

Legal Business Development: Know Where You Are Going

July 21, 2011 by [Paula Black](#)

I was working with a client today and I gave her an assignment to make a list of relationships that could help her in developing business. She asked... "you mean that could **give** me business?" And I realized that to me the distinction is very clear, but that I should define it.

There are many circles in which we have relationships and in each of those there are different ways that people could help us develop business.

First, let's explore the ways...

- Obviously there is the category of a **client** that has the authority to send us work.
- There is the person that can **recommend** to someone that they call you.
- There is the individual or group that has **influence** over what a larger group of people might think... like clergy or an executive director of an organization.
- There are suppliers that can help **make you look good**... you get work, they get work.
- There are people that you can **learn** from... to be a better lawyer, business person or business developer.

Second, there are all the circles that exist in your life...

- **Your family and friends**... you would be surprised how many lawyers never tap into this group. Who knows you better and has your best interest at heart more than your family and friends?
- **Business colleagues**... from various places of employment, organizations, etc. where do you have relationships that you could cultivate? Could they introduce you to others?
- **Law school classmates**... stay in touch, grow together and meet their friends and colleagues, grow the circle.
- **Civic and religious circles**... where do you spend your time? Do you have deep relationships or are they simply people you just say hello to?
- **Hobby circles**... if you love things like playing music or ride horses, etc. this circle could be what fuels your passion... and creating a bridge to your legal practice could take your work to a whole new level.

You get the idea. I bet if you give it some thought you can come up with several more.

Business is about relationships and it couldn't be more true in the legal profession. You need to focus on those circles and look for people that can help in various ways. And you **need** people helping in all those ways. Just because someone isn't in the position to send you work doesn't mean they can't contribute to your success in some other way.

In Black & White

COMMON SENSE STRATEGIES FOR GROWING YOUR LEGAL PRACTICE



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