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Paula Black has advised law firms around the globe on everything from powerful and innovative design to marketing strategy and business growth. She is an award-winning, Amazon-bestselling author and the force behind **In Black & White** (inblackandwhiteblog.com), a blog dedicated to clear, straightforward advice and open discussion of legal marketing issues. For more information on Paula Black, her books and her company please visit paulablacklegalmarketing.com.

How to Find a Legal Marketing Mentor

As I always tell my clients, legal marketing should be more of a habit than a burden. It should be so completely integrated into your daily life that it's merely second nature to put something business development-oriented on your schedule. That being said... everyone needs a little guidance. With social media on the upswing and the reach of the Internet at our fingertips, it's easier than ever to find a marketing and business development mentor—whether it be in person or online. Here are a few ideas to consider on your search...

The Traditional Route— The easiest way to find a legal marketing mentor is to look around. Who do you know in your firm (or other firms) who has impressive legal marketing skills? Make a list of the people who use marketing and business development to their best advantage and get in touch. Take them to lunch, ask their advice, pick their brain. I would be willing to bet the person in question will be flattered to offer their suggestions.

Gather A Group— They say there's safety in numbers, but could there also be success? I think so. Look around at your friends and colleagues and make a list of those who might be open to a weekly or monthly marketing roundtable. Plan to meet at specific times (Brunch? Lunch? Drinks?) and have a set agenda for discussion revolving around marketing and business development. Share tips and ideas, help each other with referrals, discuss what's working...and what's not, and recommend interesting blogs, books and articles that can help each of you succeed.

Go Virtual— With the plethora of information out there on the Internet it's easier than ever to find a virtual mentor. Most legal marketing experts (myself included) have blogs and Twitter accounts designed to share advice and strategy on a weekly, if not daily, basis. Sign up for their feeds and mailing lists to have mentor-level information delivered directly to your Inbox. The key here is finding someone you connect with...even on a virtual level.

Where my focus is always straightforward, simple strategies to incorporate every day, others may focus on client service, technology, or new media. Subscribe to a few and see which fits best into your own mindset. Then develop a relationship. E-mail questions, comment on blog posts and keep your mentor updated on your successes.

Start Slow—If you're looking for the simplest way to get started with a potential mentor there's nothing like a good, old-fashioned book. Browse your local bookstore for best-selling marketing and business development books or read Amazon.com reviews to see what author suits you best. Once you've connected with someone's voice and ideas it should be easy to find him or her online and (as mentioned above) get daily reminders and advice to keep you on track with your plans. No time to read? I have been a longtime fan of books on CD. Keep one in your car, office or home and put in on in the background, the information is bound to sink in!

Finding a legal marketing and business development mentor can be an incredibly helpful tool in furthering your knowledge and gaining valuable insight from someone who's been there and done that. The real work comes in finding that person that gels with who you are, what you do and where you want to go; but once you do, it's a short road to new ideas, strategies and results!