



Zero sum BD days

Applying a “zero sum days philosophy” to your business development projects is one sure-fire way to ensure you stay one step ahead of your competitors.



Grow a profitable practice with “zero sum business development days”

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There is no doubt, in the current climate, that business development and marketing activities are frustrating. This should not, however, deter you from the bigger picture – having a successful and profitable law practice.

Fortunately, business development and marketing activities for professional services firms is not rocket science. Hard work – yes; rocket science – no.

A case in point: “zero sum” days.

Adapting and applying a “zero-sum days philosophy” to your business development projects is one surefire way to ensure you stay one step ahead of your competitors.

As is the case with a fitness workout program, in order for your business development zero-sum program to work, you need to:

Work out your end goal strategy

Before you set off on this journey, make sure you have an end goal in plan.

This could be to grow profitable revenue by 10 – 20 percent over the next 12 months. It could also be that you want to increase your client base by 5 to 10 clients.

Whatever your end goal business development strategy is, make sure you have one, as there is nothing worse than doing business development activities ‘on the fly’.

Play to your strengths

Too often, I see genuine business development efforts wasted by those who do business development activities that they are clearly not comfortable doing.

If you enjoy networking, then do this. If, however, networking is not your thing (and it really isn't for some), either consider what your other options are or [hire a coach](#) to help you improve. Whatever you decide to do though, make sure you play to your strengths.

Make it fun

I have yet to meet a person who doesn't like to have fun. The interpretation of what constitutes fun may differ, but the element of fun is always there.

The same approach should also apply to your business development activities. Let's face it, business development is a dull drudge we all have to do, but the moment we introduce an element of fun, it is no longer really a business development activity.

Fun to you may be setting and exceeding targets. If that's the case, do it. Alternatively, it may be playing golf. Again, if that's the case, do it. It really doesn't matter that much what you do, provided you keep the plan and end goal in mind, and the activity falls within the overall strategy.

Do a little workout every day

As is the case with a fitness program, your zero-sum business development program needs to include some kind of workout every day.

Some days your workout will be longer and more strenuous (say, a network meeting or half-day presentation) than others (a day you make three phone calls to clients and prospective clients).

Bring it all together in a plan

Finally, you need to bring all of this together in a plan.

I like to advise people to use their digital calendar as their plan template. In this, you can add all of your networking events, seminars, days you will publish articles or post blogs and on any "free" days left over, you can include little mini-workouts, such as planning to have a coffee catch-up with someone or making a telephone call to see how a contact has been since you last spoke.

Having a business development plan in place that ensures you become the trusted advisor to your clients – in the mould advocated by David Maister and Andrew Sobel – takes hard work. It isn't rocket science, but at the end of the day, you need to implement a daily workout that is more proactive than all of your competitors if you want to stay ahead in this day and age.

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