



**“An excellent way to generate new business as a young attorney is to develop meaningful relationships with other lawyers.”**

# Young Lawyers

BY RYAN J. WORKS, Young Lawyers Chair

## THE BUSINESS OF BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

As a young lawyer, developing new clients and generating revenue from the legal services we provide is a difficult task – especially in an economy where clients are sparse. For those of us in private practice, nothing is more vital than maintaining a workload that justifies our existence; this can be accomplished most directly by developing our own business.

Business development is especially tough for young attorneys because it isn't taught (or even discussed) in law school. New lawyers are not generally experienced enough for business owners and general counsel to consult with directly, and there is typically an institutional base of clients for new lawyers to serve within law firms – where many of us land our first jobs. However, starting early by “practicing” business development will help ensure that when the experience is gained, and when business development becomes a key component of your business, you will meet or exceed expectations.

There are many different approaches to developing clients, but for younger attorneys, these approaches may seem limited. In my experience, the most successful strategies require getting involved through professional organizations, trade groups, boards, committees, youth organizations or any other group dedicated to a cause that you may enjoy. This is tough because it takes time and energy above and beyond our already-demanding practices and family lives. Although you might not sit on the biggest and best committees to start, joining other community business leaders in aid of a cause is certain to connect you with those who may eventually need legal services.

Another excellent way to generate new business as a young attorney is to develop meaningful relationships with other lawyers. Lawyers have conflicts as well, and only those who are most respected by their peers will be called on when those conflicts eventually arise. Also, as we know, lawyers in jurisdictions outside of Nevada can be fruitful referral sources as they are likely unlicensed here, unfamiliar with the laws and local procedures, and are unfamiliar with our judges and local bar. In this regard, serving as local counsel (a task often handed down to young associates), and serving well, can be an excellent way to obtain repeat business.

Although these are only a couple of the many strategies available, whatever business development techniques you employ, remember to maintain and nurture the relationships that you build. I was recently re-connected with a Chicago lawyer with whom I worked as local counsel many years ago. A branch of his firm's offices needed Las Vegas counsel on an emergency basis and he remembered me, resulting in me getting a great case. I continually update and maintain my contact list in a proprietary-like fashion. Holiday cards and occasional strategic e-mails help maintain the connectivity.

By staying involved building and maintaining relationships, I am confident that you too can start the process of “making it rain.” ■

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