

Topics For Your Next Business Development Lunch

By [Jim Cranston](#) on August 9, 2018

A client recently asked me for guidance on an upcoming business development lunch that was obviously important to her. Her former colleague had recently been appointed as the new general counsel of a huge potential client. I immediately recognized the anxiety in her voice. Turns out the mere thought of having to prepare for this important business development opportunity was clearly stressing her out. Perhaps it's true for a lot of us . . .

This was my response:

A few thoughts regarding your upcoming meeting with the GC:

1. Begin with rapport building – personal, family, kids, summer vacation, what's new?
2. Next, explore how her new role as the GC is going. Be interested and curious. Be inquisitive. Consider asking about what she's working on, her priorities for the year, major projects, interesting aspects of the role and if she's experienced any surprises so far.
 - During the exploration conversation, be sure to “drill down” on any particular topics that might be of interest to you or the firm. Perhaps there will be a way you can add value.
3. At this stage, I anticipate that she will ask about how things are going for you. If not, perhaps try to steer the conversation in that direction. Perhaps share some significant highlights or innovations from your work or the firms.
 - Alternatively, if she doesn't ask about you, I would suggest a next step with her to keep your conversation going. Something like participating with you on a webcast, panel, article, client alert, women's initiative or event, diversity project, etc. The key is to get a follow up conversation or meeting.
4. I would now close with “is there anything I can do to help you?” That simple gesture will stick in her mind for some time. If things are going well, you might intimate that you'd thoroughly enjoy working with her if the opportunity ever came about. Again, the gesture plants a seed.

I hope this helps. I'm happy to discuss if interested . . . just let me know.

Good luck!

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