

You Already Know 'All You Need to Know' to Get More Law Firm Clients

By [LawVision](#) on November 23, 2016

What is your number one obstacle to attracting new business? If you are like most of my clients, your answer is "time."

Lack of sufficient time is the one thing that wreaks the most havoc on the would-be rainmaker. Knowledge of business development is not the problem. Figuring out how to do it is a snap compared to actually doing it. Of course, as with anything, you can always learn more techniques and better solutions. But, the problem is not knowing, it's *doing*.

If you already know how to attract new clients to your business (if you really can't figure it out, [call me](#) and I'll help you through it) but you don't seem to be able to actually go out and do it. How do you fix it?

The answer is: build habits. Business development is less about a series of time-consuming events and more about a consistent chipping away at the problem, one person at a time. Make a list of your contacts and come up with a plan each week for moving one of them closer to bringing you business. Form the habit, solve the problem.

Sound too easy?

Consider weight loss. I'm not that great at it. One glance at the menu and I'm ready to go, one whiff of my neighbor's grilling and I'm all in. Bring out the chocolate ... game over. I actually have a plaque on the wall at Shula's Steak house in Chicago. Believe me, I earned it. Exercise? Oh yes, regularly. I run to the fridge during every commercial break and between innings. You get the picture. Keeping my weight down has not been my priority. If when we meet your first reaction is "maybe he should let out the waist of that suit," please go easy on me, I hurt easily.

Now, I know what to do. I mean c'mon, who doesn't know what to do to be healthy? Eat fresh fruits, vegetables, and lean meats, go easy on the carbs, watch your calorie count, get some exercise, and blah blah blah. In fact, as I write this, I can see three books on my library shelf that explain what I should do to lose weight – some with specific recipes and techniques coupled with scientific or pseudo-scientific reasons to back up each author's approach. Clearly, I know what to do but I, perhaps like many of you, don't do it. Sure, there are fits and starts. I read the book, give it a try for a day or two, but eventually momma brings out the pasta and things quickly go south.

What's the problem? It's habits. To lose weight you have to form good habits. Knowing what to do is meaningless unless you actually do it and do it regularly.

Is it any different for business development? Not at all. If you don't have ingrained habits, you won't stay at it when it's tough going, when you are discouraged, or when you just don't feel like you have the time.

Compare your need to succeed to [a recent study about weight loss](#). It was published in the American Journal of Preventive Medicine, and was based on methods derived from social cognitive theory and behavioral self-management techniques. Researchers started with over 1,600 dieters and asked them to do three things:

1. Do all the basic things we all know to do for losing weight. That would include eating fresh fruits, vegetables, lean

meats, and fewer carbs, reducing one's calorie count, getting some exercise, etc.

2. Attend small group or personal meetings that emphasize social support, problem-solving and program ownership, and,
3. Keep a regular record of foods eaten and exercise performed every day.

Is it any surprise that those who committed to only carrying out task number one lost far less weight than those who went to the meetings *and* kept a log of their progress? The difference is that the last two activities – having a personal motivator/supporter and keeping a record – lead to real change and cause the formation of habits that lead to success.

[Charles Duhigg](#), author of "[The Power of Habit](#)", suggests that creating a record of activities does something else. He argued that participants eventually start to see patterns in their behavior, and many start using the logged information to create future plans. The structure of building that one habit will therefore spawn other good habits.

I meet with my coaching clients regularly. Among other things, we do some of the same things mentioned above. We provide support, attack identified obstacles, create strategies for success, and motivate them to act. Of course, there is some how-to training, but the majority of time is spent building habits that lead to success even when they are already overloaded.

We also encourage the creation of something similar to the successful dieter's record. Our participants come away with a plan and a pipeline document that focuses efforts, establishes control, and builds good habits for keeping in touch, following up, and monitoring progress.

Going back to the weight-loss study, both groups of dieters knew what to do but the group that received coaching and used the appropriate tools lost significantly more weight than the dieters who didn't. Duhigg reports one dieter as saying "After a while, the journal got inside my head. I started thinking about meals differently. It gave me a system for thinking about food without becoming depressed."

Getting it all down on paper (or in a spreadsheet) makes the difference. Would-be rainmakers succeed if they are constantly monitoring their list of prospects, making adjustments where needed, setting next steps, and taking action.

It's clear that I am the wrong guy to keep you away from mom's pie or the local buffet, (heck, I may even meet you there), but this I know from years of experience: one-on-one coaching works. More importantly, if through that coaching you can create a list of key contacts and review it regularly, you will create success. Build that one habit and the rest will follow.