

Five Ways to Make Business Development Easier

Grow Your Business Without Being Pushy

Tarnow
& Co.

Business development doesn't have to cause stress

As a professional, business development can be a nagging source of stress. As if serving your clients isn't challenging enough, you also have to deal with the constant need to grow your business. It's a pressure that never seems to go away.

As a former CPA, I know how you feel. It took a long time for me to get comfortable with developing new business. Even today, it's still not my favorite activity. I understand it's importance, yet it often feels out of character. I fear I'm going to become someone I don't like—a mix between Gordon Gekko from *Wall Street* and Tommy from *Tommy Boy*.

This doesn't seem fair. Despite all the education most professionals obtain throughout their careers, few receive formal training in business development. It's no wonder so many refer to this activity as a "necessary evil."

Professionals should be rewarded for their expertise, not their ability to develop business. Unfortunately, that's not the way things work. Professionals have to do both. It's a constant tension that leads to a nagging source of stress all professionals learn to endure.

I want to help reduce that stress. I believe you should spend more time serving your clients, not stressing about how to grow your business.

Business development doesn't have to be difficult to be effective. To that end, here are five ways to make business development easier.

1. Have a basic plan

Sometimes, the nagging stress you feel is because you're winging it. A basic plan is a great way to calm your nerves and bring some order to your business. If someone asks you, "what's your business development strategy," and you don't have a clear answer, that needs to change.

An effective plan has four basic elements:

- a. A clear elevator pitch.
- b. A way to attract potential new clients.
- c. An easy process for tracking your professional relationships.
- d. A product or service offering you trust (i.e. hopefully you are selling something you believe in).

A plan keeps that nagging sense of guilt away. It helps you control what you can control. Implementing your plan a little bit every day will bring results.

2. Seek out public speaking opportunities (both live and virtual)

Keynote messages are one of the best ways to develop new business. Speaking at continuing education events and professional conferences is a great way to meet potential new clients. Keynote messages show the audience that you have mastery of a subject, and it also lets the audience see your personality.

Taking the time to write a message can pay big dividends. Generously giving away helpful content is a great way to build goodwill with potential clients. Even as the world moves to more virtual conferences, developing a thirty to forty-five-minute message on a topic you've mastered is an easy way to create new business without feeling pushy or salesy.

3. Appreciate the value of an email address

If you obtain someone's email address, that's a big deal. Donald Miller, the CEO and Founder of StoryBrand, recently said, "Each email address is worth about \$10 nowadays." Think about that, when you obtain an email address, that's like someone buying you breakfast.

Don't look down on email addresses. Professionals who are successful at developing business place a high value on email addresses because email is the easiest and cheapest way to build professional relationships. Which leads to idea four...

4. Go first

It is your job to initiate with potential new clients. I need you to re-read that sentence again. Most professionals overlook this. They think, "I gave them my business card, they'll call me if they need help."

Don't wait for the phone to ring or for an email to arrive. You go first. Taking the initiative isn't bothering people; it's building a relationship with new friends. It can be as simple as sharing an article you think they may like or checking-in and asking them how they are doing.

This is the third element of an effective plan outlined above. A common mistake professionals make when it comes to business development is not taking the initiative. It's your job to be a leader and take action in your relationships with prospects. It's not their job to call you.

5. Remember your role

Here's the reality: your potential clients aren't into you. They don't think about you, and they don't "want" to do business with you. They are into themselves. They think about their world. Their life. Their problems.

If you want to serve your clients, then help solve their problems. That's the role you play in your client's life. You're not the hero of their story. They're the hero of their story.

You're the guide, not the hero. You're Yoda. They're Luke Skywalker. You're Morgan Freeman's character in *The Shawshank Redemption*, not Tim Robbins' character.

You don't have to market how great you are. You only have to market your understanding of your potential client's problems and the solutions you have to these problems. That's it. If you think this is about you and how great you are, business development will always feel icky, and you'll put it off.

Become a business development superstar

Those are five simple ways to make business development easier. You don't have to be super-salesy. You can sell business without selling out. You need a basic plan, a keynote speech, an appreciation for email addresses, to take the initiative, and to remember this isn't about you. This is about helping people remove problems from their lives.

When you start to implement these, you'll become a business development superstar. If you need assistance implementing any of these ideas, feel free to reach out; I'd be happy to help: Adam@TarnowCompany.com



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