

THOUGHTS ON BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

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1. Network, network, network

Get out there (at least weekly) and meet with and talk to people. Try different networking groups. See which ones yield the most leads/opportunities. Be consistent with those, whether you feel like it or not. You never know where the next lead is coming from.

2. Learn to be a great listener

3. Price your services reasonably and so everyone wins

What's the win for you? What's the win for them? Is there precedent in the market for the cost of your product or service? What will your market bear for sustainable business? You might be able to charge a lot for a single project, but the idea is to have a repeat customer. Budgets may be tight, but know the value you bring – and what it may save them or *bring* them in increased results, productivity, business, etc. Also, think about yourself as a customer and what you are willing to spend on something you need or that will help you in some way.

4. Make small group presentations on mutually interesting topics that link to your business

Find places where you can facilitate (think about those networking groups) or make presentations whenever possible. You're selling and doing at the same time.

5. Surround yourself with advisors who see and think differently than you and will be honest

This could be your lawyer or CPA (good ones are worth the money you pay them), a business planner, other advisors, etc. If you're not ready to put together a formal board (which is most of us), you should still have key advisors around you who can speak to business structure, set up, taxes, legal, etc.

6. Cultivate and nurture your sense of humor

People who take themselves too seriously are not fun or pleasant to be around. Don't be one of them.

7. Do what you'll say you'll do, always

And if you really can't, amend the commitment, and then make good on that. When you lose the honor of your word, there's not a lot left. Following through on every commitment you make, even the small ones, builds trust. Customers are not going to do business with you unless they know, like and trust you.

DISCUSSION POINTS

1. Brainstorm your challenges in business development. Brainstorming (whether alone or with others) means you get ideas out on a flipchart, all ideas are good (no judging), and no discussion on the points until you have your list.
2. Divide your list into three parts:
 - a. High Impact — Doing something about these challenges will have the greatest ripple effect for improvement.
 - b. Medium Impact
 - c. Low Impact — These challenges are still important to come back to but can wait so you can build momentum with changing the high impact challenges first.
3. Start action planning around the high impact items one at a time. What will you do to change it? Have smart goals.