



PROGRAMS FOR ASSOCIATES

Overview

According to Hildebrandt's 2007 Client Advisory (p. 9), "the competition for [associate] talent is intense...[and] associate attrition is currently at record levels in US firms, with an annual turnover of about 20 percent a year." This is one of several forces that is leading firms to build or expand programs to train associates to bring in new business.

But while there is a great deal of interest in associate business development training these days, there is no consensus about how it should be structured. Programs range from an occasional "lunch and learn" to elaborate programs over several weeks or months.

The LegalBizDev approach

At LegalBizDev, we believe that one size does not fit all, since policies and expectations for associates are so different from firm to firm. Therefore, we have built our associate workshops and presentations around a set of modules which are easy to customize, so that each firm can mix and match, and find the most efficient way to meet their goals.

Many firms begin by scheduling these three one hour sessions as in-house lunches or webinars:

- Six ways to increase results from your limited marketing time
- How to increase business with current clients
- How to find new clients: From prospecting to closing

Additional options are described below.

Program goals

Our programs are designed to help associates start thinking about their role in developing new business, in the present and in the future. They provide knowledge and skills built on best practices from other law firms and other professions.

We customize each program to the firm's policies and expectations. The fundamental skills required for business development are the same regardless of goals, but the way these skills are applied will depend on many factors, including the time associates can realistically devote to business development. At many large firms, business development programs should not teach them to immediately begin looking for new clients, but rather help them to start building their personal networks for the future, and increase the satisfaction of the

clients they already have, both external and internal.

However, there is one factor that is common to most firms, that does have an important effect on all of our presentations: associates have very little free time. We believe this has critical implications for every program. For example, there is little value in starting by training associates in how to “work a room” if they will never have time to enter rooms that need to be worked. Therefore, our approach centers on prioritizing tasks to assure the best use of time.

Presentation options

We build our programs around eleven independent one hour modules. Each is self-contained, so that a firm can choose to offer any combination of modules, or even just a single session, at your office or by webinar.

Some firms select the key modules that best fit their needs, and offer them as lunch sessions over the course of several months. Firms that prefer a more intensive approach can combine several modules in a single half-day event, or for a full day retreat.

All eleven modules can be offered as webinars, so that you can get the impact of a live event without requiring every lawyer to be in the same place at the same time. Lawyers can participate from offices around the country or around the world. You can even record events so that any lawyer who misses the scheduled session can view it later, whenever they can find the time.

In-person presentations are usually more effective than webinars for many reasons, but they are also more expensive. Each firm must therefore balance its goals against its budget to identify the best approach. For large firms with multiple locations, we usually recommend the webinar approach because it offers significant benefits in cost and convenience.

Eleven modules

Legal business development: Basic principles and best practices, consists of eleven one hour modules to motivate associates to consider how their business development skills can be improved, and explain what they need to do to improve them. Most of the modules can be offered to groups of any size:

1. How the legal market is changing, and what it means to you
2. Six ways to increase results from your limited marketing time
3. How to increase business with current clients
4. How to find new clients: From prospecting to closing

5. How to improve your elevator speech
6. How to increase results from speaking and writing
7. How to increase results from networking
8. What clients want (Panel discussion)
9. How rainmaking works at our firm (Panel discussion)
10. Cross-cultural differences in the best way to develop new business (Panel discussion)
11. How to create a one page business plan and assure follow-up

The first six modules are included on audio CDs in *The LegalBizDev Success Kit*. Firms may use the *Success Kit* to review the approach and help decide which modules to offer firm-wide, and to serve as an extra resource for lawyers who miss a module or who would like to study key sections.

Two of the modules (#5 and 11) are highly interactive small group sessions limited to six lawyers; the other nine can be delivered to groups of any size.

Modules 1 to 7 include interactive exercises, in which associates apply the general principles to their own practice. Participants in Module 11 will draft a one page business development plan, listing specific action items. If some or all of the participants already have business plans, these one page plans will not replace or contradict them. They will help lawyers translate strategic goals into tactical actions, and to assure follow up.

Books and CDs In addition to the complete handouts that are provided with each module, firms often like to provide each participant with a copy of Dr. Hassett's book *Legal Business Development: A Step by Step Guide*, and/or copies of *The LegalBizDev Success Kit* for the senior associates who are most involved in marketing, plus a copy for the office library.

Coaching For senior associates who are expected to devote several hours per week to following up with key clients and prospects, our structured coaching programs will help each individual find the tactics that will produce the fastest results for their practice, their personality, and their schedule.

The next step For more information, or for a proposal for your firm, contact us today at 800-498-7246 or info@legalbizdev.com.