

Legal Association Networking

Be it the state Bar Association, continued learned seminars or your law school Alma Mater, there are dozens of networking opportunities where you can grow your business. Just because you're attending for non-networking reasons, doesn't mean you can't pass your business card and get more work.

Conferences offer a wealth of opportunity. Whether it's learning about the most recent court decisions in a given area of law, updated software programs to make your law office operate more smoothly and efficiently or honoring a retiring Judge, don't pass up the opportunity to glad hand the more experienced attorneys in the room.

More importantly, remember that you're the low man on the Totem Pole. Try and find ways to get work from the attorneys who might have overflow work or can refer you potential clients that might not otherwise be able to afford the more experienced lawyers fees.

Build Alliances

Find out ahead of time who is on the guest list and who the attendees will be. If you can "call ahead" and set-up an opportunity to meet with a few of the esteemed guests and experienced attendees during the event, you will learn a lot more than just what the sessions will teach. Find out what they wished they knew now that they didn't know then—so you don't make the same mistakes. Learn about their business and how you might be able to implement what they're doing. Ask them if they need some help and how you might be able to help make them more profitable.

Go With A Purpose

Most lawyers attend events with a "wingers" attitude. What's a "winger" you say? A winger is someone who walks into a situation and plans on winging what they're going to do or say. Don't be a winger. Know ahead of time what you plan on accomplishing. Review the agenda before the event starts and if multiple sessions are being held, pick out the ones you want to attend. Are there particular attorneys who intend on presenting? Is there a special area of law you'd like to increase within your business? If so, seek out the attorneys that do those areas and find them. Once you do, introduce yourself and chat him or her up. Find out how they get their clients for that specific area of law. New business opportunities are right there, you just have to have a purpose.

Follow Up, Follow Up, Follow Up!!

Once you get back to your office with the business cards you've collected from the previous event, do something with them! For heaven's sake, don't wrap a rubber band around them and throw them into your desk drawer like you have the other ones. First, write a "Thank You" note to the person expressing how much you appreciated their time and advice. Even if you got nothing out of it, they still took time out of their schedule (where they could have been networking for work) to talk to you. At a minimum, you owe them a debt of gratitude for their time. Second, offer to take them to lunch to build the relationship. While I may not use those words, exactly, what you're offering to do is build upon the business relationship you started at the event. You never know how they might be able to use you or refer you work in the future. Lastly, mail a handwritten note 60-90 days later, if for no other reason to stay on their radar. If the person you just met contributes even one extra clients through a referral each

year, what would that do for your business? Make a few dozen friends like that and you'll soon be the one giving work away to newbie solos!