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Mission Accomplished

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Self Interest Can Be Very Profitable



"If you want to be successful with marketing, you better talk about what matters. You better tell everybody how business development will put more money in their individual pockets ..."

I was talking to a friend of mine who happens to be an outstanding business developer. We got into a discussion about business development as the best way of increasing firm revenue. He laughed when I said "firm revenue" and said, "If you want to be successful with marketing, you better talk about what matters. You better tell everybody how business development will put more money in their individual pockets – not just onto the firm's top line."

That hit me like a two-by-four. Of course, it's important to discuss teamwork, firm goals, missions and such. But if we want to create a true business development culture, we have to demonstrate that bringing in clients will make individual firm members more money. We have to show that *not* bringing them in will limit personal income.

Successful professional services firms set out clear career paths for their members. They let them know that the top-paid partners are those who bring in the business, and that associates who learn how to do that will become partner more quickly than those who don't. Successful business development cultures consistently recognize and reward not only the results, but also the effort to bring in clients.

It may not be politic to say so, but we must appeal to individual self interest (both positive and negative) when we implement a business development plan. We must understand that in doing so we're also enhancing the firm's success.

Follow-Up is Key to Successful Action Plan Implementation

We've all heard it a thousand times: "Accountability within a firm is essential to that firm's success." Absolutely true. It's also true when it comes to action plans (or marketing plans, if that's what you choose to call them). Individuals need to be accountable for what they commit to in their plans. Sounds great, doesn't it? But what does "accountable"

really mean? Of course, being accountable means the individual is taking personal responsibility for implementing his or her action plan. But here's the other part of the equation: it also means that the firm is living up to its end of the bargain by supporting and monitoring

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the individual effort.

This is where action plans can run into roadblocks and begin to gather dust. It is human nature to create a plan and immediately forget about it. It's as though the mere creation of the plan, the writing of the words, will make business development happen. Knowing this very human response, it is essential that the managing partner, marketing partner or director of marketing play the role of monitor,

mentor and conscience.

If you are in charge of this effort, you should be scanning individual action plans at least every month to be sure you are staying ahead of deadlines. It's very important that you contact individuals ahead of deadline to remind them of tasks they committed to and to see what progress they have made. This way, you can encourage and offer help, rather than scold them for a missed deadline. Nearly everyone responds more productively to praise than

criticism, particularly when they have ventured into a new area such as business development.

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Tips for New Hires

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***

Here are a few tips you can give new professionals when they join your firm. Maybe they can serve as a reminder to your veterans, too. By distributing something like this, you will let people know right away that yours is a progressive, client-centric, marketing-oriented firm.

1. Know that being a good professional means a lot more than understanding the technicalities. Very few people, other than your initial employers, will ever care about your grades or your membership in a professional society. Those things are important, but generally not to clients.

2. Prospective clients will be very concerned about three things: Do they *like*

you? Do they *trust* you? Do they *want* to do business with you?

3. Be responsive to your clients. Don't make them wait. If you make them wait too long too often, they will find a professional who doesn't.

4. Clients are not an interruption to your day. They are the reason you have a career and a good paycheck.

5. Mother Nature gave you two ears and one mouth. Use them proportionally.

6. Maintain your good manners even when no one else does.

7. Behave in a way that makes you enjoyable to be

around. Laughing at yourself is nearly always a good idea.

8. Business development in professional services is based on three things: finding, creating and sustaining relationships. You can't do this from your desk. If you want to get clients, you have to get out of the office.

9. You never know where your clients will come from. Therefore, be courteous to your support team, your vendors, and your colleagues. You can't do your job without them, and you want them to rave about you in the community.

10. Thank your clients early and often. Never, ever take them for granted.