

[Lawyer Client Development Struggles: You Are Not Alone If...](#)

Posted by [Cordell Parvin](#) on August 2, 2011

Have you ever struggled with client development and thought you were the only one? I can tell you I know many lawyers who have struggled at some point. I am one of them.



I decided to write about this topic after reading a [Copyblogger](#) post: The [4 Words That Will Get Your Email Opened](#). I wondered if those words would capture your interest and convince you to share this blog post. I also wondered if those words would get your clients to share something you might write. What do you think?

I have coached hundreds of lawyers and mentored hundreds more over my long career. I can very safely say: You Are Not Alone if:

- You haven't created a business plan this year (but darn it, you should prepare one)
- You have no concrete plan for your non-billable time (you might be wasting valuable time)
- You limit your learning to what entitles you to CLE credit (spend time learning a specific legal skill, learning about your clients, and learning about what it takes to be a trusted advisor)
- You don't know where to start your client development efforts (to get started make a list of 10 client development activities, rank them and start on the most important)
- You are struggling to find time to do client development (make time each week, put client development activities on your calendar)
- You feel your practice is so broad that it is hard to figure out who would be good target clients (start with types of clients like those you are currently representing)
- You don't want to be a salesman (create valuable content and clients will find you)

- You have worked really hard on client development and you haven't seen results (it took two years before I saw results from my efforts)
- You are under the shadow of a giant in your own firm in your practice area (find a niche within the niche)
- You do not like marketing yourself (you do not have to market yourself, if you are genuinely interested, ask good questions and actively listen)
- You do not like going to networking events (you can do other things)
- You want to go home after work and be with your family (you can go home and still build a book of business)
- You are introverted (some of the most successful lawyers I know are introverted)
- You don't like public speaking (then create valuable written content)
- You don't have any system to stay in touch with your best contacts (this leads to "random" lunches with no strategy)
- You don't know how to follow up after meeting a potential client (think of what follow up you would find valuable if you were in the potential client's shoes)
- You don't have many readers for your blog (you will get better at blogging over time)
- You don't understand how to best use social media (time to start learning)
- You don't repurpose your articles and presentations (you are missing an opportunity to reach a different audience)
- You don't know how to close the sale when you are meeting with a potential client (say something like: "We can help you with that," or "We would love to work with you on this.")
- You don't know the answer to every question you are asked (don't worry about it)
- You spend more time planning your vacation than you spend planning your career (time to turn that around)

You may feel better knowing you are not alone, but view this as an opportunity to seriously get started with planning your career and focusing on client development. Please share this post with colleagues and friends who may be struggling with client development.

Cordell Parvin Blog

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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.