

[Client Development Coaching: What Are You Doing Differently?](#)

By [Cordell Parvin](#) on January 27th, 2015

I have written many blog posts since I started 8 plus years ago. I sometimes wonder if any of you reading this one were with me when I first started.

Over the years, I have found that some of the very best posts come from lawyers I have coached. This is one of them. I hope you find it helpful.

Client development coaching is about making changes. If you worked with me, what are you doing differently?

In many firms, I have the chance to work with several groups of lawyers over many years, If the first group is successful, then lawyers vie to be part of the next group.

A few years ago I finished working with a group of lawyers at a firm and at the last group meeting I asked each lawyer to describe what he or she is doing differently now. Later I asked the lawyers to share their ideas with the lawyers in the next coaching group.

Here is what one lawyer told the next group:

About six years ago, I didn't do any regular exercise. I'd go on hikes and campouts occasionally, but didn't do anything habitually. I decided that needed to change, and I started going for walks every day around my neighborhood.

I didn't look or feel any differently right away. I just knew from common sense this had to be a good idea. Within a few months, however, I had taken up jogging.

I had probably never run more than a couple of miles at one time in my life. Now I'm devoted to running and it has benefited my life enormously on many different levels. I jogged 18 miles this past Saturday as I am gearing up for a marathon next month.

Client development coaching for me has been like my progression in running. It got me to start taking walks around my professional "neighborhood," and now I'm beginning to move from walking to an occasional run, and I'm noticing some results here and there.



Weaving client development into your professional routine will help you make marketing a monthly, weekly, and eventually daily occurrence. If you're already marketing your services, client development coaching can potentially help you do it better.

If in all honesty, you haven't been marketing yourself, client development coaching can potentially inspire you and give you ideas about how to start. To tap into that potential, learn from your colleagues in the coaching program, share your successes with each other.

Give some thought to your meetings with Cordell — if you have an idea, share it with him. Once in a while, he'll pat you on the back and say, "That sounds great." The other 99 times, he'll provide a suggestion that will make a good idea great.

Cordell taught me how to do little things better: Handwritten notes, e-mails of articles, small gifts, etc. This past December, I can't tell you how pleased I was to get several phone calls and messages from client contacts laughing appreciatively about the perfect gift I had sent them. Not one of these gifts was expensive. Every one of them was thoughtful in the literal sense of the word.

Client development coaching made me willing to take the risk of doing big things. One of the first things I did after getting involved with coaching program was to get on an airplane and went to see someone with whom I had worked on a fairly large case that had concluded roughly a year before. Quite frankly, it knocked me out of the office for a couple of days and it yielded no tangible results.

Yet, I learned from the experience, and most importantly, I developed a willingness to risk my time in the pursuit of richer relationships with business contacts. This led to a later, much more time intensive trip that actually led to a couple of files getting overnighted to my desk, along with a slew of new business contacts to build upon.

Client development is not a mathematical formula — we might all wish it were so easy. Things that work for you might not work for me. No one is going to tell you precisely how you can get from Point A to Point B. That is at once frightening and liberating. Be open-minded, be patient, and be willing to ease outside of your comfort zone.

Congratulations on becoming part of a terrific firm initiative.

So, what is your takeaway from Keith's advice to his firm's next coaching group?

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.