

[Client Development: One Tip to Attract Clients](#)

By [Cordell Parvin](#) on August 21st, 2015

You have heard the expression:

All other things being equal, people (clients) want to do business with people (lawyers), they know, like and trust.

Likeability: What is it? What are the elements?

In his book “The Likeability Factor,” Tim Sanders includes a chapter on “The Four Elements of Likeability.” Those elements are:

- Friendliness
- Relevance
- Empathy
- Realness (authenticity)

When I coach young lawyers I share with them that I believe that about 10% of legal work is “bet the company.” Clients will hire the best-known senior “go to” lawyer to handle that work.

At the other end, I believe that about 20% to 30% of legal work is commodity work. Clients will hire whoever is willing to do that work for the lowest price. If you are in a firm of any size, you will not be able to compete on price and frankly you would not want to compete on price.

Finally, I believe that at least 60% of legal work is neither bet the company or commodity work. Clients will hire lawyers they like and trust and with whom they feel some connection.



How can you position yourself to have the best opportunity to be hired by clients for that work? First, you have to be a capable lawyer. But, that will not be enough.

You need to also be likeable with the elements Tim Sanders describes. You need to be friendly. Tim Sanders uses a quote from Bert Drecker, a communication expert:

If you want to get your message across . . . , You must first persuade the listeners...
that you represent warmth, comfort and safety.

Next, you must be relevant. As a lawyer that means understanding your client's industry and company and understanding your client contact's needs.

Next, you need to be empathetic. You must be able to see things from your client's point of view. To do that you need to be able to ask relevant questions and then listen, listen, listen.

Finally, you need to be real and authentic.

If you don't have time to read the entire book, I think you will find this [summary](#) helpful.

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.