

What Lessons Have You Learned?

Lance G. Godard
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I read an interesting post recently on the *Commute by Bike* blog: "[5 Things I wish I knew when I first started Bike Commuting.](#)" I would add a sixth, but all the same I was struck by how easily these bicycle commuting lessons apply for lawyers:

1. **Route.** Plan your route. Know where you want to go and how to get there and what you need to do to move in the right direction. There's plenty of strategy and business planning resources for lawyers. Read them, then write your own plan. It doesn't have to be complicated, it doesn't have to account for every contingency, it doesn't have to take two weeks of reflection and drafting and editing. It does have to set goals, realistic, achievable, measurable goals. It does have to understand the clients you want, the work they need, and your ability to perform that work. Plan your route so you don't end up someplace you don't want to be.
2. **There are some things you shouldn't economize on.** This applies to a wide range of things, from technology to confidentiality to security. It also applies to your time: be frugal, but don't skimp. Obviously your time is your most valuable asset (even if it shouldn't be your entire business model), but that doesn't mean that you should be afraid to spend big on the right things, even when you're not getting paid for it (see item 3).
3. **A little maintenance goes a long way.** Client relationships are like any other relationship. They require work. Not just providing good legal advice. Not just responding to phone calls and emails and questions. Not just making sure that the contracts are signed and the payments are made. Of course you need to do all of those things. But you also need to maintain the relationship, to show your clients how important they are, to ask them how you are performing, to address their concerns and understand their objectives.
4. **Don't undertake vehicles.** Yes, this one took some deciphering: "undertake" apparently means "pass on the right." So how does this apply to lawyers? It means you need to be where your potential clients can see you. Maybe it's time to start a blog. Or join the French-American Chamber of Commerce. Or give a talk on the Tax Code. Whatever you do, the first step is figuring out where your clients are, because that's right where you need to be.
5. **Shop around.** Another lesson that could apply to a number of situations, but here's a valuable one: shopping around with respect to your clients is a great way to make sure you're doing the work that you want to do, that you're providing the value that you want to provide, that you're engaged and committed and passionate about helping your clients, because they are clients that you know you want to have. Sometimes it isn't practical, but when it is, working for clients that you like and respect will help ensure that you deliver value in everything that you do.

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Lance Godard is the Principal and Founder of The Godard Group. He helps lawyers and law firms identify and execute solutions for a wide range of business development and marketing needs, and is available for hire on short-term and long-term projects. For more information, visit his website at www.TheGodardGroup.com, his weblog, Are you writing this down? (<http://writingthisdown.blogspot.com>) or follow him on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/lancegodard>.

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What's the sixth lesson I learned from bike commuting? "Get on the bike." The most important step in commuting on a bike is riding the bike, and the most important step in managing your law practice is, well, managing your practice. So get on it.