

WOMENLEGAL

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A WOMAN'S WORLD?

What issues do women working in the legal profession in the US, UK, Australia and Asia face today?

FOCUS FEATURE

An insight into the American Bar Association Commission on Women in the Profession's latest report.

MASTERCLASS

How to overcome the obstacles facing women aiming for partnership.

Born business boosters

Marianne M. Trost,
‘The Woman
Lawyers Coach’
reveals how
your natural
abilities can be
used to your
advantage.

WE HAVE NATURAL ABILITIES that can be used to our advantage – if we recognise them and purposefully use them. Simply put, business development is fundamentally about successfully building, nurturing and growing relationships. At the risk of over-generalising, women have the leading edge when it comes to relationships.

While many of us do not excel at developing business opportunities at football games for example, we do typically excel at relationship building and connecting with people on multiple levels. These natural abilities can be used to create trusting relationships with clients, potential clients and referral sources. This is our advantage.

We are interpersonal relationship-builders

We introduce people to others we know, invite contacts to join us at events, create occasions to gather, exchange and share information, and find ways to connect with one another. These natural tendencies are at the heart of successful business development, and are easily transferable to the art of growing a client base.

We are good listeners

How many hours have you spent listening to a friend’s challenges without asking, “So, what’s your point?” The same skill applies to clients and potential clients. The next time you take them to lunch, ask them; how the current state of the economy is affecting their business, what they perceive their greatest challenge over the next 12 months to be, and what their five-year vision for their company is. Then listen carefully. You may discover numerous potential areas where you or your colleagues can be of future assistance.

We are excellent communicators

Clients want to be kept in the loop (even when the news is bad). They want to be called or e-mailed regularly. They want us to ask questions, and share what we know and what we think. Do what comes naturally –

communicate often and meaningfully with your contacts – and provide quality work. It’s a powerful formula for success.

We enjoy staying in touch

Being in the right place at the right time is often a deciding factor in who brings in the next client or even a new piece of work. Women can exponentially increase their odds by doing what many of us enjoy anyway such as calling our contacts periodically, forwarding an interesting e-mail, mailing a copy of an article with a personal note and so on.

We genuinely care and want to help our clients

Clients and potential clients want to work with lawyers who genuinely care about their businesses and want to help them succeed. If you want to help your contacts, tell them exactly that. Then ask for the chance to show them. You will be surprised at how responsive they will be.

We connect on multiple levels

As women, we have a tendency to connect with people on multiple levels. This makes for more meaningful and lasting relationships, but also for more enjoyable working relationships. In a recent survey¹, the majority of in-house counsel reported that they would rather work with a ‘good’ attorney with whom they enjoyed working than with ‘the best’ attorney with whom it was not enjoyable to work.

So, the next time you wonder whether your male counterparts have the winning edge in business development, think again. You have what it takes naturally! [WOMENLEGAL](#)



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Reference

1. <http://www.acc.com/>