

[Client Development: Ask Clients: What Would You Do . . . ?](#)

By [Cordell Parvin](#) on August 7th, 2015

A few years ago I read a book written by [Charlene Li](#) and [Josh Bernoff](#): [Groundswell: Winning in a World Transformed by Social Technologies](#).

I found an interesting idea in the book. Early in 2007, Crédit Mutuel, a French bank, began an ad campaign directing viewers to a website titled: “If I were a banker.”



The authors describe that the website has a French voice who says: “If I were a banker, I would give my customers a say in things and together we would build the bank of tomorrow.” From there the visitor can either enter a suggestion or see what others have suggested.

Crédit Mutuel received tens of thousands suggestions. Some were useless. Many were very helpful and creative.

As the authors note, instead of saying: “Tell us what to do,” they said: “What would you do if you were us.”

There is a subtle, but important difference. Because the bank is encouraging the customers to develop empathy for the bank, even momentarily, Crédit Mutuel gets much more realistic suggestions.

So here is my question: Can you and your law firm create the same dialogue with your clients? If so, how would you do it? I suspect you won't be putting the “If I were a lawyer/law firm” question on your website.

But, you might simply ask your clients, “If you were our law firm:

- what would you do to add value?”
- what would you do to be more responsive?’
- how would you improve client service?”
- how would you train your lawyers?”
- what improvements would you make in billing?”
- how would you improve communication with clients?”
- what topics would you offer in webinars at no charge?”
- what would you ask your clients?”

P.S. Are you a lawyer I coached? If so, I invite you to do a guest post on my blog. Send me your draft on some aspect of client or career development, leadership, mentoring, motivation or another topic.

Cordell Parvin Blog

DEVELOPING THE NEXT GENERATION OF LAW FIRM RAINMAKERS

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.