

Mirror Mirror: What To Do When Clients Don't Pick You

By [LawVision](#) on November 14, 2013

It's that iconic image – the vain Queen staring at her reflection in the Magic Mirror as a voice tells her it is not she, but Snow White, who is the fairest of them all. We've all been there – personally and professionally – when the one you've been trying to land tells you they have decided to choose someone else. As one General Counsel put it to a Managing Partner friend of hers, "It's not that you weren't responsive, it's just that [INSERT FIRM NAME HERE] was really fast."

First off, it's ok to get emotional. Lawyers, after all, have one of the [lowest levels of resiliency](#) of any profession. Cry, curse, whatever it takes (note: not in front of – or at – the client). Then, once you've pulled yourself together, take a lead from some of the steps our clients have found useful to help with the rebound:

1) Take Inventory

Face it, nobody knows us better than we know ourselves. Rather than ticking off all of the reasons you are superior to the competition, focus on the one party who truly matters: the client. Ask yourself the following key questions – if you struggle to articulate the answers clearly, the client probably did the same.

1. What was the critical business objective behind the client's legal need?
2. How did your proposed solution help the client achieve their stated objectives?

2) Revisit What Makes You Fairest of Them All

What reason did you give the client to select you over the other firm? And – here's the key – does this reason better position you to solve their problem and to partner with the client on reaching their objectives?

Often times, the unique differentiator which makes you the top choice for one client is completely irrelevant to another. Keep an eye on how the prospective client measures success to delineate exactly what is going to distinguish you. If you are not sure, just ask.

3) Don't Go Gentle into that Good Night

Though it is difficult to overcome rejection, it is now your job to demonstrate to the client your value and investment in the relationship (in short, you want to show them what they're missing). This requires ramping up your investment in outreach and value-added communications.

1. Set up Google alerts or ask your library or business development team to bring you hot topics on the client, their industry and changes relevant to their key issues. Do not forward these. Instead...
2. Provide the client with succinct, frequent emails (1 to 3 times per month) with juicy tidbits and ideas relevant to their objective (e.g., an alternative approach to financing small-cap acquisitions; a new regulation impacting zoning requirements)
3. Introduce the client to like-minded professionals with similar business needs and goals such as other clients, referral sources or colleagues

Your goal is to stay top of mind and offer the client advice, expertise and value (at no charge). After 3 to 6 months, ask the client for a call or meeting to reconnect and discuss one or two key topics in more depth. The next opportunity is yours!

