# Little Things Mean a Lot

By Steven M. Bell on August 10, 2020

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In a soon-to-be-published book about strategic account management (sometimes called "key client planning") for law firms, we have assembled a good deal of detailed technical advice for building and operating a Strategic Account Management strategy at a law firm.  We also share practical insights into the human side of sales at law firms and how sometimes micro steps add significantly to the journey.  Here is a short excerpt from the book about the latter.

*Strategic account work is step-by-step over a long period of time, not a gargantuan effort over a short one.  Not every interaction with clients reaches the level of "big meetings" or "substantial pitches," both of which require the expenditure of lots of time and sometimes money.  In our large-client work, though, we often have been reminded of the effectiveness of the dozens of small but highly productive steps, which each can be accomplished in, literally, minutes.  Here are some simple examples of next steps that don't require a lot of time, but which add up to a lot and which steadily solidify the relationship and garner new work.   In most respects, these steps represent just being a client-facing, and team-facing person who pays attention and who cares.*

*o   Make the continued successful operation of the strategic account team the highest priority of each workday.  If necessary, make a calendar appointment for yourself (the first of the day) to give 10 minutes' consideration to the strategic client and the professionals there with whom you work.*

*o   Set up e-mail alerts about your client and its industry….and read them daily.  When appropriate, reach out to the client by phone or e-mail with a message of congratulations or to offer advice.*

*o   Open the "news" section of your client's web site daily.   Let your client know that you're paying attention to the items it itself feels are important by reaching out with a phone call or an e-mail.*

*o   Know about and participate in the charitable and social causes important to the client.  During a charity campaign, donate; no need to be anonymous.*

*o   Check the SharePoint or HighQ strategic account management portal daily.  Enter something, especially information or insights that evoke reactions from your colleagues on the strategic account management team.*

*o   When there's positive news at the client, share it with the team and on social media with a short comment.*

*o   Follow your client (and the individuals who will be on the client side of the team) on social media.  And do plenty of "liking" and sharing forward.*

*o   Based on your growing personal and professional knowledge of those within the client organization, clip and send news articles of interest, industry updates, and research specific to the client's industry and of interest to those individuals.  Script: "I was thinking of you when I read this article."*

*o   If you know the dates of client birthdays, anniversaries or other significant life events, enter them into your calendar and* *reach out on those dates.*

*o When* _another_ *member of your strategic account team achieves success with a deal or a case, or experiences personal or professional recognition, let the client know. It's easier to brag about others than about oneself.*

*o Share developments – even small ones – liberally amongst the team. Celebrate the big wins, sure, but also report the small victories such as setting up a client meeting, getting assigned a new matter, or connecting with a new individual at the client. You've set up a team e-mail list; use it!*

You and your teammates can generate dozens of small-step ideas like these to advance your strategic account initiative and to deepen relationships with clients. Most important, if you have an idea, don't sit on it. Act on it….NOW!

Our upcoming book, SAM-Legal: from Key Clients to Strategic Accounts, will be available on Amazon by autumn of 2020.