

CAREER JOURNAL

The Check Boxes

What Are the Critical Factors to Consider When Choosing a New Firm?

By Bill Crooks

Let's take a moment and step back in fantasy-time to Aug. 3, 2009. The story could have gone like this:

Firm Chairman Rex Bidley has just informed his Chief Marketing Officer that the firm must take better advantage of new technologies. He informs the CMO, whom he has promised "a seat at the table," "I have decided that we should produce a podcast, starring me, to break the news that the firm will be laying off redundant support staff and 'non-essential' associates."

At the same time, 30 floors below, the corporate practice business development manager Jennifer Faircloth is reviewing her e-mail inbox where she finds: Thurs. 8/3/2009 4:25 PM ... Subject line "Why isn't my phone ringing?" sent by a partner in the securities practice ... Thurs. 8/3/2009 4:26PM Subject line "Pitch due tomorrow." Another partner states that she forgot to inform Jennifer that she has a pitch due tomorrow. When 9 p.m. rolls around, Jen will eat dinner at her desk again. Pushing onward, Manager Faircloth begins an e-mail to the proposal group leader requesting assistance; but then she remembers that there no longer is a proposal group. The group leader and her coordinator were part of the first round

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Lawyers Are in the Relationship-Building Business But Are They Connecting?

By Kimberly Alford Rice

Some things appear to be so simple that we assume (dangerously) that everyone "gets it." Bear with me a moment.

For lawyers, it is imperative to consistently and persistently cultivate, nurture and strengthen their relationships with their universal networks — with clients, to receive more work; with referral sources, to receive more referrals; with prospects to develop new work, and so on. Then, answer me, why is it that a significant number of lawyers (clients and wannabes) either have no system (formal or otherwise) for getting and staying in touch with these people and/or do a dismal job of staying connected?

WHAT DOES 'GETTING AND STAYING IN TOUCH' MEAN?

Again, a seemingly obvious question, but in my legal marketing practice of over 20 years, I have yet to encounter more than a handful of lawyers who understand, as a practical matter, the fundamental principle of this phrase.

Starting with the widely known statistic that it takes from 7-10 "touches" annually to stay "top-of-mind," lawyers are well-served to develop (often with the support of their legal secretary/assistant/marketing or IT department) a consolidated contact list, including:

- Clients;
- Industry/professional contacts;
- Referral sources;
- Prospects;
- Friends and family;
- School classmates (law school, college, high school, etc.);
- Co-workers and former co-workers;
- Contacts from former clerkships;
- Association contacts;
- Community contacts;
- Holiday card recipients; and so on.

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Relationships

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Though it may be an arduous administrative task to assemble all the business cards, old Rolodexes (yes, I'm showing my age), database print-outs, etc., it is important to have all your contacts in one system.

As I often relay to my clients, no list equals no connections and communications with friends, peers, industry contacts, prospects and ultimately, no clients. Remember, we're in the "relationship-building" business and it becomes much more daunting to foster relationships if we don't proactively get and stay in touch.

While I could outline the precise steps lawyers need to take in assembling, organizing, categorizing and systemizing their contacts, I'll spare the reader the administrative details in this article except to point out that once the task of gathering and entering all your contacts into a central system (even Outlook does a decent job of this) is complete, lawyers would be sorely remiss if they did not "categorize" their contact names.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

For purposes of communicating regularly with your various constituents (clients, referral sources, prospects, etc.), no one communication message will be of interest to everyone on your contact list. That is to say, if you develop an e-newsletter or legal update on the importance of developing social media policies for the workplace and send it to your human resource clients, that topic may be of little interest to your charitable organization contacts unless they are involved in employment law issues. Basically, you want to tailor your

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message to an intended audience and there is no better way than to develop "categories" of contacts.

When it comes to knowing how, when and how often to reach out, paramount on most attorneys' minds is that they do not want to be perceived as "too pushy," "aggressive" or otherwise annoying. Understandable. One principle I often convey to my clients is that most people are so involved in their own world, business, family, etc., you are not capturing 100% of their attention most of the time. In other words, to adequately "register" on your targets' radar, there must be regular, consistent and persistent "touch points," be they via e-mail, phone call, face-to-face (for which there is no substitute) and social media outlets, just to name a few.

CHECK MOTIVATIONS

To build and grow a healthy practice, it is imperative to develop a system of getting and staying in touch, but doing so with the appropriate mindset. In short, "it's not about you."

Lawyers often ask me, "What is it that I'm saying to all these people?" "I don't want to bother these folks," and other such sentiments.

My response is usually a variation on the theme of reaching out with a helpful spirit and with true intentions of checking in on your contacts' businesses, seeing how they are making out with a recent transition or starting a new position, or a company move, etc. The universal sowing seeds of good will will certainly reap only good things. Or, said another way, employing Newton's law of motion, "for every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction." The more "good will" you put out, the more it will come back to you ... usually multi-fold.

TIME CONSIDERATIONS

Attorneys are very busy people, often logging their time in six-minute increments. Where do they "find" the time to get and stay in touch with everyone AND have the oft-needed downtime?

Just today, I explained to a junior partner client that if addressed productively, his contacts will soon be in his personal network circle. Think

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Client Feedback — Best Practices

Part One of a Three-Part Article

By Donald E. Aronson

My articles in the September and December issues of last year discussed the 12 steps that are essential for a well-planned and well-executed Client Feedback Program (“CFP”). As mentioned in those two articles, “While all [12 steps] are crucial in attaining the desired end-result, *how* each step is implemented and *by whom* will obviously have a distinct effect on the outcome” (emphasis added).

The purpose of this three-part article is to elaborate on the *How* and the *By Whom*. In other words, for a successful CFP, it will require more than just going through the basic mechanics, or 12 steps. It will be necessary to implement certain and several Best Practices to assure a result that will achieve a firm’s — as well as the respective client service teams’, practice groups’ and/or practice offices’ — relevant goals and objectives.

The first two parts of this article will discuss the *How*. The third part will be devoted to the *By Whom*. The Best Practices to be discussed are based on our more than 20 years of experience with Client Feedback, both as Lead Partners at, and as consultants to, professional services firms.

While a CFP may incorporate interviews (in-person and/or by phone) as well as surveys (written or online

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questionnaires), this three-part article will be oriented primarily toward interviews as they are what you’ll want to use with your Tier 1 — *i.e.*, most valuable — clients.

THE HOW BEST PRACTICES

Among the various components of the *How* Best Practices are the following:

- A. Background Orientations
- B. Client Selection
- C. Interviewee Selection
- D. The Interviews
- E. Communicating Feedback
- F. Follow-Up
- G. Summary Reports
- H. A Continuous Process
- I. Cost

This first part of the article discusses components A through D; Part Two will appear in the September 2011 issue and will discuss E through I.

A. Background Orientations

- *Orientation with Firm Management* — This will reveal firm and service area goals and objectives as well as firm strategic and marketing initiatives, and also enable the interviewer to explain the approach and his/her qualifications.
- *Separate orientations with each Lead Partner* — For the clients whose executives are to be interviewed, the purpose of this orientation is to determine Client Service Team goals and objectives, discuss major issues regarding the client relationship (including the fee and other competing service providers), and determine whom and how many to interview.

B. Client Selection

- *Principal focus on Tier 1 clients* — A CFP is a major undertaking requiring considerable resources. Since maximum benefit will be derived from the feedback provided by key executives of a firm’s most important clients, this is where resources should be allocated. Caveat: It is possible that actu-

al plus potential billing should not in all cases be the prime determinant of which clients belong in Tier 1.

- *Not just for problem clients* — Airing and then resolving issues with clients where problems exist is an important aspect of a CFP. However, significant value can also be derived from interviews conducted at clients with which the firm has an outstanding relationship. Here the objective would be to find out *why* the relationship has been so mutually beneficial and productive. And, once those qualities are revealed, the firm will want to capitalize on them. Consider the following: 1) How can those qualities be replicated with other clients? 2) How can they be used in the training of partners, associates and other firm personnel? 3) How can they be incorporated in promoting the firm and positively differentiating it from others for purposes of hiring, promotional materials, RFPs and other new business and strategic initiatives?
- *Initially, voluntary participation by partners, then mandatory* — We have found that it is usually the more effective Lead Partners who will be the first to sign on their Tier 1 clients to participate. After it becomes evident how valuable the process is, others will volunteer. Thereafter, firm management should be comfortable in requiring it of partners who are still reluctant.

C. Interviewee Selection

- *Focus on key decision-makers and key influencers* — The interviewees designated should

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Client Speak

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be those involved in the selection, retention and termination of outside counsel as well as those who are most familiar with the firm's work and that of other firms.

- *Interviewees from beyond the General Counsel's office* — These would include executives from other functional areas as well as from corporate and operating groups and the Board, depending on how the firm's services and personnel are deployed. As one business unit CEO told us, "They sure understand the law, but they know little about my business." In this case, limiting the interviews to those in the General Counsel's office would not have revealed such a shortcoming.

D. The Interviews

- *Primary use of in-person interviews* — This is particularly advisable for key executives of Tier 1 clients; the use of other methodologies can be considered for other interviewees. Several reasons for our strong preference for in-person as opposed to phone interviews were referred to in the September 2010 article (the discussion of Step 3). I won't repeat those. But let me here discuss the issue of cost, which is normally the most important consideration in favor of interviewing by phone. And the interviewees recognize that.

When a firm makes the effort and incurs the expense to send someone to an interviewee's office to conduct an in-person interview, many of those we've interviewed interpret that as an indication of the firm's enhanced commitment not only to the Client Feedback process, but also to the relationship and to the client.

For those of you who may need more convincing as to the greater effectiveness of interviewing in person, I suggest you query the

litigators in your firm about how many depositions they have taken over the past year by phone — and why, or why not.

Furthermore, in support of the continued use of in-person meetings as opposed to other state-of-the-art means of communicating, you may wish to refer to the report by *Forbes Insights* on the results of a June 2009 survey of 760 business executives entitled "Business Meetings — The Case for Face-to-Face."

- *Primary use of one-on-one interviews* — Often, a target interviewee will wish to have a subordinate join in the interview, or a senior executive will want his/her team to jointly participate. Whenever there are two or more present, you run the risk of the classic focus-group dilemma — *i.e.*, one person, such as the CEO or General Counsel, may so dominate the discussion that there is no assurance that possibly differing observations and impressions of the others will be heard.

Group interviews are sometimes suggested under the mistaken impression that time will be saved by getting all the interviews completed at once. In fact, the only one whose time will be saved is the interviewer because a group interview will require more time from each of the interviewees.

- *Interviews specifically tailored to each client and each interviewee* — Each client is different, as is each case, matter, engagement and the related — and often numerous — personal interactions. Accordingly, use of a set questionnaire for every interview at every client runs the risk of not uncovering the truly unique issues, problems and opportunities that may exist.

In contrast, an interview guide — based on the orientation sessions (see A, above) and other research about the client and each of the interviewees (via applicable websites and public documents, including SEC filings) — provides direction into those areas that will be most

vital and relevant with respect to each client and each interviewee.

- *Open-ended probes, not prompts* — Too often, the way a question is asked will result in a predictable or not completely candid response. For example, one of our clients had initiated an advertising campaign and we suggested it might be useful to determine the reactions of those we were interviewing — in addition to their feedback on the other important issues. We could have posed the following question: "What do you think of the firm's advertising?" That would, of course, have disclosed that the firm was in fact advertising, and a positive answer might have been offered to please the firm even if its ads had not been seen. Instead, we asked the interviewees, "What do you think of advertising by professional services firms?"

While the answer to that question was only marginally useful, if the response included no mention of the firm's ads, we felt it realistic to assume that the ads either hadn't been seen or they weren't memorable. Those who did recall the ads volunteered their reactions as well as their comments.

- *The 90/10 approach* — Aside from revealing the interviewees' impressions regarding areas and issues of most relevance, an important objective of the interviews is to make sure they dominate the discussion. Our intent is that they speak 90% of the time, and we speak 10%.

STAY TUNED

As mentioned, Part Two of this article is to appear in the September 2011 issue and will focus on the remaining five components of the *How*. The *By Whom* Best Practices will appear in the November 2011 issue. Included in that discussion will be the pros and cons of using in-house personnel versus a third party to design the CFP and/or conduct the interviews.



Book Review

Legal Project Management — Quick Reference Guide, Tools and Templates to Increase Efficiency (Second Edition) **By James Hassett, Ph.D.**

By William Means

LegalBizDev, a Boston-based consultant to law firms and lawyers, recently released the Second Edition of *Legal Project Management — Quick Reference Guide, Tools and Templates to Increase Efficiency*. Written by Jim Hassett, Ph.D., the founder of LegalBizDev, the spiral bound book is an easy-to-read, informative overview and guide for applying project management techniques in the legal field. Particular emphasis is placed on moving from billable hourly rates to fixed fee arrangements. The publication is an update of the First Edition published in July 2010.

The first chapter of the book advises, “This book was not designed to be read cover to cover.” Accordingly, it is somewhat challenging to write a traditional book review. The guide is a compilation of narratives, checklists and templates organized around key concepts and issues related to project management. It includes chapters on Key Issues in Legal Project Management; Setting Objectives and Defining Scope; Identifying and Scheduling Activities; Assigning Tasks and Managing Teams; Planning and Managing Budgets; Assessing Risks; Managing Quality; Negotiating Change Orders; and, Ten Best Practices. The chapters are supported by more than 80 pages of Appendices providing additional narratives and sample template forms.

A refreshing aspect of the book is that it’s not a one size fits all, must do things this way, “how to” book. The author, a recognized consultant in the legal field, notes that all law firms are different, and that size, organization, areas of specialization, and personalities will play a role in the extent and

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manner in which information provided in the guide will be used. He has also collaborated with a team of nearly 40 law firm partners, marketers, business developers and industry consultants in compiling, editing and reviewing the book.

Hassett does a very good job of taking complex project management issues and summarizing and explaining them in everyday language. For example, the book provides an overview of the differences between project management, process improvement, Six Sigma and Lean methodologies within the framework of several pages.

While providing overview information, the book also provides the reader a wealth of resources to learn more detailed information on key topics. A chapter entitled “Assign Tasks and Manage the Team” pays homage to and builds upon the American Management Association’s “Ten Rules of Team Building.”

It is one of numerous examples where Hassett takes broad business concepts and tailors them to law firms and legal professionals. The book also provides many tips on where to find useful tools, such as providing website addresses for free downloads of Gantt Chart development software and calendar and scheduling tools.

As previously noted, a basic premise of this guide is that legal work is increasingly shifting from general tasks performed at hourly billable rates to specific, focused tasks performed as fixed-priced contracts. The author presents ideas for making this transformation within the existing resources and framework of your law firm, without necessarily making large investments in new systems.

A section of the book is devoted to how to write an effective Statement of Work. Another chapter discusses developing checklists and assigning responsibilities. Yet another is devoted to Planning and Managing budgets. All these tasks currently apply within law firms, but need to be tailored to effectively fit the new industry paradigm.

This Quick Reference Guide also leaves the reader with the feeling that he is not alone in the marketing and business development challenges he faces. I found myself on many

occasions reading a passage or case study and saying, “Well, that sounds familiar.” And the book provides brief examples of current and recent initiatives at leading law firms and companies, such as Seyfarth Shaw’s Lean Initiative, Morgan Lewis’ process improvement analyses, Dechert’s RAPID Resolution approach to project management, and FMC Technologies’ General Counsel’s development of templates around the Association of Corporate Counsel’s Value Index.

A potential criticism of *Legal Project Management — Quick Reference Guide, Tools and Templates to Increase Efficiency* is that the book is too simple and lacks detail. Hassett states that the book is written for lawyers. While I found it very informative and useful from the perspective of a marketing professional, readers will have to make an individual decision as to how they believe Partners and leadership at their firm might respond to the book.

Because this publication is intended as a reference guide, there is repetition of information between the chapters and appendices. Somewhat surprisingly, the book cites Wikipedia.org as an information source. While additional sources and websites are almost always noted, this may raise some eyebrows, given Wikipedia’s reputation among many academics and researchers.

LegalBizDev is in the consulting business, and the book, while useful as a stand-alone document, was written as a sales support tool, or “teaser” for introducing the firm and its capabilities. That noted, the book is well written, informative and enjoyable reading. The layout includes broad margins and pages dedicated to inserting hand written notes. Priced at \$49.95 + shipping, the book is affordable, and the templates and outlines that it provides can be used and customized without restriction.

Order at: <http://www.legalbizdev.com/projectmanagement/quickreferenceguide.html>. Price: \$49.95 Plus \$3.00 Shipping in U.S.

Note: Law firms, lawyers, or in-house counsel having existing consulting relationships with LegalBizDev receive a 50% discount.



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Subject line "Salary freeze" ...

THE REAL WORLD

Now let's return to today's reality. For many, the tough circumstances of 2009/2010 still remain, but the summer of 2011 is providing much-needed relief for legal marketing executives who may wish to consider opportunities for change. Positions that were posted on job boards and left to languish month after month during 2009/2010 are now being actively addressed.

At one low point in 2009/2010, 12 CMO positions were open at the same time. This year, we see a different story emerging: When a position opens up, there is little delay filling it. Moreover, many firms are now taking a proactive, forward-looking approach to upgrading department leadership and expanding their marketing and business development initiatives.

KEY QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

The danger during a positive job market shift is jumping to a firm in a reactive fashion with limited insight. With the market for marketing and business development talent on the rebound, it is vital that those considering new opportunities pay attention to assure the changes they make are truly positive.

In today's environment, department leaders considering a change should be mindful of the following basics:

- Why is the position open? Watch for the revolving door.
- How long has the position been open? A long-vacant post may indicate a lack of consensus on the functions of the role.
- Does the position outline provide a road map for expectations or does it include everything under the sun to ensure "all bases are covered"? A position outline that includes every

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area in legal marketing may be a red flag for consensus paralysis-by-analysis decision-making issues.

- Are the position responsibilities and reporting structure essentially the same as before the position became open? If not, why and how did the firm gain consensus to change the role? A position opening provides the firm with an opportunity to re-think the role and change focus for the position. If the role is different, it is important to understand who is driving this change. Many times, the change could be the result of a change in leadership.
- What are the objective benchmarks for success in year one and year two?
- The lack of clear benchmarks is often the leading cause for short tenure. Not only is it imperative that you crystallize these areas, but is also just as important for the firm to internally communicate benchmarks to appropriate staff members.
- Are the benchmarks for success consistent for all the key stakeholders in the hiring process? It is very important to always re-direct and secure consensus for common benchmarks. If this is not possible during the hiring process, understand you may be at the mercy of subjective assessments. "Well, we think he/she is doing a good job, but the firm is spending a lot of money in that department."
- How widespread is consensus for change? As is often said, law firm culture was designed to resist change. In some cases, the interview process may describe the desire for change, but the reality for the firm as a whole may be different. If you are charged to be the change agent to expand contributive behavior, how does or will the firm reward that behavior?
- How does partner compensation relate to firm's desire for change? Are partners rewarded for participating in cross-selling activities? Does the compensation system make it impossible to move away from possessive attitudes regarding clients?

- What is the current status and structure of the department? Many times, a firm will expect a certain level of performance but the resources may not necessarily match expectations. The firm may or may not be willing to align resources with their benchmarks for success. It is very important to gain clarity before you start the position, not after you submit your 90-day evaluation.
- And finally, what is the hiring process? How many are involved in the process? Always remember the process is a direct reflection of decision-making once you are inside the firm.

SUPPORT STAFF

Now let's focus on marketing and business development support staff members.

This summer, unlike the summers of 2009/2010, managers may be seeing more e-mails with the subject lines like "Recruiting for Business Development Position." These probes may also reference a compensation bottom-range that is 15% higher than their current salaries (which have probably been frozen for the past two years). However, and although it is important, compensation alone is seldom the end-all when deciding to accept a new position.

Here are a few boxes that should be checked by departmental lieutenants trying to make an informed career-move decision. Obviously, one does not want to go from dissatisfaction to dysfunctional depression.

1. Commitment to Function

Does the firm invest in and utilize the proper tools to allow staff to meet expected level of service? Does the firm have enough personnel in the department to support the function? What is the ratio? To what degree does leadership of the firm back and endorse business development? Do partners, in general, have a possessive or contributive attitude toward client relationships? Are partners financially rewarded to participate in cross-practice client focus programs?

2. Department Culture, or 'Avoiding Myopic Control Freaks'

Do supervisors require staff to cc them on every "important" correspondence? Do supervisors watch over

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Preparing for Things That Go Bump in the Night

By Allan Colman

In life, there are no guarantees. In my role as a business development consultant, I'm often asked about the likelihood of success for various attorney sales approaches. Rather than offering a definitive answer, I often draw on Jay Abraham's responses to hypotheticals:

- Will everything work out as well as we expect it to? Hardly.
- Will some of the things we hope for not happen or turn out worse than we expect them to? Undoubtedly.
- Will there be some things that turn out better than expected? Probably.
- Are there more opportunities that will be uncovered as things progress? Again, probably.

The final question that is often posed offers a bit more flexibility: Will you do everything in your power to make the result of this business development opportunity an outstanding success? If your answer is yes, the response is "Absolutely."

Law firm marketing is no different than any other service or task. Put the effort in. Plan for the worst and hope for the best. And then work, work, work until you see the results.

MIND MAPPING

Jay Abraham has been called "America's number one marketing wizard" enough times that it's the tagline used on the "About" page of his website. He's seen as a genius at getting down to basics and, having worked with him in the past, I check in periodically to see what's new.

Often, there are treasures to be found. A great example is the mind map developed by Greg White of Phoenix Information Solutions in Melbourne, Australia. This tool provides a graphical representation of Jay's key sales consulting services (for lawyers and other professionals) that were in-

cluded in his book *Getting Everything You Can Out of All You've Got*.

The concepts presented in the book and on the mind map are all used in one way or another in our legal marketing training sessions and workshops. For example, our training emphasizes thinking long term. When it comes to approaching a new prospect or a long-term client, we encourage the lawyers we're working with to:

- Understand the prospects' and clients' needs and internal pressures
- Become a trusted adviser, and
- Protect the prospects' and clients' interests

When we work with our clients, we follow Jay Abraham's "Strategy of Pre-eminence." As a law firm marketing and business development consultant, we aim to become a valued friend, to offer rewarding solutions that are profitable for everyone involved — and we encourage the lawyers we work with to approach their prospects and clients in the same way.

CLIENT RETENTION

Another element of long-term thinking that we often discuss is client retention. It is a key element of long-term revenue creation. Jay Abraham has pointed to three primary reasons why clients leave long-term relationships:

1. Lack of contact leads to their forgetting about the relationship.
2. Their situation changes.
3. They become dissatisfied.

Clearly, the first of these is the easiest to overcome — and we encourage the lawyers and marketing teams we work with to develop and take advantage of a contact system. Your clients won't forget about you when you stay in touch: Let your clients know what you and your firm are currently engaged in; send them articles or reviews of legal decisions that they may be interested in; ask your clients to join you on a conference panel.

Make sure you are communicating the status and next steps of your work on a regular basis and stay on top of changes your clients are experiencing as well. Ask them about other challenges that they are facing and offer your assistance. Be aware of your relationships, and keep on the lookout for subtle changes.

While client dissatisfaction is never comfortable to deal with, it's some-

thing you should be aware of long before a client disengages. Even if it seems insignificant, when even the smallest issues arise during an engagement, deal with it immediately. Especially if they have been a long-term client, take action and win them back. According to Abraham, 80% of these relationships can be recovered with instant actions — in fact, you may find that they become your best clients.

NEW CLIENT DEVELOPMENT

A great law firm business development tactic is to introduce your clients to your firm's other clients. Another great tactic: Ask your clients to introduce you to their suppliers, supports, advisers, and the individuals they go to as experts. In other words, in order to meet new prospects and develop new client relationships, work with your clients to "host" meetings with non-competing and complementary prospects. This is the foundation for Jay Abraham's host-beneficiary approach.

Earlier in this article, we mentioned the importance of becoming your clients' trusted adviser. And we briefly touched on the importance of client relationships and client retention. Most recently, we talked about asking for referrals. New client development with the host-beneficiary approach builds on these steps.

If you have become your clients' trusted adviser and have established the good will that comes from a successful business relationship, they will return the favor — when you ask for referrals — by introducing you to other in-house counsel and their clients. The good will and solid relationships that they have will work in your favor. It will provide you with the opportunity to, as Abraham suggests, make their clients your prospects.

COMBAT COACHING?

At the Closers Group, we talk a lot about our RED ZONE approach to business development. We focus on the importance of having your strategies and tactics practiced and ready so that, when you meet face to face with your prospects, you'll be ready to close the sale. Jay Abraham, who we've been talking about in our recent posts, has offered a similar extremely effective program

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Business Dev.

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that he called “Competitive Combat Coaching.” It’s considered to be a more aggressive and productive way of looking at growing law firm successes, and builds even more on his 2000 book *Getting Everything You Can Out of All You’ve Got*.

Every firm and organization has a number of tools that they aren’t using effectively. The more that you look at your own organization — with or without the help of a business devel-

opment consultant — the more you’re going to find:

- Underperforming assets;
- Overlooked opportunities;
- Hidden assets;
- Under-valued relationships; and
- Under-utilized collaboration opportunities.

As the competition for legal services intensifies and client budgets fight to stay stable as time goes on, doesn’t it make sense to look within your organization and build on what you already have? The cost is low — and the effort can make your legal market-

ing far more effective. In our Rapid Assessment work with clients, these are among the first tactics we use to strengthen law firm business development efforts.

CONCLUSION

When you’re fighting for new client engagements in the RED ZONE, it’s important to recognize that you are participating in a form of sophisticated combat. Draw on your training and strengths and you’ll be prepared to engage and win new business.



Career Journal

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staff to such a degree that they comment about a lunch that is 10 minutes longer than usual? Is there apparent harmony within the department? Does the team work toward common goals?

3. Career Path and Ongoing Professional Development

Has the department head been promoted from within in the past? Will you be able to develop a professional development plan with the leader of the department?

4. Ability to Demonstrate Tangible Value

Will you have the opportunity to demonstrate tangible value to part-

ners in your role? Is the role structured to be forward thinking in regards to partner support, or is the role (and the majority of the department) stuck primarily in reactive tasks?

5. What Is the Track Record, Management Style and Reputation of the Department Head/Chief Marketing Officer?

How long has the CMO been at the firm? Where did he/she work in the past and what was his/her tenure? And finally, does she mentor her staff or primarily manage “to the top”?

CONCLUSION

The bottom line is that you need to do your homework. Be the informed candidate. I hear so often, “If I only would have known beforehand.” Every firm has its positive points and

challenges. As I mentioned earlier, every firm’s culture is different; you will notice that the moment you step off the elevator. Pick the firm you believe will not only be the best professional fit for you, but the one that will also be the best cultural fit.

In many ways, we are in a still-emerging professional market segment where it is up to us to educate and inform. When choosing between firms to serve, be sure to know which boxes are checked, and prepare to investigate those that are not.

Knowing the answers to these questions will help you better evaluate your next career move.



Relationships

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about it, we all have certain people with whom we enjoying sharing time. What if those special people could be the same as those in your categorized contact lists? How cool would that be? Kill two birds with, well, you know.

For the successful senior attorneys among us, many of you have worked most of your professional careers to create this very scenario. But it didn’t happen overnight. It took years, in some cases, one contact at a time. This brings me to my next point.

LEVERAGE TECHNOLOGY

In our global Internet age, it has never been easier to “get and stay in contact” with a broad base of contacts

via the technology tools available (*i.e.*, LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, blogging, etc.). Not a technophile? No sweat; there are “people” who make a career of helping clients “connect.” One such job title is “certified social media specialist.” These days, lawyers do not need to spend time (that they don’t have) writing articles, e-newsletters, blogs, etc., but are well served to delegate this to other trained legal writers. The marketplace is full of highly qualified talent to assist with this task.

NET-NET

1. In the growing competitive legal services arena, cultivating strong relationships is more important than ever before. As a successful lawyer and business owner, you must find a way to

get and stay in touch with your desired audiences, targeted constituents, and those folks who ultimately can help you grow a healthy practice. It is most easily done by committing to making it happen.

2. Gaining buy-in with your support resources (internal and/or external) so everyone is on the same page.
3. Developing a viable and workable system for gathering, categorizing, and maintaining contacts on an ongoing basis.
4. Scheduling dates/calendar regular communication with your contacts in addition to the other regular “touches.” Repeat.



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