

### Control Your Destiny: Seven Steps for Building a Clientele

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I will never forget one new partner's awakening to the importance of client development. He had worked virtually his entire career on the files of one large financial institution that officed in the same building as his firm. Every day, someone rode up in the elevator with an armful of new transactions requiring his attention. As he described it, it was like there was a machine in the basement producing files. Then he became a partner and was expected to develop his own clientele. Where could he begin?

Based on conversations with lawyers, it seems that a relatively small number in any given law firm actually developed substantial books of business on their own. Some lawyers who appear powerful by virtue of significant client relationships in reality inherited their clients from retiring or transitioning partners. Some lawyers rely on their colleagues to refer the vast majority of their work. Some ride the coattails of great rainmakers. Others have tied their success to the strong reputation of a firm practice area. Still others work for institutional clients who, as our new partner experienced, produce files like virtual machines.

So what's a lawyer to do if suddenly forced to develop a clientele on his or her own?



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#### Building Your Book of Business: Seven Ideas

It's no secret that in firms large and small, the lawyers with the most significant client relationships usually make the most money and enjoy the most influence in their firms. And the importance of client development only increases for solo practitioners: They cannot afford to be complacent about building a clientele, or to rely on others for business.

But beyond the monetary aspects, when you build your own clientele, your practice becomes more enjoyable. You are able to control the kind of work you do, and you gain greater satisfaction interacting with clients because you built those relationships yourself. In essence, you can control your own destiny. Here are seven ideas for doing so.

If you suddenly had to develop a book of business on your own, would you know what to do? Solos and small firm practitioners need tactics different from large firm lawyers. Learn how to take the right steps and you win the rewards of personal client relationships.