

Law Firm Sales: Reach Out With Gratitude

By [Silvia L. Coulter](#) on June 19, 2023

Receiving acknowledgement for a job well done, or for helping another business colleague or contact, or for ongoing work received from a client, is rewarding for the recipient. The inherent message is “you matter.” Acknowledging one’s contributions is a form of recognition and appreciation. Yet, many forget to do this simple outreach which is a) easy to do, b) takes very little time, and c) has a huge upside.

A recent meeting with a group of senior litigation partners reminded me of this simple concept. During this business development meeting with a client in New York, I mentioned it’s important to send a handwritten note sometime during the year—holidays are always a good time for this—to thank a client for their business, or a referral source for the ongoing referrals they’ve sent your way, or a colleague or business professional at your firm who has helped you in some way.

One of the partners said, “I don’t think this matters and, furthermore, our clients are too busy to be bothered with communications that are not of immediate importance.” Another partner got up and left the room. Clearly, I struck a chord of some sort.

A lively discussion then ensued. During this debate, the partner who left the room returned with a sheet of paper in his hand. He announced to the group, “I thought it would be helpful to underscore the point being made here. I have a letter from the general counsel of a significant client, a private equity firm we do a lot of business with. The letter says, ‘Steve, I’m sending you a copy of a thank you note I received from your competitor, another large NY firm. I’m wondering why I never received a note from you, given that your firm receives far more business than your competitor’s firm.’” The room was quiet for a moment and another partner said, “Duly noted.”

While this topic may seem a bit elementary, it is surprising the number of partners with whom I work, who are so busy they don’t think of this simple way of reaching out to clients and others or the positive impact it will have.

Buy some note cards and take a few minutes to thank clients, referral sources, firm colleagues, and peers who have helped to make your career as successful as it is. You will also find some joy in writing these.

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