Foreword

There is no doubt that in this day and age, being able to develop business means being able to create autonomy, higher compensation rewards, job security, and more control over your career path. Less obvious but maybe more important, mastery of business development also usually results in intrinsic rewards, such as a feeling of connectedness that comes from meaningful relationships, a renewed sense of purpose and meaning in work, and happiness and knowledge that we actually might be making a difference in other people’s lives. As a business development coach, I really like helping lawyers obtain the first set of rewards, but I’m even more compelled and passionate about helping them possess the latter.

Candidly, most attorneys with whom I’ve talked don’t argue that business development is vitally important to their professional growth and development. They also have a general sense of what needs to be done. The challenge really lies in understanding how to undertake the task of business development, let alone how to do it in a way that feels authentic, helpful and without manipulation.

The other challenge for lawyers is discerning how to cut through the clutter and get to the core pragmatic elements that make business development work. Many training and coaching tips and tools are available, but many often inadvertently cause attorneys to feel more overwhelmed than enlightened, adding
to the sense that business development is a task better left for a different day.

For associates, this is a particularly slippery slope. While their short-term success relies on meeting billable hour requirements and fulfilling the needs of those that control lucrative work assignments, their mid- and long-term success relies on building a foundation of relationships that are most easily and authentically created during a lawyer’s early years. Associates are in an advantageous position to focus on developing relationships without the burden of immediately generating revenue results. This context sets the stage to build long-lasting relationships based on genuine affinity and affection—if associates will make the time to invest in relationship building. It requires a bit of courage to make a commitment of time devoted to business development and a dose of faith that the investment away from billable work will return dividends in the future. For those associates who are willing to be courageous and faithful, the rewards are numerous. For those who choose to wait, believing that “the real work” must always take precedence and priority, they will likely find themselves struggling to catch up under significant pressure later on.

Fortunately, David King Keller has pulled together a great resource for any associate to figure out not only what to do in the realm of business development, but also many ideas on how to do it. Keller’s book is a veritable treasure trove of business development ideas, tools and best practices, and what I find most valuable is that he has amalgamated the best ideas from many of the profession’s most respected rainmakers, thought leaders and experts into one helpful resource. Keller has taken great care to include ideas for all personality and communication styles, recognizing that there is no one magic solution for everyone. Keller
also brings a unique perspective as an expert of neurolinguistic science, which will help associates think about how they develop their mindset, in addition to creating their plans and activities.

As president-elect of the Legal Marketing Association, an organization devoted to supporting professionals who share in the responsibility for promoting and developing business for their law firms, the topic of associate business development is high on my list of passions. I’m hopeful that with this book, more associates will feel impassioned and empowered about their own abilities and the opportunities that are possible when they apply themselves to the art and science of developing business.

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