

GREINER
CONSULTING
GROUP EST. 1991

NALP 2024 ANNUAL EDUCATION CONFERENCE

BD 2.0: CULTIVATING RAINMAKERS – A DROUGHT-PROOF APPROACH

KEY TAKEAWAYS

TIMING:

When is too early? Is it ever too early?

Everyone should focus on client development through the channels of client service, as early as they can in their careers - even from year one. Serving the Partners, Counsel and more senior associate supervisors **is** serving the client.

It's never too early to develop relationships. Establishing clients is not based on getting a following *per se*, but will likely be based on providing reliable service over time, being someone they can reach out to, someone that they like, appreciate, and enjoy working with who is interested and invested in solving their problems or helping them achieve their goals.

QUALITIES & MECHANISMS:

What are the personal qualities, modes, and habits that help build a drought-proof practice?

BD Stars take advantage of every opportunity and discover that **opportunities are everywhere**. Perseverance and action over time is more important than charisma.

Successful people look at things **holistically**. They invest in their client relationships and understand their clients' business. Attunement and commitment to the client is everything.

Understanding the **humanity** of your role in this business, not over-lawyering, will attract clients. Solving problems and being adept and handling novel situations garners client attention.

Navigating and surviving economic cycles is fundamentally a **mindset** - you hold the power to maneuver and thrive through any business cycle if your determination, agility, and creativity are paired with strong relationships.

Ambitious people are successful, intellectually **curious**, and can see around corners.

CLIENT SERVICE:

What are clients looking for? What are clients expecting?

Clients expect and deserve honesty, dedication, transparency, no surprises, and thoughtful communication. Details matter: how you bill your client, how you give estimates, how you keep them informed on matters **all matter**.

Client service is responsiveness, understanding the relationship, knowing where your client fits in their organization, how you can be helpful to them, and recognizing how to harness resources within your practice group, the firm, and even outside of the firm.

Master everything within the realm of client service. A reputation of responsiveness and looking out for your clients goes a very long way in developing a client following.

Operate with the mindset of **serving** your client, **rather than managing** your client.

CLIENT RETENTION:

What are some factors in retaining clients over the long haul and despite market fluctuations?

Fully understand your clients' lifecycle. Be invested in their business and industry. Know **where** and **how** they make their money, how they operate, and what their workforce looks like. You will invariably find additional opportunities for the firm, possibly outside your own practice group or region.

Firms tend to originate much more business from existing clients than from brand new ones. Know how you're going to do your part to continue to grow client relationships and matters even if you're not the originator.

Even if you are skilled at getting clients, if you don't **know how to treat them**, you won't retain them.

RELATIONSHIPS & YOUR NETWORK:

How should you think about your network?

Successful rainmakers tap into firm peers and alumni and view every single attorney as someone who could go on to become a client.

Develop the ability to cross-market with different practice groups, both in and outside of your firm. You need to know your firm's capabilities to fully grow and retain the client.

Know how to connect the dots. Learn *how* to say: "I'm going to become your friend" with thoughtfulness around timing, shared interests, and needs.

You can't be an excellent lawyer *just* sitting behind your desk.

SPECIALIZATION:

How important is developing a specialization?

More and more, the industry is moving toward specialty practice, which can support your BD pursuits. Your specialized area of practice is **your calling card**. Seek guidance from mentors and more senior lawyers in developing your specialty area. Get curious about and follow broader economic and legal trends.

You need to possess some specialty that is marketable **now** and in the **near future**. Uniqueness and depth of understanding in your specialization distinguishes you.

Within your niche, be as broad as possible. Don't put yourself in too narrow of a box. Specialization that identifies and amplifies your value can help you build your **reputation and visibility**.

Tune into the clients' business. Understand the lifecycle and where the BD opportunities are - even if there's a dip in your specialized practice, you have created a calling card that is deep but not too narrow.

Get very clear on (and be able to articulate) **your differentiators**. What is your value proposition?

MENTOR MIRRORING:

What if I don't have the same relationships with the clients that the partner enjoys?

If you want to develop a brand to attract clients, you should first develop an internal brand with the senior lawyers, Counsel and Partners that you serve.

Follow the Partner's lead with the client. Mirror the way they handle communication with the client, the way they serve the client, the way they build the relationship with the client. Find a way to emulate what you are seeing, including paying attention to and developing relationships with the more junior or midlevel members of the in-house/company team.

You learn and master the skills that you're going to use later with client relationships by applying them to the people you're working with **right now**.

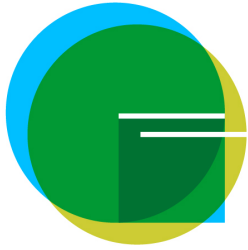
LEVERAGE FIRM RESOURCES:

How should I use the allied business professionals at the firm?

BD training should emphasize client service as a critical component.

Understand that leveraging marketing, BD, PD groups, and other offices within the firm is a *sharpening of the axe*. The time invested will reap immense benefits and ROI.

Seek proactive guidance from BD, Marketing, DEI, PD, and other firm business professionals with a "what can they recommend" type of engagement.



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