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Mission Accomplished

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Asking Why and What If

The best business developers I know are among the most creative people I know. They're always questioning the status quo ("why?") and trying to figure out if there is a better way to do things ("what if?"). Often they are a burr under the saddle of firm administrators and partners. Business developers typically question or ignore the routine and seem to have a hard time following rules, which can make them difficult to deal with operationally.

I suppose maintaining the status quo answers our need for order in a chaotic universe and allows us to keep the corporate machine

adequately greased and running pretty well.

What we don't always see is that it can act like a boa constrictor, slowly squeezing the life out of creativity. Strictly maintaining order usually runs counter to finding new ways to bring in and keep clients. And it almost never inspires innovation.

So the next time you get irritated with those who question the status quo by looking for a different approach, hold on a minute. Remember what's made these people successful: asking the right questions of themselves, their clients and their prospects. Let them

ask you why and what if. In pondering the answers, you just might be starting a conversation that will lead to great results for your firm.



Are you asking the right questions in your firm?

Words are, of course, the most powerful drug used by mankind.
— Rudyard Kipling

Who Are the Marketers in Your Firm?

It's possible that some of your best marketers may be people who never leave the office. Ask your word processors, accounting clerks, and runners for their ideas on how to improve

client service. You may be surprised at their creativity and innovation – at their ability to ask "What if?"

When they come up with a good idea, use it! And don't

forget to reward them for their creativity. You'd be amazed what a little public praise (and maybe a gift certificate) can do.

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To Cross Sell Effectively, Treat Your Partners Like Clients

Firm leaders: to advance the interest of the firm and to increase its revenue, create systems to help your partners know and trust each other.

Have you ever received an email from one of your partners asking if you know anyone in town who specializes in a certain area — only to sigh heavily, realizing that at least one person in your own firm provides exactly that service? It’s surprising how often partners exhibit a lack of knowledge about their own firm’s services.

To avoid this, be sure you meet regularly with your partners (one-on-one when possible) to find out more about the specifics of their specialties. It’s amazing what you can learn in 15 or 20 minutes. If you spend the time, you’ll get to know them better and understand how to use their skills and

strengths to help your clients.

Another approach is to invite members of each practice area to make brief presentations on their specialty to associates and managers (who often have more contact with clients than partners). It is best to assume these groups don’t know everything your firm does and plan communications accordingly.

Finally, use your intranet effectively. When one practice group sends a mailing to clients, for example, post it so everyone can stay informed and keep their clients up to date on other areas in which your firm can help them.

Spending time with your partners outside formal meetings gives you the opportunity to build relationships with them. We know that in professional services clients only do business with people they trust and, usually, with people they like. It’s no different for partners in their cross-selling efforts.

If your partners trust and like you, your chances of gaining an introduction to their clients who may need your expertise increase. Just like clients, partners can only learn who you are and what you do if you take the initiative to develop a relationship with them. And when you take the time and effort, everybody wins.

I get results for professional services firms by:

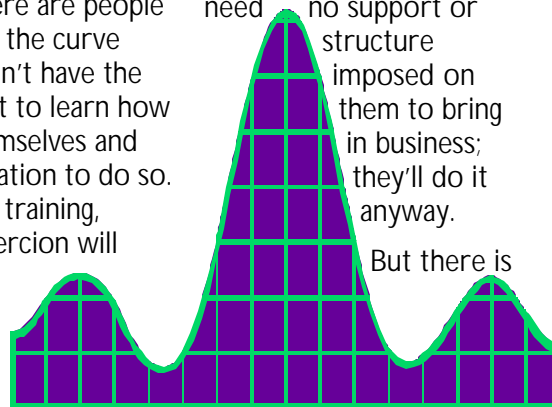
- **Creating and helping to implement firm marketing plans**
- **Helping professionals set and achieve individual business development goals**
- **Training all experience levels in marketing, including client service, referral development and cross-selling**

The Bell Curve of Business Development

Like most things, business development skills fall into a bell curve. There are people on one side of the curve who simply don’t have the skill or interest to learn how to market themselves and have no motivation to do so. No amount of training, support or coercion will change them much. There are people on the other side of the curve who are skilled and

experienced business developers. Often they need no support or structure imposed on them to bring in business; they’ll do it anyway.

But there is



the big group in the middle of the curve: they may not know much about marketing and they may be intimidated by it, but they are sufficiently motivated to give it a try. When it comes to business development, these are the people who should receive the bulk of your time, money, effort and encouragement.