

[It's 2013: How Can a Young Lawyer Leader Connect with Clients and Referral Sources?](#)

By [Cordell Parvin](#) on February 6th, 2013

If you are a regular reader you know I have written about the strength of weak ties several times. [Three years ago I wrote: The Strength of Weak Ties](#). I recently shared with Kevin that when I was a young lawyer I never heard of the premise, but my client development success most often involved recommendations by “weak ties.”

Every new significant client who came to me did so because someone originally recommended me and, that person was rarely in my inner circle of close friends. Years later I read research by [Mark Granovetter](#) and his paper; [The Strength of Weak Ties](#), and learned these referral sources were all “weak ties.” My largest client found me because a government lawyer who was on a panel when I gave a presentation recommended me. I spent a half a day with him so definitely a “weak tie.”

The idea in 2013 is to increase the number of weak ties who know what you know. I will give the YLD leaders this one page handout.



There are a variety of ways to increase the number of weak ties who know what you know both in person and on the internet. Being a YLD leader is one way to build weak tie relationships in

person. You could also be active in your clients' industry association, your community or whatever suits your strengths. For me, speaking and writing for highway construction industry associations was my most important activity. On the internet, a young lawyer can increase the number of weak tie contacts by blogging, connecting on LinkedIn, joining LinkedIn groups and actively using Twitter. See my post this week: [What Can Twitter Do for Your Law Practice?](#)

Another important thing to keep in your mind is what is called the [250 rule](#). [Joe Girard](#), record-setting auto salesman, created the rule. The essence of the rule is that if someone was getting married or getting buried on average, he or she might have about 250 people show up. For your purposes, every contact you have, likely has 250 strong and weak tie contacts. Think about which of your contacts has more who are potential clients and referral sources. You want to spend more of your time with those contacts and find ways to get to meet their contacts who are most relevant to your practice.

P.S. If you are coming to the ABA Mid-Year meeting in Dallas this week, drop me a note so we can connect before or after my presentation on Friday.

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.