

Mind the Gap: The Marketing and Business Development Chief

By [Silvia L. Coulter](#) on April 25, 2014

During a recent marketing audit project with a firm, I had a conversation with one of the firm's more influential partners. When I asked him about the Marketing and Business Development team he said, "You can put away your paper with the questions on it and I will tell you one thing." He continued, "they need to take their own advice—they are a great group of people but they don't listen to their own advice." We went on to have a great conversation and, admittedly, his musings were funny but sobering at the same time. Our LawVision team has conducted a good number of marketing and BD audits over the past few years and we generally hear about the same types of issues. So, the following quick sketch is a high level guide to all the Directors and CMOs who may want to avoid unplanned career moves:

- Take initiative to present your plans for the success of your team. Show how you will help them to be successful business development and marketing professionals through professional development and mentoring. Firm leadership is always aware of leaders who are not supportive or who do not help their team members to be successful.
- Don't be a "credit hog." Give credit to team members when they have good ideas, have completed a project that went well or have made someone else look good.
- Conduct a survey (yes, ask your "clients" for feedback). Connect with key stakeholders, practice chairs, office heads to gain valuable feedback about you and your team. Like you advise the partners, check in with clients—go talk with them!
- Conduct "post matter reviews" with partners to gain input about specific team members' performance on a project.
- Be proactive in suggesting next steps for the firm to take—they may not be as far ahead in vision land as you, but suggesting some strategic ideas for the future and then revisiting them periodically will keep you in good stead with the firm leaders. Be patient, persistent and proactive.
- Provide the lawyers with an opportunity to provide input, showcase their successes on the firm Intranet or through an internal firm newsletter. Build support in little ways around the firm.

Mind the gaps!

Silvia Coulter is Chair of the Business Development Practice at LawVision Group LLC and may be reached at 617-697-4869 or scoulter@lawvisiongroup.com

