

The Law Firm Marketing and Business Development Organization: It's Not the Same Old Marketing Team Anymore

By [Silvia L. Coulter](#) on September 18, 2012

There is a clear upward trend confirming law firms are recognizing the need to centralize marketing and create a separate business development/sales function at their firms. One might guess this trend is showing large firms moving in this direction; but we are seeing this with all size firms. This trend is confirmed also by the 2010 and 2011 annual [Marketing and Business Development Study](#) sponsored by Hildebrandt Institute and LawVision Group.

Some firms have separate functions with separate chiefs/directors and some firms group the separate functions under one chief. It is clear that many firms have found that hiring sales specialists (those who have worked in sales (on commission or "carried a bag,") are more successful than those who simply understand the sales function. While partners might be skeptical about having sales people open doors, sell for them and bring in business to the firm, those who are well down this path see the advantage of sales people partnering with their lawyers.

Lee Miller, Joint Chief Executive Officer of DLA Piper comments,

"As I have come to learn in this role over the years, a business development vision is extremely essential and must tie in with your vision of the firm and the business development professionals play an integral essential role with this and clients."

The role sales people play at firms can be very controversial among many lawyers. This is a trend and our guess is law firms will have similar business development and marketing structures similar to the accounting firms within a few years.

As always, we welcome your opinion, comments and experiences.