



Week of **August 26, 2008**

"Above All, Try Something"

In a recent coaching session, I spoke with an associate who was frustrated because he had been working hard at several client development efforts that suddenly and unexpectedly had fallen through. As he put it succinctly, "Now, I've got nothing." My advice to him was to keep from fretting about his dilemma. When you do, minutes seem like hours, hours become days, and it's easy to get into a funk. The more rational and effective strategy was defined by Franklin Roosevelt as he characterized his governing strategy in the dark days of the Depression: "It is common sense to take a method and try it. If it fails, admit it frankly and try another. But above all, try *something*."

The key to business development success is building relationships with potential clients. Relationship development is a marathon, not a sprint, and it starts with getting into the public eye. There are many ways to do this. For example, attend lunch or bar association functions, particularly when these things are done with established senior partners. Associates should also be encouraged to do "blawging" (either individually or on behalf of the firm), and to contribute to client news updates. Writing articles in trade or legal publications is another key strategy. In all this work, keep the visibility purpose foremost and don't get lost in the message. Be sure to include all your contact information (especially email and phone), and make certain that you have reprint rights for the material.

What you write about can change over time, depending on how your skills and interests evolve, how the economy is doing, and many other factors. Learn where to find your target market and think about how you can best reach them to let them know that what they need is within your abilities. Make sure that your tactics are in tune with your target. For example, if your target audience is not focused on using the Internet and searching the web on a regular basis, then

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Clients include attorneys, managing partners, executive directors and financial directors at small, mid-size, and large law firms. We have seen many of our clients increase their revenue by five or six figures—that's \$50,000 to \$400,000 based on reports thus far.

Many of my clients have experienced:

- Increased revenue with long-term strategies for sustainability

blogging is not so meaningful to them and may not be a worthwhile marketing tactic for you. There is no one tactic that will cover the waterfront of opportunities to communicate with your marketplace. It becomes a question of your comfort zone, your creativity, and your time availability.

The beauty of these activities is that the young lawyer can, at review time, make a convincing argument: "This is what I've done to promote myself and promote the firm." If you are down 800 billable hours, you can't sit around and mope for 400 of them. Go on the offensive, demonstrate the number of articles and blog posts and presentations you've done, and show how many people you've reached. If you make the effort, eventually there are members of your audience who will become your clients. It's only a matter of time. A former partner of mine once said, "All I have to do to achieve all my goals is live long enough. And I plan to!"

Best wishes,

Ed Poll

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What Readers Are Saying...

"I look at Ed as my business partner now—my once-a-week essential business meeting to take the pulse of my practice. During our one-hour phone conversations, we hash out the larger and smaller business challenges of my law firm. I always come away from those conversations enlarged, challenged, and sometimes even quite shaken, but with the tools necessary to move forward down the path he and I are constantly redefining for me and my firm."

-AL, Northern California