



Make It Rain in 2020!

Take action now to build your book.

BY **MARTHA M. NEWMAN**

The best advice to get more clients: Nail down your business development goals this month and create an action plan for the upcoming year. Think big but be realistic. Ditch the excuses and stick to your plan. Here is a basic checklist (more to come in future issues):

Put Numbers and Deadlines in Your Plan.

Decide your target revenue goals, the number of referrals you want to obtain, and which selling skills to enhance. Settle on the number of *new clients* and number of *new matters* from existing clients that you are going after and make it happen!

For some lawyers, two audacious goals would be to bring in 50% more clients than they represented last year and to double the number of referral sources they can count on. Relationship building with prospective clients and fellow lawyers is crucial to hitting those targets.

To maximize your chances of achieving your goals, consider this timetable for building business development proficiencies: improve your networking skills and get comfortable working a room within eight months; gain self-confidence

talking one-on-one about your value with prospects within six months; and eliminate at least one self-sabotaging habit by December. Deadlines motivate.

Use Time-Proven Strategies.

Turn satisfied clients into advocates and referral sources by asking them to recommend you to potential clients, preferably right after you have thrilled them with good results. Don't wait until the bloom is off the rose. That sounds like a no-brainer, but many lawyers will not do it for fear of embarrassing the client or appearing too eager for work.

Find out the conferences and organizations where your prospects do their networking and request speaking opportunities. Join if you can. Write articles for publications your clients read and form relationships through the bar association with lawyers outside your field. Utilize social media to build your brand and raise your visibility.

Network Whether You Dread It or Not!

Many of my coaching clients would rather do pushups until they collapse than walk into a room full of strangers,

but their fears diminish when they learn practical tactics for working a room. Act like a host—not a guest—and meet new people by using the *shake and break* method: “Hi, I’m Amy Smith (extend your hand). I wanted to come over and meet you.” You do not have to be a scintillating communicator! Folks will think you are a fascinating conversationalist if you ask questions about their work and let them talk about *themselves* and *their* problems.

Practice Your Value Proposition.

Make yourself memorable with a dynamic value proposition (elevator speech) that focuses on the outstanding results clients gain by hiring you, not just the list of services you perform. Dispense with humility and work anonymous success stories into your conversations that give prospects reasons to trust your expertise in handling problems like theirs.

You Really Do Have Time!

Stop making excuses about why you cannot spend time on business development. If you designate certain days and hours each week for planning and doing business development and honor that commitment, you are building an essential habit that will pay off. Schedule at least two business development activities each week, preferably three.

Do the Most Important Thing.

Get out of your own way this year. Reject negative thinking and get rid of bad habits that drag you down. Your success hinges on mustering the courage to make positive changes that will enable your rainmaking success in 2020. **TBJ**



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