

Burns & Levinson Energizes Lawyers with 110% Business Development Challenge

By **Larry Bodine**, a business development advisor with a nationwide practice. He has helped 250+ law firms generate new revenue by devising strategies, conducting business development retreats and individually coaching attorneys. He can be reached at www.LarryBodine.com and 630.942.0977.



Burns & Levinson conducted the “110% Challenge” business development program and energized the firm’s attorneys to pursue sales activities such as participating in local organizations, socializing with clients and cross-selling each other. The “110% Challenge” challenged attorneys to develop and practice networking and relationship building, awarding points for the various activities they engaged in, with the ultimate goal of reaching 110 points within 110 days.

40 out of 41 participants – 97.5% – attained the goal. As a result of the program the lawyers opened 22 more new matters than were opened over the same time period the previous year.

“My goal was to encourage attorneys to play to their particular strengths and not be concerned with having to do everything on the list,” said Scott F. Katz, Business Development Manager. “They were not required to complete each task, but were encouraged to try new things as they became more comfortable with their overall efforts.”

“One size does not fit all and all people (yes, even attorneys) are different. I wanted them to branch out to try new things rather than force them to do so from the get-go. I don’t think this is the only way to be successful, but based on our culture and in an effort to establish a level of trust between me and the participants, I felt that this was the best method for our group.”



Scott Katz

As a Boston-based firm with more than 125 attorneys and offices in Providence and New York, and elsewhere in Massachusetts, Burns & Levinson represents privately and publicly held companies, universities, institutions and individuals. Clients are in various industries from traditional manufacturing and service businesses, high-technology and life sciences companies, and emerging companies to scientists, entrepreneurs and Canadian, Chinese and Israeli-based companies.

Mandatory and optional participation

The business development program was designed to run for 110 business days, requiring mandatory participation of 41 lawyers, including all income partners as well as all

associates in their third year and up. Additionally, all first and second-year associates had the option to participate.

Each participant received a list of business development activities, all of which were assigned a specific point value (see the chart at the end of this article). Participants were challenged to accumulate an average of one point per day over the 110-day period based on their business development activities.

While 110 points was the goal, participants were encouraged to achieve as many points as they could. Development of some actual new business was expected, but the program was designed to focus more on creating and maintaining strong business development habits among the participants, and making these activities second-nature for a larger number of attorneys in the firm.

Program description and rules

There were three separate groups, segmented by years of practice and title. Each group did not necessarily share the exact same activities or point values, though there was some overlap. Because some actions were more or less likely for a particular group, there were different point values for activities depending on the group.

“Consequently, participants competed with other attorneys from their designated group. In many ways individuals were not competing with others, rather they were simply striving to reach their own (common) goal of 110 points,” Katz said.

The lawyers were responsible for keeping track of their own business development activities. There were 11 checkpoints, taking place once every 10 business days, and all relevant activity information and verification had to be submitted in a report on those dates.

All participants submitted their activity reports to Business Development Manager Scott F. Katz. Check-in meetings were suggested for everyone, but for the convenience of all concerned, they needed to be scheduled in advance. A minimum of two scheduled meetings was strongly recommended.

Trophies and cocktails to celebrate

The 110% Challenge officially concluded with a firm-sponsored cocktail party. All lawyers reaching or surpassing 110 points were recognized. The firm gave trophies to the attorneys with the highest number of points in each of the three groups: two associates and one income partner who earned them.

- Of the two associates, one is a second-year corporate associate who is a great networker. The other is a more senior IP associate who is also a strong networker, for whom the program was a way to manage his business development efforts.

- The income partner is from the business litigation group and is an active networker.

Each lawyer received a “feedback sheet” at the cocktail party so they could provide their thoughts (good and bad) about the just-completed program. Following are a few quotes from the participants, as written on their individual feedback forms:

- “It empowered me into spending time on marketing or networking due to clear firm buy-in.”
- “It made me aware of the need of being *proactive* rather than reactive.”
- It encouraged me to be more *persistent* with follow-up, rather than giving up after the initial follow-up.”
- “It produced better cross-marketing within the firm.”
- “It helped me to gain confidence from knowing that the firm is behind me or us, with the importance of marketing myself and the firm. I also learned to listen more to others (inside and outside the firm).”
- “It increased my level of confidence in networking in different groups & settings, and made me more readily comfortable in networking overall.”
- “It provided structure to what I was already doing, and really helped me with following up.”
- “It helped me to incorporate events in my personal life with networking opportunities.”

Income Partner Activities & Point Values

10 Points were deducted from the total if a lawyer was a “no-show” at a firm-sponsored event.

Meet with Business Development Manager (or Marketing).	5 points (points awarded twice, but lawyers can meet as often as needed)
Open New Clients as originating attorney (Full or shared)	10 points each
Open New Matters as originating attorney (Full or shared)	5 points each
Participating on committees, organizations (charitable or not), boards, bar associations, etc.	6 points per meeting attended
External client development (Networking or socializing with existing client)	2 points each
Internal cross-selling (client development) Example: You were working with a client in one area and introduce the client to other attorneys in other area(s) of practice within the firm.	2 points each

Providing referrals to referral sources Example: Referring a potential client, matter, lead to other legal or professional services firm	2 points each
Invite other attorneys to attend events for a “new” group or organization that you were a part of already, but they were not.	1 points per attorney who attends (You may invite one attorney to multiple events and receive 1 point for each event he or she attends. You may invite multiple attorneys to one event, and receive 1 point for each attorney who attends.)
Invite associate or associates to a networking event	2 points per associate who attends (You may invite multiple associates to one event and receive 2 points for each associate who attends)
Set up or participate in prospect meetings - conduct conflict checks	2 points each
Set up meetings with referral sources – conduct conflict checks	2 points each
Following up on prospect meeting; referral source meeting – either by email, card or note, in-person, phone, sending out firm materials, or connecting on social media site (Example: LinkedIn)	3 points each (Verification required)
Join another attorney(s) from a different practice group at lunch or dinner or drinks to learn more about their practice(s)	2 points per attorney (Credited only once per attorney. No credit for multiple meetings with same attorney.)
Attending firm sponsored events (bar associations; Chamber events)	1 point each
Attending programs or events from firm memberships.	1 point each
Attending alumni networking events	1 point each
Attending other group or organized networking events	1 point each
Attending the 110% Marketing Lunches	1 point each
Attending in-house firm events	1 point each
Attending business development or marketing presentations or seminars or webinars	1 point each (Verification required.)

Participating in practice group or firm sponsored events.	1 point each
---	--------------

For more on this topic, call:

Larry Bodine, Esq.

Business Development Advisor

Tel: 630.942.0977

E-mail: Lbodine@LawMarketing.com

Web: <http://www.LarryBodine.com>

Assisting law firms for 20 years:

- Training lawyers at firm retreats.
- Coaching lawyers to develop their personal marketing plans.
- Developing business development strategies.
- Using technology to market a practice.