

## [Success: Try this 80 Minute 5-Step Planning Exercise](#)

By [Cordell Parvin](#) on December 27th, 2013

I originally published this blog in December, 2010. I have changed the dates to be current.

You have likely heard me say that you are the architect of your career. You are responsible for your success and like an architect, you must design your career with an end in mind. A few days ago I read a Seth Godin blog post [The world's worst boss](#). In essence Seth Godin argued the odds are you are not doing it well.



You could be like many lawyers who want a system to help them with planning. I created the exercises that follow for a group of new partners I was coaching. It worked for them and I am confident it will work for you.

### **Step 1: Establish Your Goals**

#### **Duration: 30 Minutes**

Instructions: Begin by brainstorming potential goals. Think about what you want to achieve, clients you want to serve, the type of work you want to do more of, what you want to experience, what you want to learn. After you have completed your list, think about and write down why each draft goal is important to you and when you answer, think about and write down why your answer is important to you. In other words seek to determine what is motivating you to achieve the draft goal. From your

list, determine which goal is your major definite purpose/most important goal. Based on understanding why achieving other draft goals is important, decide on which of the others should be part of your plan.

## **Step 2: Develop Your Action Steps**

**Duration: 15 minutes**

Instructions: For each goal determine the actions you will need and want to take to achieve the goal. Additionally for each goal, determine what action step you will take in the next week.

## **Step 3: Begin Work on Your Plan**

**Duration: 15 minutes**

Instructions: Determine how much time you plan to commit to non-billable activities over the next year. Then determine how much of that time you will spend on your professional development, office activities, pro bono services and client development. For each category, prepare a draft list of action items you could do in the allocated time.

## **Step 4: Create a 90 Days or Monthly Action Plan**

**Duration: 10 minutes**

Instructions: Simply brainstorm with yourself all the potential client development actions you can take over the next 90 days or the next month. When you finish brainstorming edit and record the list with the most important action at the top.

## **Step 5: Weekly Action Plan**

**Duration: 10 Minutes**

Instructions: Make a list of your non-billable actions for next week. Estimate how much time you will spend on each action. Then decide when during the week you want to do it and put it on your calendar.

I think **you** will find this 5-step exercise valuable **because** you will creatively come up with a plan and then break it down so you will be accountable for putting the plan into action.

If you plan on joining our [2014 Group Telephone Client Development Coaching](#), try doing this exercise and we can go over your results in the January session.

**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).