

Play to Win

Upping Your Marketing Game

By [Sally J. Schmidt](#) | Dec.07.15 | [Business Development](#), [Daily Dispatch](#), [Legal Marketing](#), [Play to Win](#)



As the new year approaches, a lot of firms ask their lawyers to prepare annual business or marketing plans. Even without that structure, it makes sense to take a step back to reflect and assess what has worked, what hasn't and what should be done differently.

This isn't as easy as it may sound. One of the biggest questions facing many lawyers when it comes to business development isn't whether to do it; it's how. Maybe what you are doing isn't terribly effective, but what changes should be made?

Making “Marginal Gains”

I remember [an article](#) I read several years ago about Great Britain's cycling team. Although no Brit had ever won the Tour de France, the team's new general manager was charged with making that happen. His theory is called the “aggregation of marginal gains.” Simply put, it means making a one percent improvement in everything you do. Within three years, the team had won the Tour de France.

A One Percent Improvement Plan

If you think about the things most lawyers do for marketing or business development, there are virtually unlimited ways to improve preparation, execution or follow-up by one percent. Here are just a few examples.

Going to a lunch meeting:

- Research the person you're meeting with before you go.
- Prepare three to five questions you'd like answered during the meeting.
- Identify the one or two things you hope to convey during the meeting.

Writing an article:

- Talk to someone who fits the profile of your target audience to get their thoughts on hot topics or challenges.

- Use writing the article as a reason to get together with a referral source or prospect to discuss the topic and its implications.
- Send the article to a trade association with an offer to speak on the topic.

Attending a firm meeting or retreat:

- Sit next to someone you don't work with every day.
- Have a strategy. Who do you want to meet? What do you want to learn?
- Prepare your internal "elevator speech" — what you've been working on, new areas of expertise or the like.

Giving a presentation or webinar:

- Ask for the list of attendees in advance and do some research on them.
- Contact one attendee afterward with an offer to give the program (or something related to it) on-site for the company.
- Invite a small number of people to a follow-up meeting or roundtable discussion on the subject.

Finalizing a client engagement:

- Send a thank-you note for the opportunity to work with the client.
- Send an email praising the contributions of a client representative.
- Set up a postmortem call or meeting to discuss the matter.

After meeting someone new:

- Immediately add the person to your Outlook contacts, the firm's CRM system or your own database and code him or her for appropriate activities.
- Create a calendar appointment to follow up in an appropriate amount of time or on a regular basis.
- Follow up with an invitation for coffee or lunch.

Attending a meeting of an organization:

- Prepare a relevant elevator speech.
- Set a goal to meet two people you don't know.
- Get there early to take advantage of the networking time.

I am not suggesting you do all these things. On the contrary, I am suggesting you find one thing you can do to marginally improve the way you execute each marketing or business development activity in which you are engaged.

So aim for small gains. Create better habits. Do everything you do just a little bit better. I guarantee you will see results.

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