

Business Development Training Results in Premium Rates and Recurring Business

By Debbie Thompson, Business Development Consultant. She works with **Larry Bodine, Esq.**, a business development advisor based in Glen Ellyn, IL. He has helped law firms nationwide earn millions of dollars using strategy, business development training and individual attorney coaching. He can be reached at 630.942.0977 and www.larrybodine.com.

Novack and Macey reported having their best financial year upon the completion of our business development program. In addition, they were able to measure marketing efforts and revenue, give credit for collections and case management, and distribute origination credits, according to partner Eric Macey. Actual collections and total originations increased immensely. Since the training, the culture of the firm has transformed for the better.

One partner was able to multiply her earnings 12 times.

Novack and Macey, the law firm the *Chicago Tribune* called “a high powered litigation boutique” and that the *Chicago Sun-Times* described as a “small firm known for a bulldog manner in litigation,” has reached the 20-year milestone of continuous law practice. Most recently, they have been named as a “go-to-firm” by Corporate Counsel Magazine.

According to Managing Partner Donald Tarkington, Novack and Macey chose Larry Bodine because he was the business development consultant who could best focus and refine the marketing efforts of the firm and business development by individuals.

“He got partners involved. He possessed the and ability to work with attorneys. Larry had necessary to complete this task by being an lawyer, writer and marketing director. Simply, worked with him liked him. Moreover, he had and references, right personality and they liked

Founded in 1984 by partners Stephen Novack the firm now has 90% of its partners listed as Illinois by the Law Bulletin Publishing choose Novack and Macey to handle their because their attorneys are in-the-courtroom business problems.



Don Tarkington



Eric Macey

experience, energy the skills that were accomplished others who had the right credentials his ideas,” Don said.

and Eric N. Macey, Leading Lawyers in Company. Clients high-stakes litigation lawyers who solve

Results: Multiplying Revenue by 12 times

Attorney Karen Levine continues to have another spectacular year as a result of our program. Since she was trained in business development, her annual revenues have increased by a factor of 12. When asked what differentiates her from the competition, she replied, “I formed a new thought process in my head. To market is to be confident in your abilities. Be conscientious; understand what is important to argue in the case. Everyone litigating against you is a potential referral.”



Karen Levine

It's apparent that Karen loves practicing law and often socializes with other attorneys. The majority of her referrals come from clients, other attorneys and judges who tell their friends that she has done a great job.

Karen enjoyed the business development program. “Larry did a good job trying to get me to focus, not backing away from emotional aspects, and helping me internalize and develop target lists.” She added, “Lists are important to help you understand the people you already know. Everyone you meet is a potential client, so you must also let them know what you do.”

Karen appeals to her clients. She is accessible, smart, experienced and a great listener. By listening, she is able to find solutions to their problems. She differentiates herself by forming meaningful relationships that go beyond business and legal issues.

The Challenge

Although Novack and Macey is a unique law firm with smart, experienced lawyers, most of the firm's partners were not routinely active in practice development. There was a lack of activity in developing relationships that brought in business. The firm obtained occasional favorable articles in the *Chicago Tribune* but fell short of getting on published lists like *Chicago Lawyer's* roster of largest law firms and rankings like *Chicago* magazine's top litigators. As a result, the firm lost business to other firms that were better known or are perceived to be safer choices.

The business development effort was spearheaded by the firm's Managing Partner, Donald Tarkington. In devising the strategy, Bodine thoroughly analyzed the firm's finances, clientele and marketing initiatives, and also interviewed key partners for their viewpoints on business development. His goal was to:

1. Increase firm revenues significantly by training all the partners.
2. Help the partners build a network of new clients.
3. Generate business more aggressively.
4. Maximize results from marketing efforts.

The first step was to develop a strategy. Working with Larry, Novack and Macey developed a vision to become Chicago's “go-to” boutique law firm for high-stakes trial

and appellate work. Novack and Macey wanted to be the law firm of choice among boutique trial firms for major business faced with “bet-the-company” litigation. Their objective was to be chosen for higher value cases that command premium rates and provide more interesting work as well as recurring business.

Goals included:

- More repeat business from current clients, especially large businesses with extensive litigation.
- More business in industries where they have a depth of experience, including energy, real estate, retail, financial services and high technology.
- More referrals from lawyers in larger firms that were conflicted out of cases, in-house counsel and business executives.
- More calls from business with commercial disputes.
- Marketing themselves in an organized, purposeful fashion to get more litigation work.



Larry Bodine

Mr. Bodine made a kickoff presentation for all partners to convey that the business development training was a firm-wide effort supported by the owners, to inspire them with a firmwide vision and to motivate them into action.

The presentation included a marketing analysis of the firm, insight into the typical law firm business development environment, how to pursue targets in a premeditated fashion, an overall business development strategy, and identification of industries where the firm has clients. To implement the strategy, the firm accepted the recommendation that each partner have a personal business development plan.

The foundation of the entire program was a one-hour training session that Mr. Bodine held with each lawyer. Beforehand, the partners were given a time-tested form devised by our consulting firm to describe how they would devote 100 hours per year (two hours per week) to business development. All participating attorneys brought their partially-completed plans to the session and received personal training to help them finalize them.

Each lawyer received:

- Training to find leads and overcome obstacles.
- Ideas for marketing tactics and techniques.
- Help picking targets based on the industries in which the firm had clients.

The written plans were built on each lawyer's strengths and interests, which gave management a written document to ensure results, and enabled Donald Tarkington to follow-up persistently with each lawyer. Attorneys liked the plans because they involved *no cold calls* and *no awkward situations*. As a result, business generation at Novack and Macey has gone up across the board.

Selection criteria

Larry Bodine Marketing was selected to advise Novack and Macey because our practice is to learn a client's business and understand their marketing concerns. Bodine devised an overall strategy, focused their energies to support the strategy and coached them throughout the process. He followed up weeks later to meet again with the partners one-on-one and offered additional guidance. "He had concrete actions and encouraged us to shoot for goals," Tarkington said.

We have helped many law firms get new clients and generate millions of dollars in new revenue. Since 2000, the firm has assisted more than 60 law firms in developing:

- Strategic marketing plans.
- Tactics to execute the strategy.
- Individual marketing plans for professionals.
- Web site plans and overhauls.

Business Development Consultant Debbie Thompson joined the firm in 2006. Accordingly, when law firms hire Larry Bodine Marketing, they get a team that has 30+ years of combined marketing and sales experience, a professional researcher, and the ability to staff up easily to handle big assignments.



Debbie Thompson

Our solution

Novack and Macey's vision was supported with the following activities.

- **Methodical and premeditated development of existing relationships** with clients, larger law firms, business organizations, referral sources and law school contacts. Partners personalized relationships with business sources, joined and became active in trade associations that their clients belong to, and sought out writing and speaking opportunities in target industry and association forums.
- **Continued promotion of results achieved for clients**, in the media, firm newsletters and press releases and Web site. The firm had a "brand name" reputation and institutional validity sought by major corporations.
- **Active use of marketing devices** such as sending newsletters to clients and prospects, actively seeking out coverage by the press and cooperating with

reporters, filing jury verdict reports with publications, and reporting summaries of results on the firm Web site.

- **Individual business development plans for partners**, citing specific activities to be pursued, devoting no less than 100 hours per year (2 hours per week) in practice development activity, quarterly review of progress made in plans, and holding partners accountable for fulfilling their plans.

Quotes from the partners



Monte Mann

Partner Monte Mann, named as one of “40 Illinois Attorneys Under 40 to Watch” in Law Bulletin Publishing Company’s prestigious annual listing, also benefited from the program. Monte has stayed true to his individual marketing plan and consistently met his goals. According to Mann, he is a big believer in staying in touch with current clients. He often lunches and holds meeting with his clients. “Running logs of referrals, passing them back and forth as well as gathering lists of perspective clients who are other attorneys in private practice and corporations are successful tactics I employ through Larry Bodine’s encouragement,” Mann stated.

According to founding partner Eric Macey, the firm continues to prosper, thanks to the successful training. There is a now a prevalent business development culture at the firm. Business development activities are a main component of partner reviews. Origination fees have been put into place.

One major fundamental tactic Eric personally employed as a result of Larry Bodine’s coaching was to chair the Chicago Advisory Board of the Posse Foundation and join its National Board. This is a program that aims to take high school seniors who show promise and leadership, and send them as teams or “posses” to a college. They are guided throughout college by the Posse Foundation; in many instances, Posse scholars have gone on to pursue advanced degrees and impressive careers.

Mr. Macey believes this training benefited him. “It gets you a profile that gains client awareness of you and your business through community involvement.” He also pursued a teaching position at Northwestern Law School. Furthermore, Eric entertains clients on a regular basis whether it is the theatre, sporting events or dinner.

The business development program continues to inspire him. When asked what methods have served him well, Mr. Macey identified three:

1. Build practice around the clients you already have and they will refer you to other people.
2. Cross sell to other law firms. When you provide excellent service the client may be the referring attorney.
3. Send memorable appreciation gifts to clients.

Stephen Novack, founding partner, is known as a lawyer's lawyer and has successfully defended several major Chicago law firms against liability claims. He agrees that business development is critical to the firm and the Larry Bodine training has helped attain two rare achievements for his law firm: nine of the ten partners of this litigation boutique have been named "Leading Lawyers" in Illinois. Separately, eight partners have been named Illinois "Super Lawyers."

Novack and Macey continues to implement individual business development plans – and use the techniques they learned in their training – to get more business and generate more revenue.