

**For my attorney readers, I know that CLE classes are often a dreaded, but necessary, task. But as often as you can, why not choose CLE opportunities that also give you the opportunity to create relationships that will bring value to you and your firm down the road. What benefits you ask? Here are a few.**

**Meet other attorneys.** I've talked to some lawyers that are reluctant to spend a lot of time getting to know other attorneys because they see them as competition. And they may be. But more likely than not, other attorneys that you run into during a CLE course turn out to be great referral sources. Your firm doesn't do everything, nor should you. So get to know the other attorneys in your area and learn more about what they do and how they work. This could lead to some great referral business down the road, and you could also make a new friend.

**Get to know potential clients.** For attorneys that work at firms or are on their own, CLE courses can be a good opportunity to meet inside counsel at companies in your area. Remember, it's not just outside counsel that has to meet the CLE requirements. Don't be overly pushy when you find yourself seated next to the inside counsel of a top prospect company at an event, but take the opportunity to start a conversation about what they do. If appropriate, invite them to share lunch with you, or grab a coffee at a later date. If you can walk out of the room with required CLE and a strong potential client, your money was more than well spent.

**Meet legal marketers or other service providers.** Oftentimes, you can get CLE credit for attending local or national association meetings. These can be great places to learn something new and outside of your specific practice area. You can also meet non-attorneys in your field. One such great example, especially for women attorneys, is the upcoming Legal Marketing Association meeting in Atlanta, entitled Making It Rain Today – Achieving Your Full Potential in a Changing World. Attendees will hear inspiring and informational talks on business development topics, get to meet other attorneys and legal marketers, and earn CLE to boot. Why wouldn't you attend?

Don't just think of CLE as a dreaded requirement, but as an opportunity to meet and get to know some really interesting people. Got any other ideas to add? We welcome your input!