

## [One Sure Way to Lose Business and Never Get a Recommendation](#)

By [Cordell Parvin](#) on August 12th, 2013

Have you ever heard of a lawyer overselling himself, or his firm, to get a client? I hear about that happening and while it may work to get the one matter, in the long run, it actually hurts the lawyer and firm. It reminds me of my experience in 2012 at one of the top golf courses in the world.



In January, 2012, Nancy and I sat through a timeshare pitch at an upscale property that included one of the top golf courses in the world. We had played golf there in 2011 and loved the experience. While we loved golfing there, Nancy and I were not a good fit to buy a timeshare unit there.

During our meeting with our salesman, he tried to learn about us and then identify our “objections” (sales term for why we did not want to buy). We told him that our daughter and son-in-law are teachers, do not play golf and could not afford the maintenance fee at the plush property.

Then we told him that given our age, we would likely be traveling and playing golf for a limited number of years. For those reasons, we said it made no sense to buy the timeshare.

Then we met the sales manager. Instead, of simply saying to us that because of our age and because our children do not play golf, we probably would not get the value we would wanted from the upscale timeshare, the sales manager assured us that we would be able to book a week later in

2012 and even book a second week if we did so within 30 days of our arrival. He said we would be able to come back again in January, 2013. The bottom line of his “closing” was we could book right away and use as many weeks as possible for the next several years.

You know where this is going, right? We purchased at the upscale property. When we tried to book a week in November and December of 2012, we were told there was no availability. When we tried to book a week for January of 2013, we were told there was no availability. The first chance we “might” be able to book a week in the winter would be December, 2013 and early, 2014, two years after we paid lots of money for the upscale timeshare.

When I complained and mentioned I wanted to rescind or sell my purchase, the sales team had a chance to earn my trust again by finding a solution to our situation. Instead, they reminded me of the provision in the contract that prohibits us from selling for three years.

Earlier this year we were finally able to book a week for December, 2013, and book a second week for January, 2014. It is very possible that we will go and be happy with our purchase. But, I will always remember that the sales team “over promised” and “under delivered” and put their immediate sale ahead of our best interests.

While the sales team made the sale, they likely lost a dozen or more other sales to the many golfers Nancy and I know throughout the US and Canada. Imagine what might have happened if the sales manager had learned about my work with lawyers and simply said:

This might not be the right place for you, but I would greatly appreciate it if you would share your wonderful golf experience with the lawyers with whom you work who love golf. We would love to show them what we have to offer.

When lawyers oversell clients just to get the business and fail to live up to their promises, their clients will never use them again. More important, the clients will also share their bad experience with other potential clients.

When I practiced law, I gained respect from potential clients when I told them I was not the best person to handle the matter we were discussing. I frequently recommended the lawyer I thought would be a better fit.

If you are thinking: Cordell lost the engagement, you are right. But, I earned the potential client's trust. Over time that was more important.

One final point: If you love golf and want the opportunity to own an upscale timeshare at one of the top golf courses in the world, put a note on your calendar to contact me in January, 2015.

**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](http://www.cordellparvin.com) or contact him at [cparvin@cordellparvin.com](mailto:cparvin@cordellparvin.com).