

[How to Get Clients to Help Them Avoid Problems](#)

Posted by [Cordell Parvin](#) on June 23, 2011

Several months ago I read a great blog post titled: [The Simple Tricks Experts Use to Always Get Paid For Their Time](#). It made me think about the many lawyers I coach who tell me potential clients "pick their brain," but never hire them.



It also made me think of Ralph, the CEO of one of my very first construction contractor clients. Like most contractors, Ralph hated paying for lawyers. (In fact, I would say he hated lawyers, at least until his wife went back to law school and became one.) As a result, he did a lot of his own lawyering without a license. I always grinned when I learned Ralph was calling me, because he usually began with: "Cordell, I know you told me to not practice law without a license, but..." Inevitably Ralph had created a bigger issue than if he had simply called for my advice in the first place.

I decided to make an effort for Ralph to change his approach. I suggested that for \$____ per month, I would take his phone calls and share my ideas. I also told him that every six months we would look at the situation and decide whether the lump sum monthly fee was fair to both of us.

I also decided I would give something away to Ralph. Since his company was local, I told him I would meet him for lunch once a quarter to talk about what was going on with his company and he could "pick my brain" with questions he may have.

After implementing these two proposals, Ralph rarely called me to help him fix the mess he had created practicing law without a license.

Cordell Parvin Blog

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Cordell M. Parvin built a national construction practice during his 35 years practicing law. At Jenkins & Gilchrist, Mr. Parvin was the Construction Law Practice Group Leader and was also responsible for the firm's attorney development practice. While there he taught client development and created a coaching program for junior partners. In 2005, Mr. Parvin left the firm and started Cordell Parvin LLC. He now works with lawyers and law firms on career development and planning and client development. He is the co-author of ***Say Ciao to Chow Mein: Conquering Career Burnout*** and other books for lawyers. To learn more visit his Web site, www.cordellparvin.com or contact him at cparvin@cordellparvin.com.