

Use Your Staff to Boost Business Development

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5 Ways Your Legal Staff can Make a BIG Difference



No doubt your staff is a valuable asset. Administrative assistants, paralegals, librarians, and information technologists keep the office running like a well-oiled machine ... and then some.

But, their contributions to the firm shouldn't stop shy of business development. This is an area where they can **MAKE A DIFFERENCE**.

Mark Beese, blogger at [Leadership for Lawyers](#), offers these ways staff can help boost business development.

1. Create a verbal business card.

Also known as an elevator speech, a verbal business card is an effective way to introduce your firm to other people. It is often used in social and professional networking situations.

Beese notes that a good verbal business card should be intriguing and includes:

- **The firm's value proposition.**

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- **Points of difference: What makes your firm different from your competitors?**
- **A story of success.**

One basic example of a verbal business card might be:

" I work for a law firm that helps land owners make money by developing underutilized properties. They rely on us to handle all of the legal and regulatory details so that they can focus on the business."

2. Be alert to opportunities.

As staff interact with clients and potential clients, network in the community and talk with friends, have them *listen* for opportunities.

They should be aware of ‘trigger events’ that might lead a company or client to consider changing lawyers or law firms. They should also be prepared to ask questions and offer to introduce the client/prospect to an attorney in the firm.

For them to be effective, staff must understand the practice areas and industries the firm serves. They should also be able to find the right attorney who is the best match with the potential client and make the introduction.

3. Help attorneys manage their contacts.

Many attorneys have a hard time keeping up with their contact information, which can hinder one’s business development efforts. Administrative assistants can help attorneys organize and update their contacts. Deleting contacts that have passed on, updating information on people who have changed jobs, completing missing physical addresses or emails (or websites, blogs, twitter, etc...) can be very helpful.

4. Get involved in competitive intelligence.

EVERYONE around the office should dabble in a little competitive intelligence. Admin staff can serve as intelligence gatherers and synthesizers, providing relevant information to attorneys and practice/industry groups, including:

- **Setting up news alerts**, like Google Alerts, for key clients and prospects, reviewing daily alerts and providing only those stories/links that are relevant to the attorneys.
- **Setting up litigation alerts**, such as Thompson/Reuters or LexisNexis, reviewing daily and providing only those relevant cases to the attorneys.

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- **Receiving email newsletters**, reviewing blogs and other online content via RSS feeds, culling out useless information, and providing a summary of relevant information to the attorney or group.

Staff can also **learn basic competitive research techniques**, such as profiling a company or individual prior to a business development meeting. Developing a basic research protocol of visiting web sites such as LinkedIn, ZoomInfo, Martindale Hubbell, Legal OnRamp, Hoovers, Google News, company and industry web sites can help an attorney as s/he prepares for a meeting.

5. Business development tracking.

One of the keys to successful business development is having discipline in planning and tracking business development activity. Staff can help attorneys develop a lead/prospect tracking system. A simple system consists of a spreadsheet with the following fields: Name, Company, Title, Needs/Wants, Opportunities and Next Steps. The staff person can help attorneys keep the spreadsheet up to date, and assist with follow up and implementation.

Of course, we can't forget the gold standard in business development: **Outstanding client service**. Staff should be attentive, gracious, and quick to respond to clients at all times. Good client service will not only lead to good retention, it will drive referrals and open doors to new business.

Want to learn more?

Read [**Eight Ways Staff Can Participate in Business Development**](#) by Mark Beese at Leadership for Lawyers.

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