



14 WAYS YOUR FIRM CAN WIN MORE WORK

BY SUE-ELLA PRODONOVICH

For professional services firms, developing clients and winning more work can sometimes seem like a daunting task. So if you're looking to kick off or refresh your business development efforts, here are 14 ideas to get you started.

1. TRACK INBOUND AND OUTBOUND REFERRALS

In other words, know exactly where you're sending work and where work is coming to you from. The purpose of this isn't to create a ledger but to map and understand your referral networks and the way work circulates around them. By doing this, you'll know where the blockages are and when something starts to look amiss.

2. SWITCH ON THE HYPERDRIVE

Do some analysis of your client list to find out exactly who's buying from you. Concentrate your firepower on getting more people just like these. To do this, hyper-segment your market. You can segment by industry sector and geography and user or client type, and practice type, and triggers or issues or even buyer personas.

3. BRING IN NEW BLOOD

Concentrate on building new networks and new ideas by focusing your effort on building the next generation of rainmakers. You should always be introducing fee earners to the skills of business development early on in their careers. For some inspiration read [how some US-based law firms are doing just that](#) here.

4. DEVELOP YOUR OWN BEST PRACTICE METHOD FOR ASKING FOR REFERRAL WORK

Share your referral successes and rejection at your monthly team meeting. If you need some pointers, read my article on [7 steps for asking for a client referrals](#) the right way. And if you're still looking for inspiration, we can provide a 90 minute training session.

5. TAKE THE STIGMA OUT OF FAILING

No one wins every deal every time. So take the stigma out of rejection and help professionals put 'knock backs' into perspective. A fun tool to help you do this is the [automatic rejection letter generator](#). It's designed for writers but you'll get the point.

6. START A COACHING PROGRAM

Allow your staff to pick their BD coach. This will increase ROI and engagement and will help you avoid wasting coaching on those who don't want, or need, to be assisted.

You can read about a new approach to coaching in [Short, Sharp, Smart: The Future of BD Coaching](#)

7. START A SALES PROGRAM

I find professionals are usually competitive types who like to measure themselves against their peers. And nothing encourages a bit of healthy competition like, well a competition. So start a formal sales

program in your firm and celebrate business development. You can [read how to build a 90-day sales program that works here](#).

8. USE CLIENT FEEDBACK PROPERLY

Start thinking of client feedback as a tool for informing your business decisions, not as a one-off project. You can read about how to set a proper client feedback program in your firm [here](#).

9. START SCRIPTING

Everything becomes easier with practice. So start role playing responses to scenarios such as ‘The disgruntled client’ or ‘the client with unrealistic expectations’ with your senior members of staff, including senior associates and directors. You can also give them scripts to help with first client meetings or with asking for new business.

10. BUILD A TEAM APPROACH TO BD

Make Business Development an item on your monthly agenda. One firm I know started doing just this and now every time they catch up for a formal meeting it’s one Partner’s turn to highlight how a peer has furthered a client relationship or helped the firm’s business. All fee-earners participate.

11. GET EVERYONE INVOLVED

Believe it or not, Partners don’t have a monopoly on good ideas. So Include associates, directors, managers, lawyers or accountants and even graduates or paralegals, in practice meetings. And empower your associates or directors to write articles, present seminars, and network with peers.

Read more from Prof Adam Grant about [why the most highest paid person’s opinion \(HiPPO\) can also be the most dangerous](#).

12. USE SOCIAL MEDIA PROPERLY

Stop thinking only about the risks of social media and start trying to capitalise on the rewards. After all, if you’re not using social media to promote yourself and your practice, you’re missing a trick. Provide social media training to all staff, so that they do it the right way from the outset.

13. KNOW THYSELF

Make sure everyone in your team works to their strengths. Let your fee earning staff analyse and understand their communication and behavioural styles so they become more in tune with what they’re good at and how they’re perceived. There are a number of tools including [DiSC](#) and Myers Briggs.

For more tools have a look at: [Leadership Development For Professionals: A summary of Assessment Tools](#) (Beese, M 2021)

14. MAKE MEASURES EASY

The ‘T-Account’ format is a basic but effective way to keep everyone engaged. Team members manage their own T-Account and bring them to monthly meetings and update on progress / exceptions only.

For an example of measuring a behaviour see: [Measuring & Rewarding Collaboration](#) (St John P 2021)

WANT MORE?

If you want personal advice on what to do next [check out BD45 and organise a 45-minute conversation with Sue-Ella](#).



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