

## [Great Example: Why Using Your Best “Selling” Skills Won’t Work](#)

By [Cordell Parvin](#) on April 18th, 2013

I never liked using lawyer and salesman in the same sentence. I have rarely found a lawyer who effectively used “sales” skills. Selling legal services is different.

A lawyer I coached some time ago sent me this email about her experience with a “salesman.”



I met this morning with a person who will remain nameless – a salesman of sorts. He has been calling me time and time again for over the past 6 months. I have been blowing him off as I have been busy and was just generally not interested in the product he was pushing. I answered the phone last week only to find him asking again if he could come by and visit with me since “he was going to be in the area.”

I agreed to a brief meeting thinking that I should give the guy a break due to his diligence. How surprised I was this morning to finally meet with him when he had obviously not done as much as look up my bio on our firm website! He did not know where I went to school or how long I had been with the firm. I felt as if he was

wasting my time with small talk for the first 10 minutes while he was letting me know by his questions that he knew nothing about me or my practice.

He was a nice enough guy, but very unprepared. When I filled him in on the services I was already happy with and he limited his offerings down to one area, he started asking me for referrals! He said this is how he grows his business. He wanted me to refer him to other people in the firm or other professionals that he might be able to contact. He asked me at least 3 times for various contacts. I thought this was highly inappropriate as he was obviously going to use my name to try and get business from them when in fact I was not even a client of his.

Cordell – I think you might need to broaden your horizons and start coaching outside of the legal arena!

The simple point is you and I do not like to be “sold,” and your clients don’t like it either. [Charles H. Green](#) wrote a wonderful article titled: [Selling Professional Services](#). I urge lawyers I coach to read it and I urge you to read it. You will see that you do not need to become a salesman. Green suggests:

The trick is not to adopt new sales skills, but to adapt existing delivery skills. The best selling is doing.

I agree. Brainstorm with your colleagues how you can get the opportunity to sell by doing.

**Cordell M. Parvin** built a national construction practice during his 35 years practicing law. At *Jenkins & Gilchrist*, Mr. Parvin was the Construction Law Practice Group Leader and was also responsible for the firm’s attorney development practice. While there he taught client development and created a coaching program for junior partners. In 2005, Mr. Parvin left the firm and started Cordell Parvin LLC. He now works with lawyers and law firms on career development and planning and client development. He is the co-author of *Say Ciao to Chow Mein: Conquering Career Burnout* and other books for lawyers. To learn more visit his Web site, [www.cordellparvin.com](http://www.cordellparvin.com) or contact him at [cparvin@cordellparvin.com](mailto:cparvin@cordellparvin.com).

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