

# Foreword

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I've known Bill Flannery since 1992 when I first used the WJF Institute to train and assist our firm's lawyers in business development and becoming more externally focused. I've seen from a front row seat (first, as the Chairman and CEO of a law firm with a number of US and international offices, and later as general counsel of a public company) how the proper use of Bill's concepts as reflected in this guide can result in tremendous successes, and the disastrous results that occur when lawyers insist on doing marketing and client development "like we've always done it".

Bill's first edition of this guide was published in 2007, and captured the concepts and principles that Bill and his team teach in their intensive business development training sessions for attorneys. To paraphrase the basic message of the first edition, if lawyers wanted to attract new clients and retain and grow business from existing clients, they could no longer simply show how smart and experienced they were and respond to an existing problem—lawyers needed to sell solutions by developing face-to-face skills and truly understanding the client's needs and designing and tailoring legal solutions to those needs.

So, what has changed in seven years to justify a new edition of this guide and for Bill to suggest that there is a “new normal” for the legal profession? After all, at least since I became a lawyer in 1976, the legal profession has changed and evolved constantly and dramatically, often to the great consternation of those of us practicing law.

In Bill's view, the Great Recession beginning at the end of 2007 created a tremendous acceleration in the evolution of the legal profession and in the expectations of our clients, and has changed how lawyers must address business development. Based on my own experiences and observations of trends and factors affecting the legal profession and business, and discussions with a number of friends who are general counsel or outside counsel, I completely concur.

Bill Flannery understands these dramatic changes in the legal and business worlds, and in this new edition of his guide he has responded by evolving and modifying his strategies. Bill demonstrates in this guide that succeeding in today's legal market—obtaining and retaining clients and securing challenging and interesting work—“requires challenging a client's notions of its legal needs by identifying strategic business problems and then translating them into legal solutions—in effect, solving problems the client didn't clearly see.”

Successful use of Bill's concepts isn't easy—you will need to invest time and energy and you may often be outside of your comfort zone. But if it was easy, anyone could do it, and your clients wouldn't be able to differentiate you from the thousands of lawyers who are your competitors. Adopting and practicing Bill's concepts as reflected in this new edition not only will help you win new clients and retain and expand your business with existing clients, but also provide you with more satisfying legal work.

Even if you reject Bill's concepts and suggestions, or believe those concepts are not necessary for you and your practice, or are too difficult for you to implement, this guide will give you an understanding as to how your most fierce competitors are developing relationships with their clients and how they are working to take your clients away from you.

Gary M. Nelson, Former Chairman and CEO of Oppenheimer, Wolff & Donnelly, and former Executive Vice President, Chief Administrative Officer and General Counsel of Ceridian Corporation