

[Why Client Development Coaching](#)

By [Cordell Parvin](#) on February 14th, 2013

I never had a client development coach. I learned by the seat of my pants and making mistakes. I was self-motivated, so I did not need anyone to push me to do more. Senior lawyers in your firm never had a coach. They learned the same way I did and I am sure they were self motivated.



So, why client development coaching?

The short answer is you will do more, you will do it more effectively, you will figure out what not to do and you will enjoy your client development efforts more.

Have you ever had a fitness trainer? Over my many years of staying fit I have had many. Each time I had a fitness trainer I did more when I was with them and did more when I worked out between sessions with them.

You may know that I took French I and then French II in the summer and fall. (I could have been voted as the least likely person in the French II class to ever be able to speak French). I have all the class materials. I know how to learn from them. But, somehow I am not doing what I was doing when I saw my kind French professor each Saturday.

As you know I had my hip replaced on December 13. After home therapy I had outside therapy. I started with three visits a week. I worked really, really hard with the therapist, doing two sets of 20 of each exercise. I worked hard in between the therapy sessions.

I did so well that we went to two visits a week. Then, one day the therapist said that I really was doing so well on my own and I could be “released” from therapy. I thought that was great.

But, now doing the two sets of 20 of the very same exercises seems more difficult. Why? I can't believe it is different because I was trying to impress my therapist.

I thought of this when I met with a senior lawyer who had been responsible for hiring me to coach young income partners in his firm. He told me something I thought was remarkable:

The lawyers I had coached had dramatically increased their business the first year after the coaching and even more the second year after the coaching. But, the third year after coaching they slid backwards.

As lawyers we could argue that the slip had nothing to do with not having a coach. (Some lawyers might even argue the increase in business had nothing to do with having a coach.)

If you are the rare person who has never needed a fitness trainer or teacher or coach to work with you, I admire you beyond words. But, if your experiences have been like mine with a fitness trainer, French teacher and therapist, having someone push you and give you frequent feedback will keep you focused on client development even when you are busy.

I am incredibly proud of what I accomplished in my law career. Yet, I can only imagine what I might have been able to do with help and encouragement from a coach.

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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 or contact him at cparvin@cordellparvin.com.