

Play to Win

[Take Stock of Your Marketing and Business Development Activities](#)

By [Sally J. Schmidt](#) | Jan.05.15 | [Business Development](#), [Daily Dispatch](#), [Legal Marketing](#), [Play to Win](#)



One of my favorite quotes is, “If you keep on doing what you’ve always done, you’ll keep on getting what you’ve always got.” Although a bit inelegant, this phrase is particularly apt with respect to marketing and business development.

The beginning of a new year is a perfect time to assess your activities. Sometimes you’ll find your efforts are too passive and don’t include enough one-on-one, relationship-building time. Sometimes you’ll find you’ve done too much joining and not enough leading or contributing. And sometimes you’ll find you are doing a lot of things but with the wrong people.

So, whether your marketing and business development activities have not been as effective as you’d like or you simply want to be as productive as possible, now is a good time to take stock. Here are some ways to evaluate your efforts.

Contacts

There will always be people who ask you to lunch, and there will always be folks who like to be wined and dined. The question is, are you finding benefit from these encounters? Is the bank loan officer or insurance adjuster or in-house lawyer you’ve been courting for five years really worth the time and money?

The benefit can’t always be measured in terms of business generated, but there should be some mutual advantage to the relationship. For example:

- Are you learning new things when you get together?
- Is the person a potential source of work or other opportunities (e.g., visibility or introductions)?
- Can this contact be helpful to your clients in some capacity?

After carefully examining your relationships, create a list of contacts with whom you would like to spend time in the coming months, and then take the lead.

Organizations

This is an area where many lawyers go on autopilot. Once they get into an organization, they stay involved year after year after year. Don't get me wrong. I am all for taking the long-term view and, frankly, it takes a while both to assess the value of a group and to make an impact. But some people wait far too long to make a mid-course adjustment.

Take a good look at your involvement in that bar association section, service club, networking group, board or chamber of commerce committee. Ask yourself:

- Am I active? Do I regularly attend meetings?
- Am I meeting the right kinds of people?
- Is it helping me build a network of contacts who can be helpful to either me or my clients?

Once you have evaluated your outside groups, make a commitment to find a more appropriate organization or a more beneficial role to play in 2015.

Writing and Presentations

Finally, writing an article or preparing for a presentation can be a huge time-suck. There are potentially endless opportunities to write articles, alerts, chapters or even books, or to give CLEs and other presentations.

Do you write a quarterly newsletter? Do you speak every year at the same association's annual meeting? Examine each opportunity carefully to determine, at a minimum:

- Are you speaking to or writing for the right audiences?
- Are you covering topics in areas where you want to build your practice?
- Are the activities providing an entrée to relationships?

Based on your assessment, make a commitment to seek or accept opportunities this year that position you in front of the right audiences on the subjects most beneficial to you.

The goal of this review is to ensure you are acting intentionally rather than reacting to invitations or impositions on your time. And, if you are ready to go in a new direction, think about moving a bold new initiative to the top of your list, like that blog idea or webinar series or industry association that has been in the back of your mind.

***Sally J. Schmidt** is President of [Schmidt Marketing, Inc.](#), which offers marketing services to law firms. Sally was a founder and the first President of the Legal Marketing Association. She is a Fellow of the College of Law Practice Management and was one of the first inductees into the LMA's Hall of Fame. She is the author of "[Marketing the Law Firm: Business Development Techniques](#)" and "[Business Development for Lawyers: Strategies for Getting and Keeping Clients](#)." Sally writes Attorney at Work's "Play to Win" column. Follow her on Twitter [@SallySchmidt](#).*