



**Paula Black & Associates**  
3006 Aviation Avenue, Suite 3B  
Coconut Grove, Florida 33133  
Phone 305-859-9554 • Fax 305-860-0016  
paulablacklegalmarketing.com

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Contact Paula Black at:  
3006 Aviation Avenue, Suite 3B  
Coconut Grove, FL 33133  
P 305-859-9554  
F 305-860-0016  
paulablacklegalmarketing.com

**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](http://paulablacklegalmarketing.com).

## Are You Putting Your Business Development Focus in the Right Place?

There are three main places to channel your law firm marketing and business development efforts: your current clients, your referral sources and prospects. While narrowing your focus is a crucial part of business development, the truth is that not everyone warrants the same amount of attention. With time limited, it's important to recognize and measure your efforts by identifying who is helping you build your practice...and who is not. Here are my best tips for putting your time and money in the right place.

### **Look at your referral sources.**

All lawyers think they know who their best referral sources are. Take another look. A lawyer I recently coached came to me with a list of over 50 referral sources, but when we actually sat down and calculated the amount of work they had sent recently the number shrank to just 16. Take the time to look back and see who's sending you business right now and place your focus on them. Don't ignore the others, but concentrate on the ones who are making a difference today.

### **Focus on an industry.**

Look at your client list. The ones who give you the most business are most likely in the same industry. By concentrating on understanding industry nuances, you put yourself in a position to not only see where MORE work can come from within existing clients' businesses, but to gain the ability to position yourself as an industry "expert." This focus will help you better your relationships with existing clients, and it will provide fertile ground for prospecting and growth.

**Rethink your commitments to organizations.**

The key word here? Participation. Take a look at the long list of memberships on your CV. Now cross off the ones you don't actively participate in. If you're not involved, it's not business development. Being a name member only doesn't bring you business—making connections and putting forth effort does. So either get involved or take it off your business development list.

**Look at where you're spending your networking time.**

Events are a great networking resource when it comes to business development, but they have to be the right ones. Look around at the next event you attend. How many of the people in the room are potential clients? Look at where your clients are spending their time and money and follow them. They will lead you to more clients.

**Evaluate your Return on Investment.**

Are you getting a good ROI when it comes to your clients? Take a closer look at where and how you're spending your time and you may be surprised. Who's bringing you business on a consistent basis and who's not? Who's referring others over to you? All clients deserve great service, but cultivating relationships with those who don't bring in work can be a waste of business development efforts. Reevaluate where you're placing your focus and turn your efforts towards clients who are helping grow your practice.

*NOTE: Though it's important to concentrate on strategies and clients that bring in business, timing is just as important. Don't judge too quickly. All initiatives should be given at least a year before being evaluated.*