

\$1 Million in New Revenue for Chuhak & Tecson Resulting from Business Development Training

By Nancy Glazer, Esq., an attorney practicing in Deerfield, IL.

Chuhak & Tecson, a 60-attorney, full-service Chicago law firm, launched an intensive program of business development training for 20 income partners. Within nine months, the 20 attorneys brought in \$1 million in new revenue, with one partner *doubling* his fees billed.



A creative and growing law firm, Chuhak & Tecson has represented clients ranging from local establishments to national and international companies and from locally-owned family businesses to publicly-traded corporations. Chuhak & Tecson prides itself on providing innovative and practical solutions to the complex issues and intricate transactions affecting its clients' businesses.

The firm's lawyers work as a collaborative team of legal advisors. On average, they have more than 20 years of practical experience each, and they share a genuine interest in client success. Since 1987, Chuhak & Tecson has grown to become one of Illinois' largest law firms by serving as a valued business partner with clients.

The challenge

In Spring, 2005, Chuhak & Tecson made a strategic decision to start a new marketing program, "Business Development For Partners," with a total budget of \$24,000. This initiative was vital because of the impending retirement of key rainmakers and the lack of new business from mid-level partners.

Challenges to the program's success included:

- Skeptical and resentful partners.
- Lawyers with little selling acumen.
- Lack of a marketing culture at the firm.
- No similar business development program had ever been instituted in the past.

"Business Development for Partners"

The new program was spearheaded by the firm's Marketing Director, Lily Joy. To implement "Business Development for Partners," Chuhak & Tecson retained Larry Bodine, a business development advisor with of Apollo Business Development ("Apollo"). Mr. Bodine thoroughly analyzed the firm's finances, clientele, marketing initiatives and input from equity partners. Apollo

demonstrated the ability to meet the firm's five top goals:

1. Increase firm revenues by \$1 million by training 20 partners.
2. Generate business more aggressively.
3. Focus on industry niches.
4. Increase revenue from current and new clients.
5. Maximize results from marketing efforts.



Lily Joy

Apollo assembled Chuhak & Tecson partners for a kick-off presentation, which included: (a) a marketing analysis of the firm, (b) an overview of the typical law firm business development environment, (c) specific guidance regarding how to pursue "targets" in a premeditated fashion, (d) an overall business development strategy, (e) discussion about the use of an industry approach, (f) identification of five industries where the firm already had a strong client base, and (g) the creation of personal business development plans for each partner.

Chuhak & Tecson was earnest about bringing in more business. Apollo's kick-off presentation spearheaded lively give-and-take discussions about the firm's client development, Mr. Bodine advising the partners what efforts would work and what wouldn't. As a result, Chuhak & Tecson got a custom-tailored solution with real results.

The Nuts & Bolts of Apollo's Business Development Training

During Apollo's kick-off presentation, Mr. Bodine conveyed that "Business Development for Partners" was a firm-wide effort supported by Chuhak & Tecson's management team. Apollo's goals were to inspire attorneys and to provide them with an individualized, methodical and well-conceived plan to bring in more business.

Chuhak & Tecson partners were given Apollo's time-tested, strategic planning form to chart out more formally how they would devote 100 hours per year to business development. Each partner was allocated \$1,000 to use from a marketing reimbursement fund.

The crux of "Business Development for Partners" was the individual, one-hour training sessions that Mr. Bodine and Ms. Joy conducted with each lawyer. All participating attorneys brought their partially-completed strategic planning forms to these sessions and received personalized guidance in finalizing their business development strategies. Each lawyer was given:

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

The key to the success of the written, strategic plans was that each one was built upon the partner's own strengths and interests. Attorneys liked their customized plans because they involved no cold calls and no uncomfortable situations.

In addition, Mr. Bodine regularly called to check in with each lawyer while Ms. Joy followed-up in person with each partner persistently -- ensuring results. *Another key reason why the Chuhak & Tecson/Apollo Business Development Training thrived is because Ms. Joy, Mr. Bodine and firm management stayed in communication constantly.*

After only nine months, the participants of Apollo's "Business Development for Partners" brought in \$1,000,000 in new revenue. Having spent only \$24,000, the firm showed a return on investment of 4000%.

Apollo's Bottom-Line Results

Apollo's goal is to help attorneys develop business and earn more revenue. Apollo takes a common-sense, nuts-and-bolts approach to business development and concentrates on techniques that actually bring in new business.

Apollo is composed of principals Larry Bodine, Esq. and Michael G. Cummings, who have presented dozens of business development training programs for law firms across the United States over the past 20 years. Together, with business development consultants Barry Schneider, John Toth and Laura Kresich, Apollo offers over 100 combined years of business development training and the ability to staff up easily to handle big assignments.

Since 2000, Mr. Bodine has assisted approximately 100 law firms to:

- Revamp their Web sites to maximize traffic and business.
- Devise strategic marketing plans.
- Execute the developed strategies.
- Train partners in business development with individualized marketing plans.

Quotes from Chuhak & Tecson partners

One partner *doubled* his billing. When asked what he did to achieve and surpass his goals, he responded, "This program focused me on marketing and gave me the ability to learn and try new things. I began radio advertising, made myself essential to clients, and followed up on various meetings with new contacts with follow-up calls and additional meetings. I demonstrated my abilities with the United Way, scouted and governmental organizations and followed-up with existing referral sources for additional referrals."

When asked, "What did you do differently?" one partner answered, "I spent lots of time meeting people, maintaining contact, dining, golfing with repeat sources of business and potential new clients."

Other partners attributed their successes to persistence -- not giving up on a contact even after there were no immediate results. This program boosted the morale of individual partners and focused each on marketing, an activity they rarely considered or practiced.

Working closely with Apollo, Chuhak & Tecson:

1. **Increased revenue with a premeditated *business development strategy*.** Rather than "dress up the lawyers as hunters and send them into the woods to shoot at anything that moves," Apollo identified specific targets, the names of decision-makers to contact, directions on how to reach the decision-maker, and what words to use at a meeting with their target.
2. **Created a marketing culture.** Apollo trained lawyers to deepen relationships by calling on people they already knew. No one had to make a cold call. Each attorney felt comfortable in carrying out the goals of the program.
3. **Engaged lawyers in business development, by overcoming their objections** (such as: no time, too much work, not interested) and building plans around their strengths and activities they already enjoyed.
4. **Educated lawyers how to sell without being a "salesman."** Apollo taught them to sell by listening, to research the target and his/her company, and to arrive with a set of questions designed to get the other person talking.
5. **Prioritized the attorneys' targets:** #1 current clients (the low-hanging fruit); #2 referral sources (the lawyers' allies); and #3 carefully-chosen targets that fit the firm's strategy.

In the words of Ms. Joy, "Thanks to your dedication of time, resources and energy into the set-up and launching of our Business Development For Partners program, we are well on our way to a great fiscal year! You went above and beyond to make us feel confident in our marketing decisions and best of all, you worked with us to stay within our tight budget constraints. You pushed us beyond the usual and customary, sending us out into the blogosphere with our first attorney-authored blog."

Most importantly, she stated, "The program was a success and the attorneys at Chuhak & Tecson are continuing this program into the next fiscal year, anticipating additional revenue earnings."