

play to win

What's Your 'One Big Thing' for 2020?

By [Sally J. Schmidt](#)

I am a big believer that [lawyers should have personal business development plans](#). However, I am also a realist. I know many lawyers don't like plans or have time to write them properly or implement them once they exist. So, preaching about the value of year-end planning will fall on some unreceptive ears. Still, with 2020 approaching, it would be a shame not to establish a goal, objective or resolution.

When I work with lawyers on their marketing and business development plans, I often try to identify "One Big Thing." While there may be a lot you hope to tackle in the coming year, when all is said and done, what one thing do you really want to accomplish?

One Big Thing

Most lawyers have an idea, activity or initiative they have been "thinking about" but haven't gotten off the ground. Here are some examples that might fit the One Big Thing category:

- Visit one out-of-town client you haven't seen.
- Start a blog.
- Get board-certified in a certain practice area.
- Plan a seminar.
- Conduct a "postmortem" of a major matter with a client.
- Create a flow chart of your practice for use with new clients.
- Get into a "College of ..."
- Write a description of your industry or practice area for the firm's website.
- Become a member of a board of directors.
- Attend the annual conference of an association to which you belong.
- Meet a potential referral source you have targeted.
- Present an in-house CLE to a good client.

To help you get your One Big Thing implemented, break it into manageable pieces spread out over time. For example:

- **Start a blog.** Create a mission statement outlining the blog's goals and its target audience; write the first six posts; talk to marketing about how to host the blog; etc.
- **Get into a "College of ..."** Determine the induction process; reach out to current members for endorsements; fill out the applications or put together your bona fides; etc.
- **Attend the association's annual conference.** Confirm the dates; get firm approval; identify the registration deadlines; make hotel and airline reservations; etc.

Be Relentless About Reaching Your Goal

Once you have identified the One Big Thing you will commit to in 2020, do whatever you can to get it accomplished. Write it down. Share it with colleagues. Create a monthly calendar or docket reminder. Ask your assistant to hound you about it. After all, it's only one thing — you should be able to get it done in 12 months!

Good luck!