

# Top 5 Business Development Tips



**Marianne M. Trost,**  
The Women Lawyers Coach

Maximize your current efforts before you add more tasks to your 2011 business development “to do” list. Working smarter will help you add value to the time and effort you invest in growing your practice this year. Commit to:

**1** Prioritize your contacts. Not all relationships have the same potential for return on investment. Go through your contact list and identify those that are likely to be most fruitful. If your time is limited, invest a greater amount in the relationships that are most likely to matter. Take steps to rekindle relationships that have potential. Calendar follow up at regular intervals.

**2** Plan before you network. Invite contacts to attend with you. When feasible, get a list of attendees in advance and identify whom you would like to meet and whom you would like to introduce to others at the event. Familiarize yourself with the event sponsors and consider introducing yourself at the event. Within 48 hours of attending, send your VCard and a follow up note. Stay in touch.

**3** Schedule face time. There’s no substitute for face to face conversation. Take the time to have lunch, meet for coffee, visit your contact’s office/worksites, or attend an event together. Ask open ended questions and spend the majority of your time listening, not talking. Use 2011 as a reason to find out what your contacts’ goals and anticipated challenges are. Then find ways to help.

**4** Ask for the business. Let your clients know that you enjoy working with them and that you would like to continue to serve their needs. Don’t assume they already know. Look for opportunities to tell your contacts what you do and why you do it. Ask potential clients and referral sources for their business. If you don’t ask, someone else will.

**5** Set goals. Having a clear vision of what you want to accomplish in 2011 will help you assess opportunities as they come along. Investing the time upfront to decide what you want to achieve and how you are going to do it will help you eliminate random acts of business development and wasted resources.



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As a new year begins, we tend to reflect on how successful our businesses currently are and how our levels of success could be heightened. With some diligent planning and resourcefulness, law firms can achieve their goals and look back on 2011 as a year of great prosperity.

**1** Know who your target is!  
Being a jack of all trades and a master of none may help you get your foot in the door, but will do little for long term growth. Start the year off by determining what types of service offerings you want to focus on and build a marketing plan around those services. Once you know what you want to offer, determine who you want to offer it to and set out to identify where you can connect with those target markets.

**2** Embrace Social Media  
The idea that social media outlets like Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn have no relevance in the world of law is now archaic. Millions of consumers and businesses are looking to social media as a form of research before doing business with a law firm. Get your arms around how social media can help you tell your story, build your brand and connect with your target markets.

**3** Network by helping others  
Good things come to those who help others. Invest in relationships that may not have immediate ROI potential, but will allow you to share your expertise and meet other viable clients.

**4** Be ready  
Build it and they will come does not apply here. Be sure that you have the necessary tools to reach out and inform potential clients. Do an audit of your website, marketing materials and informational pieces to ensure that once you’ve attracted your target, you have what you need to seal the deal.

**5** Execute  
Daily work life can often get in the way of executing our goals. Make a plan, stick with it and set benchmarks along the way. Be sure to revisit the goals each quarter to determine if you are staying on track.