

## **WAYS TO NETWORK - #1 - #4**

There are many ways to network and get your name out there for the purposes of driving business to your door. While the list below is certainly not exhaustive of all possible ways you can build your business, they do encompass most of the ways you will look for new clients.

### **BUSINESS NETWORK ORGANIZATION**

This type of networking is one of the most successful and profitable ways to network. Typically what will happen when you join a business network association is you will meet every week for the sole purpose of passing business to members of your association. The best part of these types of organizations is that they usually only allow one person per profession. This means if you join as the family law attorney, you needn't worry about seeing your competition at your weekly meeting. Think about the ramifications of this type of networking: When one of your organization members has a co-worker, friend, neighbor looking to get a divorce, who will be the only person whose business card will be passed to said co-worker? Yours! If you have a business law attorney in your organization and you are the estate planner, who do you want passing your business card to that business owner for purposes of estate planning and business succession? Yours!

The world's largest network referral organization was founded in 1985 by a gentleman named Dr. Ivan Misner who has created an international organization called BNI. BNI is in 43 countries with over 5000 chapters world-wide. Many new lawyers, fresh with their bar card in hand, will join BNI for the sole purpose of getting new clients and knowing they will be the only [enter type of law you practice here] lawyer in the organization. Some of the best referrals to a real estate attorney have come from the divorce, estate and business attorneys in their chapter because most lawyers don't want to handle every aspect of law.

But again, as noted, if you are a bankruptcy attorney, don't you want to be in the financial advisor, banker, mortgage broker's Rolodex when they come across clients who are suffering economically? If the bank is going to refer the client somewhere, shouldn't they be referring them to you?

### **SERVICE CLUBS**

The organizations like Rotary, Optimists, etc are designed for the sole purpose of doing charitable service work by giving back to the community. This is wonderful place to network and meet more people. However, it must be noted that you can't go into one of these clubs purely for selfish reasons. The members will sniff you out right away and shun you almost immediately. That said, if done right, service clubs can lead to a wealth of referrals from your fellow members. Think about the people that usually participate in service clubs: CEOs, CFOs, and COOs. Before you dismiss this advice straight-out, hear me out. A CEO of Nabisco is not going to be a member of a referral organization, after all, when is the last time you referred

your friend to the snack aisle of your local grocery store? However, the same CEO may very well be a part of the Optimists because his young son plays soccer and your town's local chapter sponsors a soccer league for elementary school children. If you have been volunteering and get to know Mr. CEO, over time he will come to trust you enough that he might offer you a job within the corporation's legal department. On the other hand, if working for "the man" isn't quite what you're after, would you mind if Mr. CEO let you come in once a quarter to put on an estate planning seminar for the 1200 employees who work there? If you work for a medium-to-large law firm and you want to make partner within seven years, you need to become indispensable to the firm. One way to do this is by becoming a "rainmaker"—how much rain could that CEO generate if they moved their outsourced legal issues to your law firm?

## RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS

Your local church is another great place to network and gain new business. While this is one of the more logical places to run into your competition, don't be afraid to get in there and start doing good work. Those attorneys eventually retire and when they do, guess who will be the heir apparent to receive the referrals your fellow parishioners had once been passing to the older attorneys? That's right: You!

People like to do business with people of their faith. It's a common bond your client has with you even before stepping foot into your office. If they see you every week at Sunday services, they see you at the annual church picnic, or help with the Sunday school classes, if all things being equal were compared between you and someone not from your church, don't you think that would be a very significant leg up on your competition?

Get involved in a church committee, offer to be a lector doing the readings or offering communion. The face time will be invaluable and the credibility you will build with those in the church will pay you handsomely in the long run. And, even if you don't get any business from it, you've done something which will put you in His good grace...it's a win-win proposition.