

[Client Development: Find a Way to Stand Out in the Crowd](#)

By [Cordell Parvin](#) on April 4th, 2013

Yesterday I wrote [Want to get ahead? Try this](#). It was about making “giving” a client development strategy. I want to tell you a story about giving.

I have shared this story in the kick-off group coaching session with several hundred lawyers I have coached, including a new group last week. I suspect well over 30 lawyers listened to the story and created their own “easy guide.”

[Jennifer Keller](#) is a [Baker Donelson](#) Labor and Employment lawyer I coached seven years ago. Her firm gives an annual Labor and Employment workshop, which typically draws over 100 people.

In 2006 just before the workshop, Jennifer called me and said:

Cordell, you always suggest I give something away, what should I give the human resources professionals who attend our workshop?

I told her to think creatively and come up with something HR professionals would value.

Jennifer called me a couple of weeks later and she was very excited. She had gotten an idea from a fast food restaurant that had a laminated book on a ring for young children to read. Jennifer created an Easy Guide to Labor and Employment Laws in a laminated book, put it on a ring with a hook and handed it out to those who attended the workshop.

Shortly after the workshop I received an email from Jennifer. Here is what she told me.

Just wanted to let you know that I took some of those Easy Guides I had told you about out to some of my clients last Thursday afternoon. I ended up with three



new matters as a result of those meetings. Sounds strange, but going to them with something in hand really worked!!

Almost two years later, I heard from Jennifer again. Here was her update:

The Easy Guides continue to get me/us out there in new ways. We got a request a few weeks ago from a consultant who speaks to over 1000 people a year. He wanted to buy some Easy Guides to give out at his talks. We're working out a deal with him that includes mention of the firm (and me hopefully), etc.

Just recently Jennifer shared with me that her [Easy Guide](#) is now available electronically. Jennifer had remarkable idea that her clients and potential clients, and even consultants, found valuable. She came up with the idea by putting herself in her clients shoes and thinking creatively how she could help them.

I bet your clients would value an easy guide. Give them one and you might be remarkable in their eyes.

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.