

## [Associates: Do Not Buy Into These Client Development Myths](#)

By [Cordell Parvin](#) on March 6th, 2013

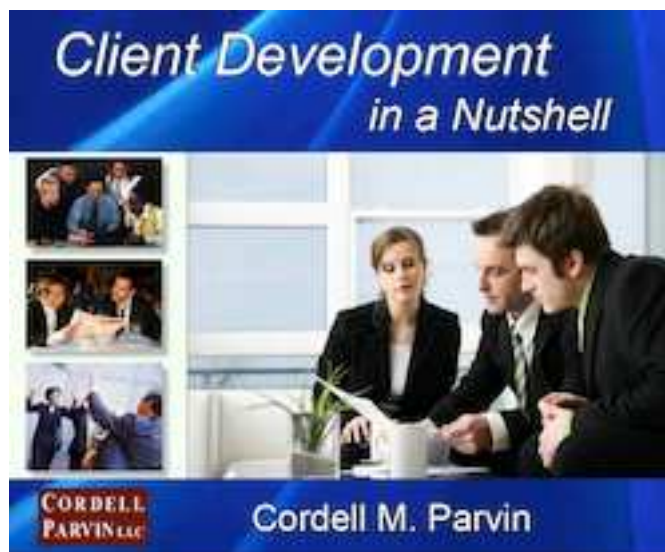
Today I am speaking to all the associates in all the offices in a mid-west law firm. I plan to share many things with them. Perhaps my most important advice will be not to buy into some of the myths they might hear about client development.

Here are the most common myths I see and my response:

1. You either have it (skills to develop business) or you don't. I can tell you from personal experience that I did not naturally have it. Knowing that drove me to work at it and develop my skills. So, you can learn to successfully attract clients if you are open to ideas and willing to work at it.
2. Just do good work, get a Martindale A-V rating and wait for the phone to ring. I was told that when I was an associate. The problem is there are thousands of lawyers in your city or state who do good work. Client development is a contact sport. It is about building relationships and adding value beyond the good work.
3. You have to do client development "my way." Senior partners sometimes make that point and an associate may not see himself or herself to be like that partner. I know from coaching over 1000 lawyers that each person has their own unique skill set and strengths. I encourage them to figure out what will work best for them and then do it that way.
4. I'm "too young, and inexperienced to..." You are never too young to start learning client development skills. You may not bring in business right away, but that is ok. This is a marathon not a sprint, you are building towards doing so later. If you wait until you are a partner to start making the efforts, you may have the same learning curve.
5. You have to be an extravert and know how to work a room. I know lawyers who are very outgoing and do poorly because they talk about themselves and do not listen. I know introverted lawyers who ask great questions and listen who do very well.

6. You have to “ask” for business. Some lawyers are good at asking for business. Others who ask come across as needy or greedy. I, personally, was uncomfortable asking so I tried to be the “go to” lawyer who would be sought by clients in my target market.
7. Associates in big firms do not need to learn client development. At the very least, associates in big firms with institutional clients need to learn about those clients and find ways to become more valuable to those clients. In the current economy institutional clients are no longer loyal and they are looking more for value in their outside legal expenditure. As a result, learning the skills to get new clients is more important today than before.

I plan to share much more with the associates today.



If you are interested, you can find some of my thoughts in my e-book: Client Development in a Nutshell.

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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](http://www.cordellparvin.com) or contact him at [cparvin@cordellparvin.com](mailto:cparvin@cordellparvin.com).