

Anatomy of a Strong Business Development Skills Training Program (part 2)

By Kimberly Alford Rice

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Reality-Based Situations and Applications

For a customized training program to be successful and heed long-term results, the curriculum and interactive learning must include reality-based situations - - what business development challenges are attorney participants facing and struggling with today. Because attorneys are trained in procedure and adapting a set of facts to apply them, the best training programs are designed to allow for functional, immediate application of new techniques.

Personal One-on-One Coaching

Ongoing follow-up individual coaching reinforces new concepts learned during the training program, establishes solid habits and keeps lawyers focused on accomplishing their goals which lead to long-term success. The coach acts as strategist, advisor, and sounding board to help each lawyer prepare for upcoming opportunities, brainstorm new approaches, course correct and stay on track. This is a win-win investment for every firm.

Program Benefits

Given that your greatest firm asset is found in your people, firms which engage in formal business development skills training will realize many benefits which are not exclusive to the associates who participate. First, investing in your lawyers' development sends a strong positive message to all personnel that management values the younger lawyers in the firm, their continuing education and the value they bring to the firm, now and in the future.

Second, the goodwill developed between associates and partners cannot be underestimated as associates recognize the investment the partnership is making in their success. Third, because of the above, associates will be more motivated and empowered to **want** to be successful for the firm and will commit themselves to embracing the training and the supplemental coaching and homework assignments required.

Lastly, because of the firm's investment in the success of their associates, lawyers will develop new marketing, selling and client service skills and behaviors, learn how to identify the best business development opportunities and generate more revenue for law firm. Savvy law firm leaders understand that this combination is a win-win for their firms, their attorneys, and ultimately, for their clients. Why wouldn't a firm make this investment especially when the stakes are so high?