

The Realities of Law Firm Sales and Business Development—Case Study #1

By [Silvia L. Coulter](#) on October 26, 2021

Renita, a non-equity partner in a global firm, was working with us to up her business development game. When we began working with her, we were told the following:

- She is working 80% and is taking care of her an elderly parent and two high schoolers
- Her practice leader is not very flexible when it comes to making equity partners in the group. Partners are required to hit \$X million in revenue prior to him recommending them for equity partner (no exceptions)
- She is a diverse female partner
- She has a solid \$1 million dollar book of business
- Her goal was to increase her book, and to also make equity partner
- COVID lockdown prevented her from in-person networking with her target prospects and clients
- Her network was amazing and she was great at keeping in touch

We teamed up with Renita and got to work.

One of our sales coach consultants began to work with Renita to help her:

- Organize her contacts and select 50 individuals to focus on for the next twelve months. These were individuals who could help her reach her goal of \$2 million
- Take credit where credit is deserved. Have open discussions with other partners she is bringing in to meet with contacts for new business opportunities. She would receive at least 50% or more of the credit for any new business brought in through her efforts, regardless of who works on the matters
- Check in with her practice leader regularly. Restate the goal of expecting to become an equity partner, and ask for feedback about progress in that direction—one needs to know where one is at in this process all year long
- Get off committees that are not furthering her career at the firm. If committee work does not translate to recognized billable time and path to equity partnership, think twice about the time it takes away from more productive hours that could be spent building a book of business and billing client work
- Prepare a sales forecast to stay focused on top pursuits. During busy times, it's easy to forget about, or move to the side, business development priorities. But those opportunities ready to provide new revenue may only need a few more discussions to kick them over the goal post.

Our coach worked with Renita to show her that her confidence as a lawyer needs to show through during the sales process. Clients want to work with confident and talented lawyers who they like. We pushed her a bit out of her “comfort zone” to connect with her contacts and to stay focused on how she could help them with their business goals. This is a stronger approach to take versus “pitching” one’s services.

By staying focused on those specific steps it will take to close new business, dealing with the political side of the practice so there are no surprises internally, and bridging firm services to client goals Renita has taken her career to a whole new level and is heading into a blockbuster 2022.