MAKING RAIN TO GROW YOUR BUSINESS

Presented by the
American Bar Association
ABA Career Center,
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Center for Professional Development
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This publication accompanies the audio program entitled “Making Rain to Grow Your Business” broadcast on April 10, 2015 (event code: CE1504CAS).
1. Presentation Slides

2. Be a Twitter Scout and Make Some Rain: How to Use Priceless News & Opinion to Build Your Practice
   Betsy Munnell

3. How to Obtain and Retain Clients
   Greg Stephens

4. Business Generation for Associates: Start Small, but Start Now
   Betsy Munnell

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Making Rain to Grow
Your Business

April 10, 2015 | 1:00 pm Eastern

Moderator Bio

Kathy Morris is the moderator of the American Bar Association’s monthly Career Advice Series. A former criminal defense attorney, she has taught law, pioneered professional development initiatives in law firms, and in 2000, launched the original Career Resource Center of the ABA. She counsels law students, lawyers, law schools, and law firms through her longstanding practice Under Advisement, Ltd., www.underadvisement.com.

Kathy’s JD is from Northeastern Law School in Boston (1975); her BA (1971) is from the University of Michigan.
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**Faculty Bios**

*Betsy Munnell* is a business development coach for lawyers and law firms through her company, EHMunnell, based in Cambridge, Massachusetts. She practiced law for nearly 25 years as a partner, deal lawyer, and rainmaker at Edwards Angell Palmer & Dodge (now Locke Lord Edwards), and had previously been an associate at Choate Hall & Stewart. Betsy is a graduate of Harvard College and Harvard Law School, where she serves as a Visiting JD Advisor. She was also a Senior Advisor in marketing and content for The Fullbridge Program.

*Jim Hanlon* is the Director of Client Development at Novus Law LLC in Chicago. He practiced law for 25 years, primarily in complex financial and global litigation, has been an equity partner at Katten Muchin & Zavis (now Katten Muchin Rosenman) and at Howrey, as well as a solo practitioner. In his current leadership role, he oversees the development of new client relationships. Jim is a graduate of DePaul University and its College of Law, with Honors. He is a former Chair of the Chicago Bar Association’s Securities Law Committee.

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**Making Rain to Grow Your Business**
Program Agenda

• Top Issues
• Tips on the Topic
• Participant Questions
• Agree/Disagree
• More Participant Questions
• Takeaways
• ABA Resources

Top Issues

• Knowing the Steps in the Lawyer Rainmaking Process
• Reaching Out for Business in Person and Online
• Making Relationships to Make Rain Over Time
Tips on the Topic

• Become expert in client industries and the language of business.

• Become an excellent “active” listener.

• Become adept in using social media/online tools to your advantage.

• Become a “top of mind” lawyer known for adding value.

Audience Questions?

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Agree/Disagree

You can be a business developer and still keep your professional and personal lives separate.

Agree/Disagree

The most fertile source of future business is from current (and former) clients.
Takeaways

• Commit a business plan to writing.
• Mine external (and internal) rainmaking resources.
• Create and use a worthwhile LinkedIn profile.
• Be a “connector” and a source of invaluable information.
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How to Be a Super Supervisor

Friday, May 8, 2015
1:00 to 2:00 PM ET
Be a Twitter Scout and Make Some Rain: How to Use Priceless News & Opinion to Build Your Practice

November 3, 2013 by Betsy Munnell

Almost every day, whether I am coaching, consulting or just chatting with other lawyers, I am asked this question (often with unveiled amusement), in some form or another:

“Oh come on Betsy, isn't Twitter just a waste of time, a place for teens to post inappropriate photos—a place to follow Miley Cyrus, Rihanna, American Horror Story, and the Pope?”

My answer is a flat and heartfelt “NO”. And here’s why:

I went pretty much native, digitally at least, in 2010. In 2009, after almost 25 extraordinary years as a law firm partner, I decamped to start my business providing career development coaching. I used a new Mac and assorted Geniuses to build a website and I refined my business development training curriculum through a Ning-powered participant worksite.

But I truly crossed over in 2010: I renovated my presence on LinkedIn (complete with group memberships and several rather pompous status posts), adopted a dignified Twitter handle, started and sporadically populated a brand new blog, built out my online professional network (and converted it to personal connections), and began to understand, and preach, the enormous utility of social media and other Internet tools for the lawyers—young and old—and law students I was coaching.

My breathless hills-are-alive-wonderment at the results of all this online activity was observed with alarm by my three daughters, who texted their disdain (Twitter, Mom? like... seriously?). This I expected. Making fun of one another is a four-season sport in our family.
What surprised me was the number of smart, savvy, competent and competitive friends, colleagues and former partners who have ignored the prodigious power of social media, especially high-end opinion blogs and private rapid-information platforms like Twitter, whose purest and best use is to educate, inform and alert—often ahead of everyone else.

**So, is Twitter a terrible time-suck waste of time?**

Consider this excerpt from a *Quora* answer posted by Bill Gross, founder of IdeaLab:

“I find that I am getting more valuable and timely information from the people I follow on Twitter than almost any other news source.... Twitter has become... like a newspaper ... dynamically configured perfectly for me.”

I am reminded of a beloved partner at my firm who flatly refused to use email, preferring to issue take-a-memo styled responses through his refined, formidable, and equally beloved assistant. Much is forgiven those – like him – who generate many millions of dollars in revenues. But a word of caution: Bucking progress is definitively less charming absent robust receipts and highly leveraged billable hours. Ultimately, it is bad business to reject efficient new technologies.

So, for the lawyers and law students out there who have not yet caught on, I have some exceptionally good advice—and it does not require you to post a single Tweet (at least not until you an important prospect gets active in the blogosphere). In fact, the best thing to do now is to relax, live large, and “lurk”....but thoughtfully, and with purpose.

**Be a News Scout: Network with News and Opinion**

**First, a few truths:**

- It is the rare young lawyer or business professional who will succeed, much less survive, without a vigorous professional network.
- Successful networking and business generation depend in large part on one’s ability to add value and, over time, to become indispensable.
- The best way to build relationships is to help others advance their careers and personal agendas. To roughly quote more than one direct tweet I’ve received from the notorious Hokies fan, Cordell Parvin, “What can I do to help you advance your career?” The thing is, he means it. Cordell is both rainmaker and gifted coach because he really does want to know the answer, he will indeed help if he can and he sincerely enjoys doing so, whatever the return. (And like me, he practiced law for decades. Honestly, we do know what we’re talking about.)
Finally, one simple and highly effective method for adding value, especially for the unproven young professional, is to become an effective scout and “curator”—the purveyor of superior information. One of the best ways there is to become indispensable.

Unfortunately, in my experience, no browser, RSS reader or other compilation filters the web’s wealth of data both simply and effectively.

- For example, even a carefully refined Google search, inevitably algorithm-bound and SEO-slanted, is likely to steer me to the most popular (often banal or shallow) answers, the mainstream view or the potentially inaccurate, though democratic, wiki-response.
- Bing and Google searches rarely generate the results I really need—links to current, cutting-edge, thought-provoking and imaginative blogs and other online media.
- “Google Alerts” are great in concept, but, in my experience, the results are bizarrely slow, and never, ever comprehensive.
- And no amount of tinkering yields a Google Search that is “dynamically configured perfectly for me”.

The immense and unwieldy internet offers a super-abundance of broad-spectrum, as-it-happens news and information, ranging in value from priceless to middling to worthless to false. It provides wonderful opportunities to assist or command the attention of prospects and clients alike. I want breaking coverage of political, business, and other news, of the shaky state of the legal profession, of innovations in legal education and training, of women’s careers and Gens Y and X. I want information about the places, ideas, people, companies, sports, hometowns, and other things of meaning to key members of my professional network. I can neither learn from, nor trade in, old news.

*A digression regarding the Fifth Estate. I can’t help myself:*

Over the past couple of years the mainstream media has decided that the exorbitant cost, and questionable value, of a JD is—officially, at long last—“news”. They also have concluded that the inefficacies of the large firm business model, the “tyranny of the billable hour”, and the “disruptive innovators” competing for a piece of the legal market, also, finally, constitute “news”. As is often the case, the print media comes way, way late to the game.

The surplus of lawyers and law schools, the dearth of women and people of color among law firm equity partners, the astronomical levels of student tuition debt, the distorted employment opportunities and inadequate practical training lawyers facing both students and practicing lawyers, and the increasing challenges to hour-based fees and compensation, have for years been headlined and hyperlinked in the blogosphere and on Twitter, LinkedIn and Facebook.
And as if tardiness were not sufficient insult, the mainstream media has yet to add much of interest to the conversation.

**My point:** My best shot at scooping the targeted news and information I need before it gets stale is to read the links tweeted by the smart, creative, opinionated and occasionally offbeat and relatively unknown thinkers I choose to follow on Twitter, and to follow the niche-Tweets of the top newswire services (who more and more frequently herald breaking news first on Twitter, before posting the actual news stories on their websites).

**Overwhelming?** No. Everyone can do this and do it well.

With a few hours invested in start-up (identifying good people and news services to follow, and organizing them into Twitter lists–just follow the Twitter prompts), a quality dashboard application (I recommend Hootsuite–again, follow the prompts), an informed and zealous guide (we are everywhere), and a regular commitment of time and discipline, you can channel Twitter, and other rapid-information platforms, to serve up data, opinions, advice, and predictions of broad value to your clients, prospects and other key contacts, often at light speed.

If you are nimble and alert, you can deploy this wealth of knowledge to build and deepen critical relationships, and to stay “top of mind” for those who live and work at a distance or are otherwise difficult to access in person.

**Two crucial caveats:**

- **Social media assisted networking and business generation enhances and enables, but cannot substitute for, disciplined, inspired, follow-up and personal contact. (And by inspired, I mean something over and above “random acts of lunch or dinner”.)**

- **Before you consider upgrading your online networking strategy, be sure you know what your audience needs to hear, see and learn. Listen—to them and to their colleagues and employers and the word on the street about their companies and industries. Know what they think about, what they read, what they hope for, and what keeps them up at night. Don’t pitch them yet. Do not under any circumstances launch into your “elevator speech”. Just ask good questions and listen hard to the answers.**
And then go forth and be their much needed web filter, their “curator”.

Be their favorite scout.

Watch for ways to help, and ways to protect. At a minimum you’ll learn to speak the language of their careers, a critical step in developing any business relationship and in winning the confidence of a potential client or referral source.

As my first born would now remark, eyebrows arched:

Just sayin’.

You may also like:

- Best Practices for Summer Associates: In Three Simple Charts
How to Obtain and Retain Clients
By Greg Stephens

November 2012

How to obtain and retain clients
Some attorneys mistakenly believe that they can obtain and retain clients based solely on their brilliance and expertise. Yet the woods are filled with brilliant, clientless attorneys. So who obtains the business? The attorneys who not only possess the requisite legal skills, but also know how to connect and stay connected with clients.

Successful attorneys know that three words determine whether they will obtain and retain clients: Relationships, relationships, relationships. But developing and maintaining relationships takes time and energy. Are you willing and determined to spend consistent time and effort to establish and maintain these important relationships? If so, don’t expect instant gratification. Even if you don’t see fruit for a year or two, don’t give up.

The ultimate goal is to become a “go to” trusted advisor. To become trusted, clients first have to know and like you. So how do you get clients to know, like, and trust you? And after you obtain their business, how do you retain it?

Know
How do you get new clients to know you? One of the best ways is through the clients you already know. Current clients already know you, and may be willing to introduce you to their network contacts and service providers if you ask them.

If you are not a partner in a firm, you can be introduced to clients through the partners who assign the work. Start by treating each partner as a client. And as you would do for any client, consistently provide exceptional service and a superior, timely work product. If you help the partners look good and make their life easier, they may agree to bring you to client meetings. At these meetings, ask the partner, or the partner’s contact, to introduce you to the up-and-coming “rising stars.” Start building a relationship with these people, who someday will be the ones who assign the work.

Because clients are more likely to want to know us if they view us as an expert who is interested in them, you need to demonstrate your skills and take a sincere interest in the clients. Here are a few things that you could do:

- Ask the client whether they deal with any recurring issues and problems. Then offer to present a free workshop at the client’s office that addresses them.
- Give a presentation at your office. Invite current and potential clients.
• Give a continuing legal education talk.
• Write an article that is relevant to the client’s needs and personally deliver it to them. See if a trade association, business journal, business organization, or newspaper that you know your client reads will publish your article.
• Present a webinar by yourself or with a partner and invite your clients and prospects to attend.
• Discover what organizations your clients belong to or support. Consider joining one or more of the organizations and volunteering for a leadership role.
• Discover what meetings and conferences your clients attend -- ask if you can go as well, and ask to be introduced to their contacts.
• Volunteer at a nonprofit or community organization, and invite clients to join you.

Social media also is an effective way to let clients know who you are. Start with your firm’s website -- keep your bio updated and consider contributing to articles, blogs, webinars and other content your firm produces. Use LinkedIn -- through LinkedIn, you can: create a community of like-minded professionals; join and participate in specific groups that are related to your and your client’s business; connect with people you know; and search for people you would like to meet and use the LinkedIn network to help you meet them. LinkedIn can be an effective intelligence-gathering tool to identify and research people, companies, businesses and their contact networks. Numerous other social media and Web-based tools to get better known are available -- you may even want to create a local listing for yourself on Google at www.google.com/placesforbusiness.

Ask your marketing department to help you generate ideas to become better known. Your marketing director can help you: monitor the legal market, clients, and industries to provide the latest news and information to help you connect and find common ground with clients; provide competitive intelligence, market research, economic and industry statistics, trends, and forecasts; and assist with presentations and proposals.

If we want to know and be known, we also must develop, nurture, and maintain a network of contacts. Remember that the focus of networking is to help people. To be a successful networker, you must be sincerely committed to helping others.

Make it a regular habit to ask a question like, “Is there anything that I can do for you?” I also recommend two must-reads for successful networkers: Dig Your Well Before You’re Thirsty by Harvey Mackay, and Networking Is A Contact Sport by Joe Sweeney.

Referrals are another way to know and be known. A referral comes from a personal relationship. It is an effective way to obtain business sooner. Assuming that a prospective client knows and respects the referrer’s judgment, the referral shortens the process of becoming known and trusted. If you already have a relationship with someone, visit with them and the people they know and ask for a referral. LinkedIn also is a good source for referrals.
Invite a client to lunch. During the lunch, don’t ask for anything for yourself. Instead, catch up with the client and their family. End the lunch by asking that important question—“Is there anything that I can do for you?” In short, you must develop and maintain a sincere attitude to help people without ever expecting anything in return.

Like
Simply being an expert in the law is not always enough for you to obtain and retain clients. Often, a client’s emotional response to you drives their decision. Are you a likeable person? Do you make clients feel comfortable? Who do you think a client wants to work with—a likeable person who understands them and makes their life easier, or someone who makes their life more difficult? The answer is obvious. If you are not likeable, clients probably will not hire you. But even if they do, they will not give you repeat business if you cause more headaches than you solve.

Ask yourself these questions to: Do you create the right first impression? Are you friendly? Do you make people feel good? Do people get along with you? Do people like to work with you? What are the character qualities of people who you enjoy being around? If someone asked you to list words that demonstrate likeability qualities, what would you list?

If you listed some of the words below, do they describe how you act and interact with people?
Relevant. Respectful. Responsive.
Sincere. Smiling.
Timely. Trustworthy. Understanding.

Rapport
Now that the client knows you and seems to like you, how do you hold their attention long enough to identify their problems and show them how you can help? You need to establish rapport. Become familiar with their business wants and needs. Research the client, their industry and competitors. Learn all you can about the background, personal interests, favorite sports and causes of the decision-maker – including using LinkedIn, Google, Lexis and other research tools. Set up Google alerts (www.google.com/alerts) to have news about the client sent right to your inbox.

Before you have your first meeting with the client, put yourself in their shoes. Clients are busy. They have deadlines. They have budgets to meet. They have business problems to solve. They must meet certain performance criteria and they have a boss to please. At the start of the meeting ask the client what their expectations are when dealing with attorneys. Ask what you can do to make their job easier and less stressful.
Remember that all clients are unique and so are their issues, wants and needs. Ask them what they are and then listen. Don’t interrupt. Afterwards, acknowledge what you heard. At this point, you can share with them how you can help. Conclude the conversation with something such as: “I would really enjoy working with you. What do you recommend should be our next step?”

Trust
Now that the client knows you and likes you, how do you convince them that you are sincerely interested in their success and in their business? In short, how do you get them to trust you? You have to do it the old-fashioned way. You must earn it.

When deciding whether to trust you, clients ask themselves questions such as: What are your values? Are you sincere? What is your reputation in the community? Do your words and actions consistently demonstrate that it is really all about the clients and not what you can get from them? Can they count on you to spend the time to understand their situation, and how they feel about it? Do you have something worthwhile to bring to the table? Will you consistently provide timely, clear and decisive legal advice?

Clients need tangible evidence to decide if you are trustworthy. Start with a professionally designed easy-to-navigate website. Your experience, representative clients, awards, honors, leadership roles, and speaking engagements all help show that others think that you are trustworthy. But an excellent website, marketing programs, and awards are not the only factors that help show trustworthiness. Clients want more evidence. They want you to stay in touch with face-to-face meetings. They want to know that your entire focus is on them and their interests and not on you and what you can get from them.

If you want to build and maintain relationships, provide a favor before you ask for one. For example, maybe you discover that the person you want to meet would like to make a connection with another person. If you cannot make the connection for them, find someone who can. Or, you read an article that may be of interest to someone you would like to get to know or have for a client someday. Mail it to them. In addition to these simple ideas, you should create your own, more sophisticated ways to provide favors based on your clients’ unique interests, wants and needs. But remember, you must develop a mindset of providing favors without any expectation of having the favor returned. Clients are smart. It will not take them long to know whether you are self-focused or client-focused.
Now that you have the business, how do you retain it?
Obtaining business is only the first step. You cannot afford to take any client for granted. Show that you appreciate their business and sincerely care about them and their problems. As Theodore Roosevelt once said, “No one cares how much you know, until they know how much you care.”

I have always told our attorneys that business development and business retention is a contact sport. Even if you do not have a current project with the client, you need to maintain consistent contact with them. You must continually sell and re-sell yourself and your services. Stay in touch with the decision makers -- find ways to recognize them, compliment them, and show them how much you appreciate their business. Regular face-time is best, but sending them a handwritten note or card on their birthdays and anniversaries also helps show your appreciation. Another way to stay in touch is to send them relevant articles from newspapers, periodicals, and trade journals and.

Take advantage of technology – including setting up reminders in Outlook or via smartphone apps -- to keep in touch with your clients. Arm yourself with information about what’s important to your clients. I use the “Mackay 66” – questions that Harvey Mackay wrote in Swim With The Sharks Without Being Eaten Alive under the headings education, family, business background, special interests, lifestyle, and the customer and you – to get that information.

Last, but certainly not least, do your best work for your clients. Keep the decision maker happy and in good stead with their boss by helping them stay on budget, keeping them informed, meticulously following company billing guidelines, being accessible, and responding immediately to all inquiries. If you are sincerely committed to the success of others, you will be successful.

**Tips for an Effective Business Plan**
To obtain and retain business, prepare a business action plan. Execution is the key. To eliminate the gap between devising a strategy and implementing it, keep your plan simple. Here are some guidelines:

1. Your best source of work is from existing clients. Because you or your firm has already established the connection, you have the opportunity to obtain more of the same work or even new work from them and from contacts on their network.
2. Who are my clients? List them and the decision maker for each one.
3. What is my plan this week to strengthen relationships with current clients?
4. What is my plan this week to build and strengthen trust with current clients?
5. What am I doing to ensure that the work continues to come to me from inside and outside of the office?
6. Are there additional business opportunities in the file that I am handling?
7. Are there opportunities to cross-sell legal services?
8. What is my plan to develop relationships with prospects?
9. Where is my practice now?
10. Where do I want it to be in 1, 3, and 5 years?
11. What is my plan to move my practice from point A to point B?
12. What am I doing to develop, nurture, maintain, and increase my network?
13. Remember that every person in your network has their own network. Can I approach someone on their lists for business or referrals?
14. At the appropriate time, ask for the work.
15. Thank the person for sending the work to you.
16. Tell the decision maker that you enjoy working with them and would appreciate receiving additional business.
17. Ask the decision maker to introduce you to two or three other people in their office who may send business to you.
18. Establish a written plan that holds you accountable to take action. Commit to spending 15 minutes every day establishing, nurturing and maintaining important relationships. But don’t expect instant success. It takes time to establish and nurture relationships before they bear fruit.

Greg Stephens, Managing Partner, Meagher & Geer, P.L.L.P. Minneapolis, MN
Many of the associates I have mentored and trained during my 30-year legal career (frustrated perhaps by the abundance of my suggestions for filling their non-billable time) have challenged me to summon up a single nugget of advice for building a successful and satisfying career as a lawyer. This is my answer, uttered in urgent tones:

*Do not listen to anyone who, in your first few years of practice, or at any time thereafter, warns against spending otherwise billable hours building your network and personal reputation in the community. This deeply flawed advice is commonly offered up (all in good faith), not just by baby boomers, but by young partners over the age of 35 for whom “the best marketing is excellent legal work” may have been a pretty workable mantra. But they are struggling now, with the rest of the profession, to maintain and grow their practices, and should know much better than to discourage you from learning how to fend for yourself.*

To put it another way:

*Any lawyer or professional development director who tells you to wait until your third or fourth year to learn the basics of business generation or to develop a networking strategy is WRONG. Follow his or her lead and you’ll fall behind your contemporaries in short order.*

**The Fundamentals.**

Trick answer, I’ll admit. A nugget is supposed to be just a sentence, or a few bullet points, like the lists you find in all the e-books or on the Power Point slides shown at your associate orientation or last month’s practice group presentation on “marketing.”

Since I can bullet point with the best of them, I’ll serve up a slide’s worth, consisting of the five elementary principles on which my colleagues and I based our marketing efforts. They still apply. Sadly, there are few professionals (and certainly no law schools) who will step forward to teach them.
Being a great lawyer with a self-sustaining practice requires much more than superior work and service.

For long-term success and satisfaction you must target (as early in your career as possible), two fundamental and interrelated goals:

The development of a distinguished and expansive reputation as lawyer and human being, and

The seeding of a varied network of talented, and ambitious, people in your community (and in other markets) as an ongoing source of advisors, allies and superior information, as well as direct referrals, new business and job opportunities.

Developing business is all about building enduring relationships within your strategic network.

To do so, you must listen carefully to these individuals, learn about them and their businesses and identify ways to offer value, professionally, personally or both.

Strive to be, and to be known as, a source of superior information, connections, influence and wise counsel--perhaps even to become indispensable.

The problem? Time. We can all agree that time is short. You are under constant pressure to produce high quality work, and, I hope, you want “a life.” Nonetheless, it is essential that you do more--much more--than put your head down, churn out the best work possible, hit your hours target and make your bonus. This is true whether or not you intend to stay at your firm, or even in the law, for more than a few years.

Your law school taught you nothing at all about this topic. And, in all likelihood, such skills as your law firm elects to teach you will be insufficient to the task. In a down economy, and a profession undergoing potentially radical change, all law firm associates (including those claiming imminent “exit strategies”) must lock on to the fastest possible track to productivity, expertise, advancement and business generation. Time spent developing good marketing habits, and a broad and coherent business network, is a direct investment in your future.

The Game Plan.
The devil being in the proverbial details, let’s consider some specifics. Your first step:

Have a plan, establish the systems it requires and execute it.

Everyone does better with an outline, a To-Do or Task List, an Outlook calendar reminder. If you are serious about business development then you must have a business plan. It need not be grandiose. Depending on your level of experience and the breadth of your connections within your firm, the bar and the community, you may wish to limit your initial goals to building up a network, rather than randomly targeting prospects and giving chase.
If your firm has no program through which to develop a career plan, seek out your professional development or marketing director, a colleague worth emulating, a mentor, a coaching blog or a personal coach and locate a few template business plans. Research and draft a detailed four month plan with specific, achievable goals. Finally, enlist someone you trust and respect to help monitor your progress.

At the very minimum, your plan should include:

- An “A” list of 10 to 15 key contacts you commit to develop for your network,
- A strategy for substantive participation in bar and community organizations offering leadership and other opportunities for visibility and networking,
- An “internal marketing” component designed to help you advance within your firm, and
- A “best practices” segment establishing the routines through which you will implement your plan.

The Infrastructure.

No matter how good your plan looks, it will collapse of its own weight unless incorporated in your daily routine, and to do that efficiently you will first need to establish guiding “systems” to support your efforts.

When I work with law firm associates to implement their business plans we first design two charts. (Some lawyers tack them to their bulletin boards or folder them next to the phone, but all that really matters is the daily discipline they impose.) One is the “Systems Set-Up” table, consisting of five columns: “Coordinating with Support Staff”; “Address Book/A-List Database”; “News Management”; “Professional Associations”; and “Calendar.” To give you a sense for the chart’s content here are a few entries from one client’s “News Management” column:

Maintain online database of web news, Twitter follows & RSS/blog feeds (include industry and financial news via WSJ, Law.com, NYLawyer, Energy, Cleantech, Biomass blogs). Target and forward information of interest to A-List, environmental department partners & prospects.

The second chart, titled “Establishing a Routine,” covers daily, weekly, monthly and quarterly tasks. Here are a few items from the same associate’s “Daily” column:

Read web news feeds; note ‘current’ article/white paper/blog topics; clip articles for emails to A-Listers, dept. partners. Contact one A-Lister by phone and another by email. Answer all calls, emails by 5pm.

And from the same lawyer’s “Monthly” column:

Attend or present at PLI/NY Bar Assoc. conference/panels on “green” topics. Organize NY bar young lawyer’s event?

It never takes long to develop these charts. With a little careful thought each lawyer can build a workable routine in an hour or two. Remember: it’s not rocket science.
No Time Like the Present

One final bullet:

- Be self-reliant. It’s your career. No one is taking care of you.

No matter how demanding your obligations in the office, both billable and non-billable, it is essential that you protect your own future by building a strategic professional network and establishing your reputation both inside and outside your firm.

Getting a job, keeping it and finding the next one all require a record of excellence and a healthy network of both personal and professional contacts.

This is no time to get careless, and no time to depend on others to chart your career course. It’s your life, and your responsibility.

Make it happen.

Betsy Munnell received her B.A from Harvard College and her J.D. from Harvard Law School. A noted deal lawyer, she was a partner for 25 years at Edwards Angell Palmer & Dodge (now Edwards Wildman Palmer) and among the core group of young partners responsible for the growth of the firm’s nationally recognized media and communications finance and M&A practice. In both law firm and bar association activities, Betsy was an outspoken advocate for intensive associate training in business and financial skills and business generation. In 2009, Betsy opened her consulting and career advising practices, Elizabeth Munnell & Associates, to help law students, young lawyers and their law schools and employers navigate the uncertain waters of a profession and an economy in flux.