

Five Reasons Why Hiring a Sales Professional Will Benefit Your Firm

By [Jim Cranston](#) on December 13, 2019

The CFO called me and asked if we could schedule our initial meeting to discuss the project. I was surprised that he had called me and not the partner I brought to the pitch meeting. Then it occurred to me. The CFO thought I was the lead partner on the engagement!

I spent ten years in sales at Big 4 firms. After my first few years in legal, I had expected the trend to hire sales professionals in law firms would take off. It didn't. But *many* years later, we see a quickly growing trend to make these hires. Today, a new era in the industry includes professional sales executives driving new business with both existing and prospective clients.

Based on my own Big 4 experience, here are five reasons why hiring sales executives makes sense for your firm:

1. **Sales professionals have more time to sell than your lawyers.** My partners would bill between 1,400 – 1,600 hours a year. While they were doing billable work, I was selling. That's a lot more time dedicated to bringing in business.
2. **Sales professionals leverage partner time.** I'd put in countless hours of phone calls, research and even initial meetings before bringing one of my partners into an opportunity. That equated to a tremendous amount of time that the partners didn't have to invest on the front end of the sales process. A good sales executive can find and pre-qualify opportunities.
3. **Salespeople will open doors.** When I closed big deals, my partners were always amazed that I was able to get past the "gatekeepers," get meetings, and eventually get business (because they had tried for years often without success). Salespeople know how to sell, period.
4. **Sales executives are persistent.** For years I've heard from my coaching clients that "the guy never called me back." So that's it? Often after one attempt, or losing one opportunity, many lawyers will move on. A salesperson would not only try several times, but also figure out another way to get in. If you're interested in gold, Fort Knox has many doors.
5. **Sales folks are agnostic as to what they want to sell.** Let me explain. Most practicing attorneys are most interested in, and most comfortable with, selling their own services. Corporate lawyers will focus on selling corporate work and so on. I don't blame them . . . it's what they know best. But a salesperson will first assess the client's needs before determining who to introduce to the prospect. Therefore, the firm may have many opportunities for expanded services to one client.

Building a sales team at your law firm will have many rewards. While the lawyers will be very involved in closing the business, teaming up with sales professionals on the front end of the sales process will save a significant amount of lawyer time. Thus, ultimately freeing up your lawyers to do what they do best ... practice law and serve clients.