50 Topics for Client Development Discussions in Your Firm

By Cordell Parvin on August 3rd, 2012

I frequently hear about firms that have groups of highly motivated lawyers who regularly meet to brainstorm client development ideas. Do you have a group in your firm or your city?

I want to help you by sharing potential topics to brainstorm and discuss at these meetings. Here are some of my ideas:

1. Daily marketing activities – What are examples of marketing actions you can do each day.
2. Follow-up on action items – If your group has created action items, you should include those action items on each agenda.
3. Time management techniques – How is each member of the group making time for client development.
4. Accountability – Members of your group likely know what they should do for client development, but they may not have the commitment or discipline to actually do it. Discuss ideas to have the discipline or commitment.
5. Share tips on making client development more of a habit.
6. Share each member’s business plan.

7. Have each member of your group share their elevator speeches and more importantly, their elevator questions.
8. What work/initiatives you have going right now and how others in your group might be integrated into those efforts.
9. What your marketing/business development plans are for the next month or 90 days.
10. What worked in your business plan from last year and what you will change next year.
11. How is each member of your group is getting the most out of his or her business plan?
12. Have a panel of rainmakers in your firm or in your city discuss what they did and how it worked for them.
13. Dress for Success? What is the best and most appropriate dress for various occasions?
14. Networking ideas – How to work an event effectively.
15. How to remember names of people you meet.
16. Follow-up – What do you do to follow up with someone you meet at an event.
17. Most effective use of an hour a week. What do you think would be the best thing you could do in an hour a week that you are not doing now?
18. Cross-selling – how to get existing clients to hire the firm to do more work. What it is. How can you most effectively do it?
19. Website bio – Update it regularly and discuss what is most effective.
20. Presentations and presentation slides. Actually have members create 3-5 beginning slides, 3-5 ending slides and do an introduction and conclusion and then critique.
21. How the marketing department can help in client development efforts. Have a marketing representative explain.
22. Questions to ask potential clients during a first meeting.
23. Active Listening skills.

24. Personality types – Have certified person administer the Meyers-Briggs and explain the attributes of each type.
25. *StrengthsFinder 2.0* – Have lawyers take the test and discuss how they can best use their top 5 strengths.
26. Extraordinary client service. According to studies 75% of Fortune 1000 clients are not satisfied with law firm service. Why and what can your group do to provide extraordinary service.
27. Lessons from *Getting Things Done* by David Allen.
28. Delegating and supervising. How can you best make sure the work gets done right, timely and within the budget?
29. Principles of Client Development – Make a list as one group did when it made presentation at firm retreat. Search my blog to find their list.
30. Practical Tips – Make list of tips as one group did when it made a presentation at firm retreat. Search my blog to find their list.
31. If you have a coach or mentor, share ideas on how to get the most out of a coaching session.
32. What are you doing on client development that is new or different than you were doing before.
33. If client development is not about hard selling, then what is it about?
34. Take a Blog I have posted and discuss it.
35. *Trusted Advisor* – Each month discuss three chapters from the book, including the points made and how lawyers in the group have used them or witnessed other lawyers using them.
36. Charlie Miller and Ronna Cross article: "Voice of the Client." What is the voice of the client and how can we use it?
37. Client driven diversity initiatives.
38. Responding to RFPs.

39. How do you follow-up with a client after a matter is completed?

40. Monthly review of one of my suggested books or articles.

41. How to deal with problem clients.

42. Feedback. What works and what doesn't. One firm actually did a survey of associates and then compared what associates said with what the coaching group said.

43. Webinars, Blogs and Podcasts. How can they be best used for client development?

44. Google Alerts: What they are and how to best use them?

45. Discussion of Ken Ferrazzi's book "Never Eat Alone". Discussion regarding attending conferences, etc. and developing a plan of action. Best practices in mingling and networking.

46. Blog topics – go over potential topics.

47. Blog headlines – After going over the topics create headlines for chosen topics.

48. How to use LinkedIn effectively.

49. What is Twitter and is it worth the time?

50. Best ways to repurpose what you have already done and get it distributed more widely.

If you are in a group I have coached do you have additional ideas for meeting topics?

Cordell M. Parvin built a national construction practice during his 35 years practicing law. At Jenkens & 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 or contact him at cparvin@cordellparvin.com.