takes time. It takes energy. It takes confidence. And it takes a developed skillset. And one must connect with one's contacts. Check in with contacts and inactive clients to see how they are doing. Get out of your comfort zone. Find a little time each week to focus on relationship-building. Results will follow.