

NEXL

LEGAL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

REPORT 2021

GLOBAL ANALYSIS



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NEXL

BUILDING BETTER RELATIONSHIPS

NEXL's goal is to help lawyers improve how they manage client relationships, using a simple and effective system.

If you want to build sustainable growth for your law firm and generate more revenue, relationship management and cross-selling is the way to make it happen.

This report provides insight into how the legal industry across the globe is using relationships to grow their practice, as well as the common challenges many lawyers face when it comes to attracting - and keeping - high-value clients.

If you're looking for an easy way to keep connected or find a solution to some of the findings in this report, then get in touch with the NEXL team for a run-through of how we can help. [Visit here to book a time.](#)

WRITTEN & EDITED BY AMY BRYANT

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Legal Business Development Report 2021.

At the end of 2020, NEXL took a pulse from across the legal industry to understand how lawyers and law firms around the world are tackling business development, what challenges they are facing, and what they're planning for in 2021.

186 legal professionals contributed to the survey, across 7 regions, to paint a picture of the legal business development landscape.

To analyse the results and provide specialist insight, the report includes exclusive responses from ten leading legal business development experts.

They share their take on the tactics lawyers should be focusing on in 2021.

AT A GLANCE

186

LAWYERS
SURVEYED

7

REGIONS ACROSS
THE GLOBE

10

BD EXPERTS'
ANALYSIS

THE LEGAL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT EXPERTS



Alistair Marshall
Director of Professional Services Business Development.



Deb Feder
CEO of Feder Development and Founder of Focus30, Business Development Strategist.



David H. Freeman, J.D.
CEO, David Freeman Consulting Group
Best-selling author and award-winning trainer and coach



Stephen Revell
CEO and Founder of Making Change Happen - a law firm consultancy, Former partner at Freshfields.



Sue-Ella Prodonovich
Author and Award-Winning Business Development Adviser to Professional Services Firms



Ben Paul
Director, The BD Ladder, BD & Marketing Consultancy.



Clinton Swan
Business development Consultant, Legal Technology expert.



Aman Abbas
Co-founder & CEO of CommWiser, Law Firm Marketing and professional services Firm.



William McLaughlin
Business Development Manager, Managing Member BD Roundtable.



Noa Mayer
Principal Owner Noa Mayer Consulting & Business development.

KEY FINDINGS

Key insight 1

Individual lawyers are mostly responsible for business development at their firm (55%)

Key insight 2

The biggest BD challenge lawyers face is finding new strategies to implement that attract business (63%)

Key insight 3

Lawyers mostly use referrals/legal and best-friend networks to generate new business, but there's a diverse range of strategies lawyers are trying in 2021

Key insight 4

Lawyers' key focus in 2021 will be on relationship management and cross-selling.

Key insight 5

Most law firms have a CRM or are considering using one.

Key insight 6

COVID-19 has meant many firms have had to pivot their offerings and change how they service clients, noting that digital has been effective, yet can be less personal.

OVERVIEW OF THE KEY FINDINGS



BY STEPHEN REVELL

SENIOR ADVISOR TO NEXL

The survey provides some great statistical support for what I have been hearing from law firms and lawyers all across the world in my recent conversations.

I think the Covid period has allowed many lawyers and business development professionals to reflect on the importance of business development and how it can be best done. Hopefully, these reflections will bring about a change of approach. The survey demonstrates there is a strong awareness amongst lawyers that they need to do more.

I totally agree with Noa Mayer’s comment that one of the biggest challenges for lawyers with regard to business development (and maybe generally) is not the need to develop a new strategy but to do things differently and implement existing strategies or indeed just spend more time in an organised way to do some pretty basic business development. After all it is about our clients.

The key business development challenge that the survey underscores is actually at its most basic – winning work from clients and doing so in what for all lawyers is a highly competitive market.

The Covid period has led us all to reflect on the importance not only – obviously – of having clients and winning work from new clients but key to that, is the relationship we have with our clients.

For most of us, it is much easier to win more work from existing clients than greenfield hunting for new clients – although sometimes that will be necessary. Whether it is an existing client or a new client, the relationship that is established is key to winning more work.

We need to invest in client relationships. We need to assess the strength of those relationships and almost certainly, more work to establish better relationships with our existing clients will pay big dividends.

The key to these better relationships is spending time to truly understand our client’s business and the challenges that business faces, both in its global marketplace but also organisationally and competitively. With a deeper understanding of our clients, we can establish better relationships.

The Covid period has also caused many lawyers to reflect upon their own responsibilities. Business development needs to be the responsibility of all lawyers in a firm; ideally appropriately supported by a well-organised business development team.

A law firm cannot “avoid” the front and central role all lawyers should be playing in building relationships with clients, maintaining those relationships and through those relationships, gaining a continued and increased flow of work.

OVERVIEW OF THE KEY FINDINGS



BY STEPHEN REVELL

SENIOR ADVISOR TO NEXL

It is particularly noteworthy that the focus of business development efforts in 2021, so the survey confirms, is going to be around relationship management and expanding revenue from existing clients through cross-selling – this is exactly as it should be.

The survey also underscores the importance of focussing on referrals and legal networks etc. Many lawyers and law firms put too little effort into these networks that can be great providers of work.

All lawyers need help in managing relationships which in turn enhances business development. Traditionally, off-the-shelf CRM systems have just not worked for law firms.

In any event, it has become clear that lawyers need a different approach to CRM. Increasingly, that approach can be enhanced through technology and systems that support business development by lawyers.

Business development teams need to be given the technological tools (alongside the lawyers at the front end of business development) so as to better manage relationships and the overall business development process.

Again, the survey shows an increasing awareness of the role that technology can play.

Lawyers need to spend more time on business development and give it more priority.

The focus of all business development needs to be the client, not the ways in which we might approach the client, e.g., brochures and marketing material.

You have to start with a client and the relationship you have or aim to build with the client.

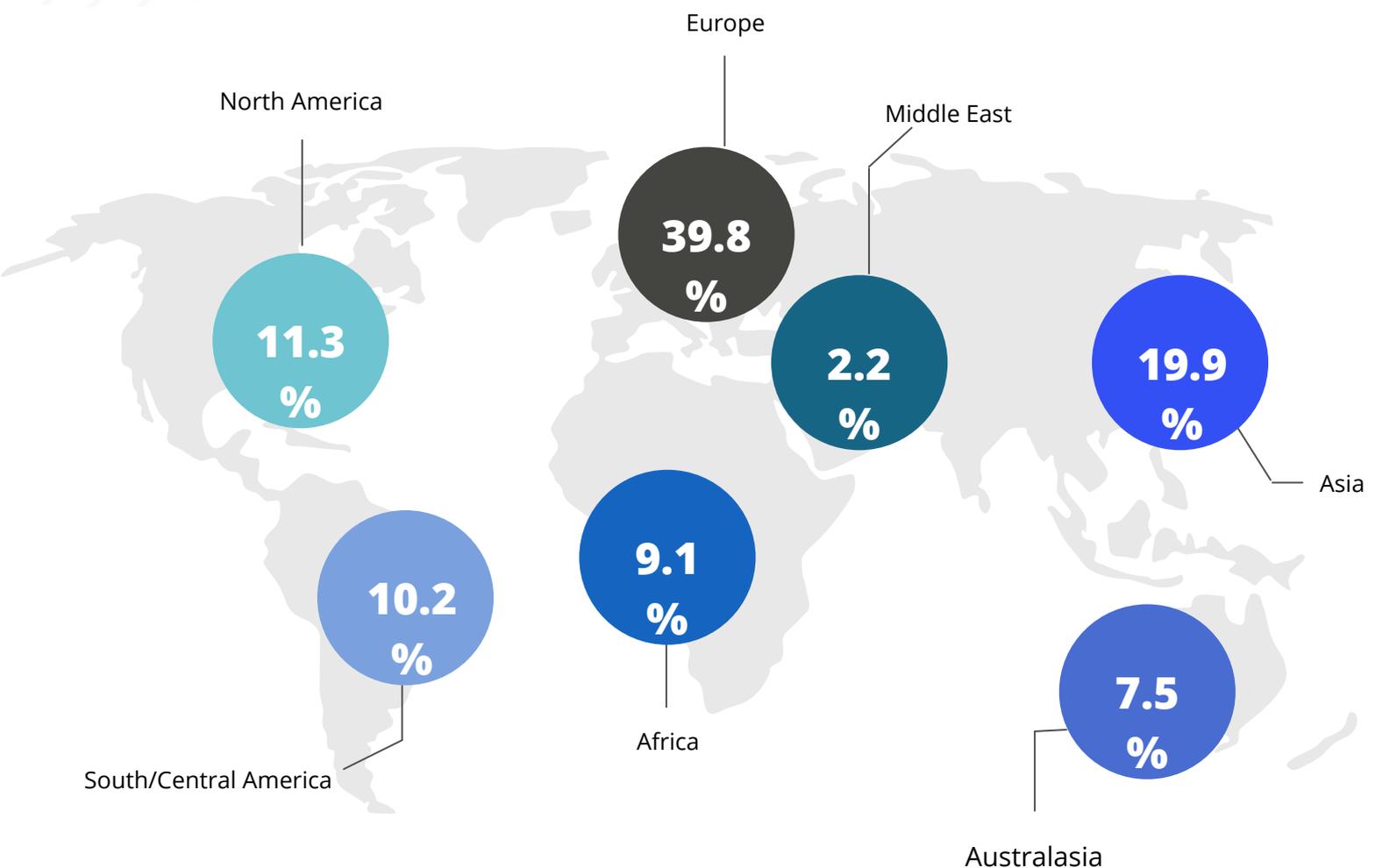
Please write the following 3 words somewhere prominently on your desk under the heading Client Relationships and Business Development – and do it!“

“Establish, Maintain and Manage”

WHO TOOK PART

The lawyers and legal industry professionals that took part in the legal business development survey were from seven regions across the globe. In total, we had 186 responses, with the majority being based in Europe (39.8%) followed by Asia (19.9%), North America (11.3%), South and Central America (10.2%), Africa (9.1%), Australasia (7.5%) and the Middle East (2.2%).

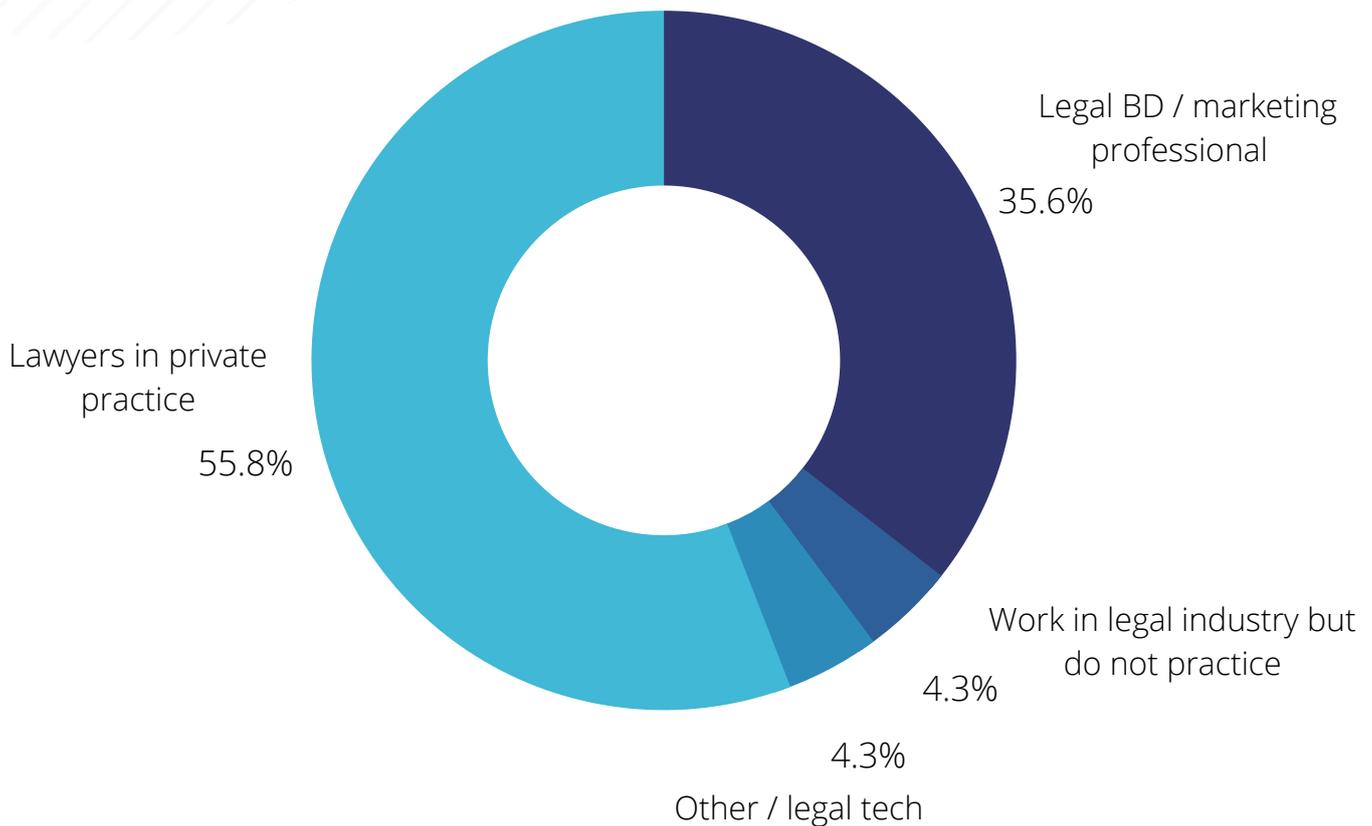
BY LOCATION:



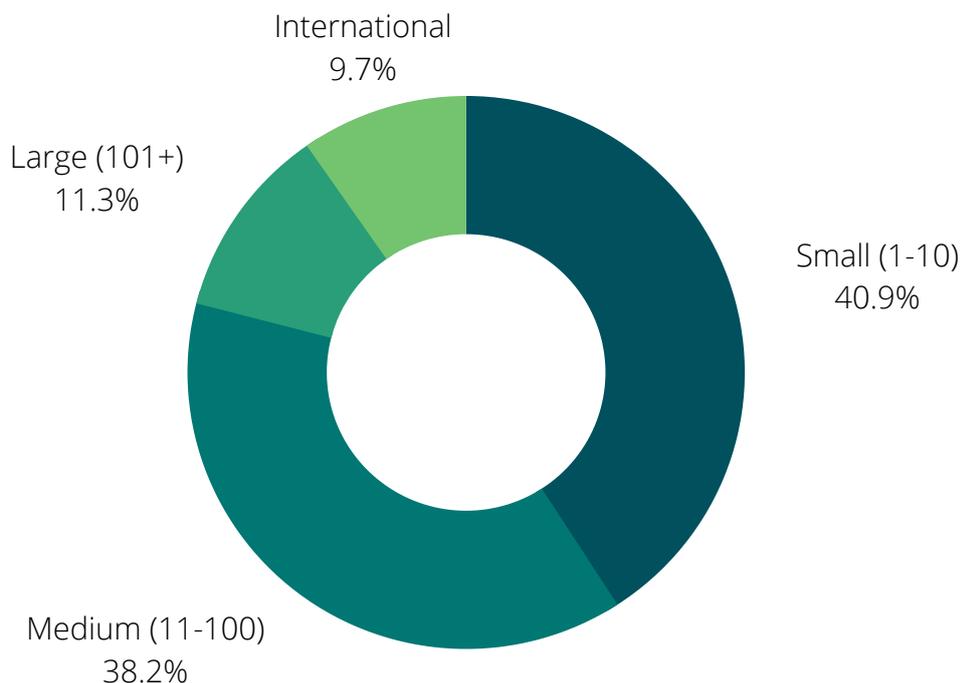
WHO TOOK PART CONT.

The majority of respondents were lawyers in private practice (55.8%) and worked at a small-sized firm of 1 - 10 people (40.9%). Just over a third were part of a legal business development or marketing team (35.6%), followed by non-practice professionals working in the legal industry and other/legal tech (both 4.3%).

By profession, the breakdown looked like this:

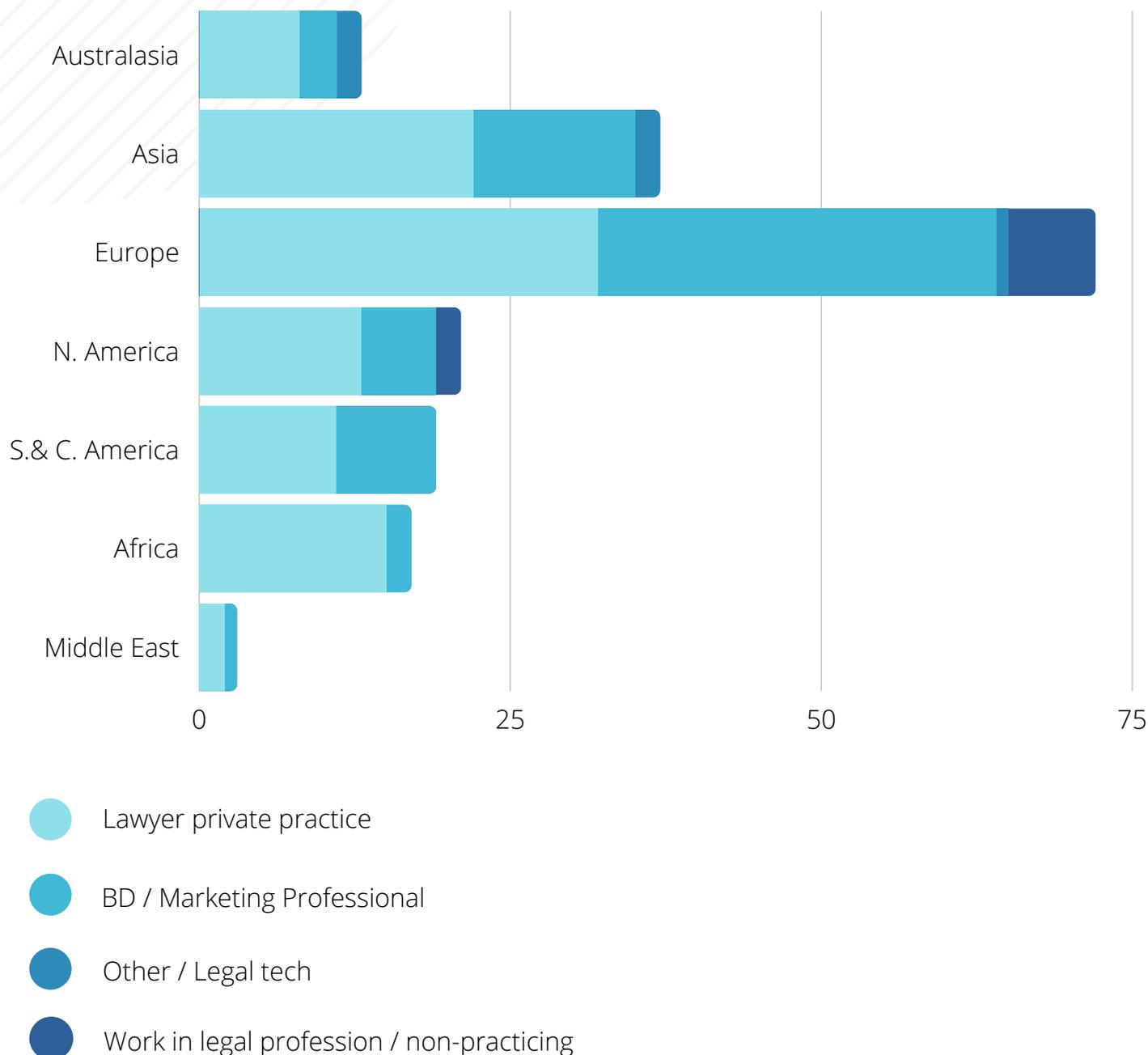


Most lawyers worked at a small boutique firm of 1 - 10 people (40.9%), which was closely followed by lawyers at medium-sized firms with 11 - 100 people (38.2%). Large-sized firms represented slightly over a tenth of respondents (11.3%), followed by lawyers at international firms (9.7%).



WHO TOOK PART CONT.

The divide of professionals in each looked like this:



The majority of respondents were lawyers in private practice located in Europe (32%) and Asia (22%). European-based lawyers or legal professionals made up 39.5%, followed by Asia (20%), North America (11.4%), South and Central America (10.3%), Africa (9.2%), Australasia (7.6%) and the Middle East (2.2%).

Key insight 1

LAWYERS ARE PLAYING AN INCREASINGLY SIGNIFICANT ROLE IN LAW FIRM BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

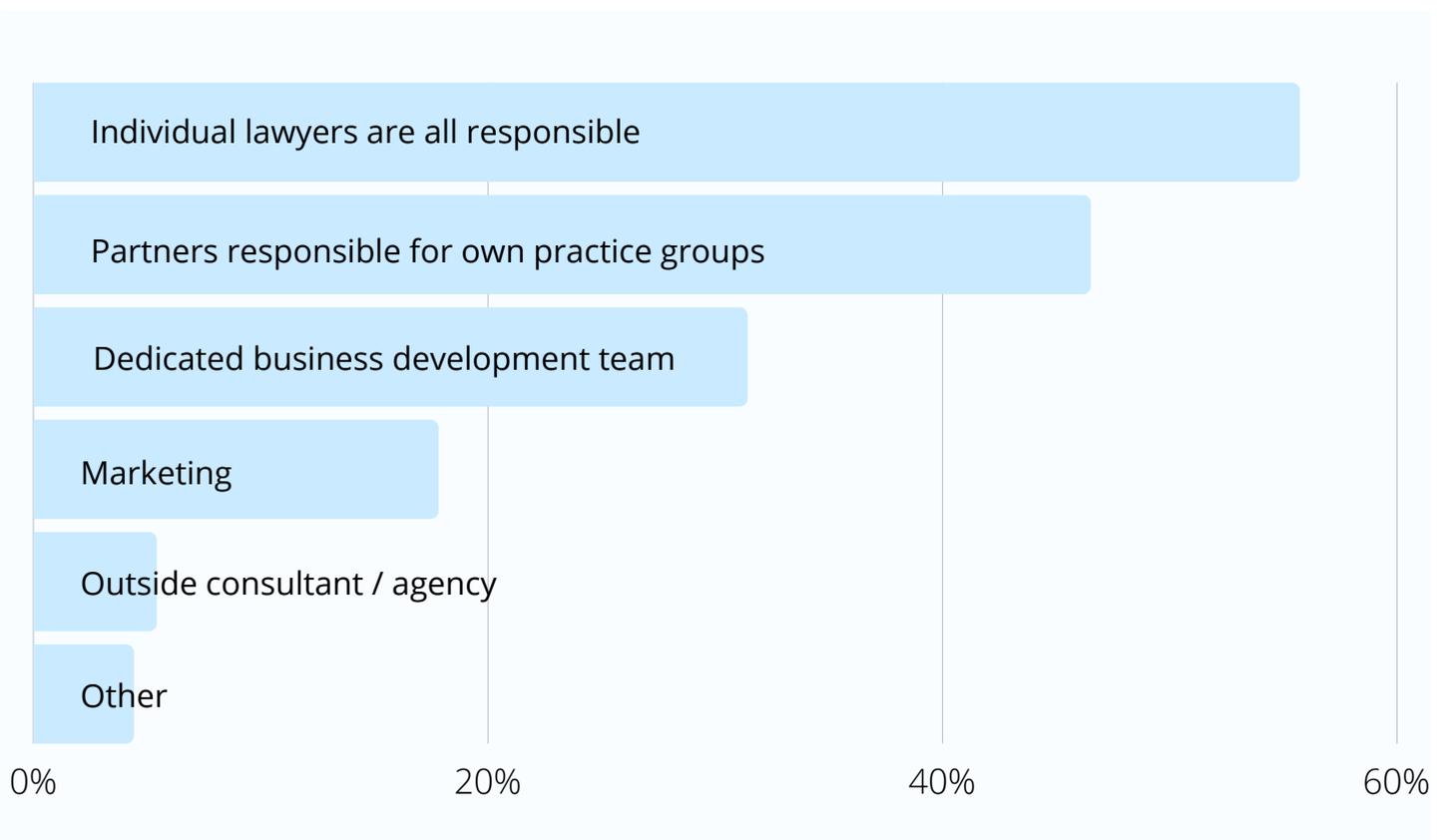
When asked who is responsible for business development at their firm, 55.7% said that all individual lawyers are responsible for their efforts.

The survey responses tell us that lawyers have a significant role to play in the overall business and growth of a firm. Business development is related to everyday tasks and responsibilities such as client interactions, relationships, deals and matters, in addition to managing practice groups.

Nearly half of the respondents (46.5%) said that the partners at their firm are responsible for their own practice groups.

Just under one third (31.4%) said they have a dedicated business development team, and 18% have a marketing team who are responsible for supporting the attorneys' efforts.

A growing number has reported they engage outside consultants to assist their firm with their business development efforts and we can expect this number to grow as it is a cost-effective way to improve a firm's business development practices.



ANALYSIS OF THE CHANGING ROLE OF LAWYERS IN BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT



BY CLINTON SWAN

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT, COMMS DIRECTOR, LEGAL TECH & STARTUP LEADER

The NEXL survey points towards at least some lawyers perhaps feeling increasing awareness, pressure and personal responsibility around work generation and business development expectations.

The good, or bad, starting point – depending on your perspective – is that a degree of expectation has always existed around lawyers’ business development efforts, and it’s largely a non-negotiable required skill for senior leadership and partnership roles.

At its core, business development is a ‘human’ skill, and the emotive elements of this and the accompanying risk of rejection can feel slightly uncomfortable for some.

However, this pressure is probably feeling amplified at present, in part due to being thrust into a changing, and for many, unfamiliar, more digitally-oriented landscape.

More good news though, you have an increased array of tools and options at hand for connecting, reconnecting, showing interest and offering value.

And, a greater chance to position or differentiate yourself, as regardless of firm size, the vast majority of lawyers are in the same boat.

Alongside, it’s worth noting that the notion that ‘Business Development’ is or sits with a single role in a firm is slightly misleading, and from an operational perspective can actually work as a distraction away from firm/team [external] progress.

The reality is that business development/work generation (and, importantly, the client experience!) is a core functional capability of every and any law firm, and aspects of that function fall right across the firm – it’s a team game in the same way that all members of a sports team all contribute to performance and results.

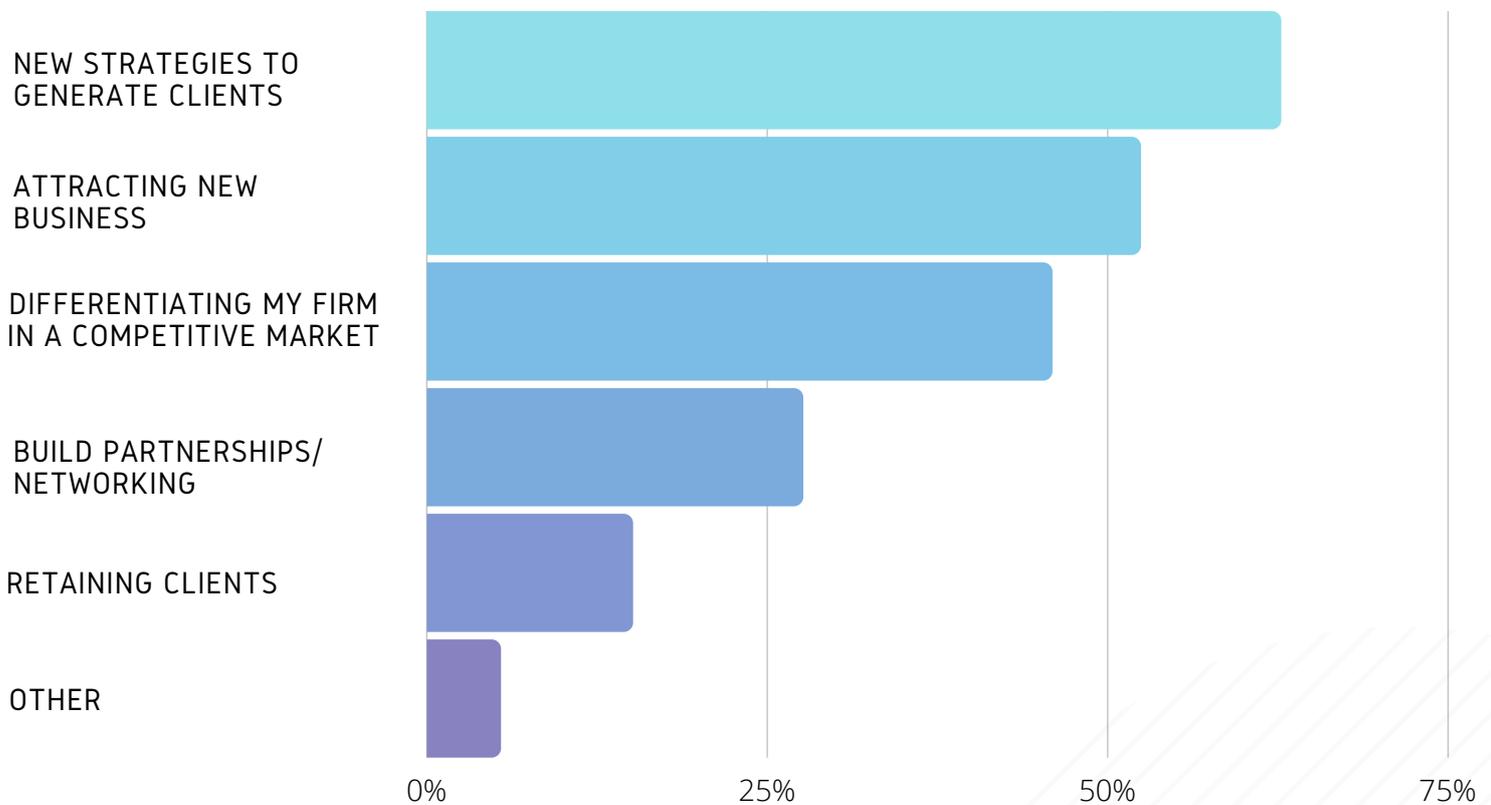
It’s worth considering and testing business development plans and efforts through this collaborative and outcome-oriented lens – how can you align plans, people and teams collaboratively towards common objectives?

And what about your peer-group and external contacts; you may be surprised at just how willing they are to help play a part in your success.

Key insight 2

THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE IS IDENTIFYING NEW STRATEGIES THAT GENERATE CLIENTS

Client acquisition, referrals and partnership are important to increasing a law firm's growth potential, and they remain a challenge for many lawyers. When asked what the biggest business development challenges lawyers face at their firm, identifying new strategies to generate clients was the largest (62.7%), followed by attracting new business (52.4%), differentiating the firm in a competitive market (45.9%), partnerships and networking (28%), and retaining clients (15%).



Other Answers



"All of the above"

"Finishing all the work as fast I would like before new projects come in."

"Selecting the right clients and reducing the long tail"

"Coping with the work load"

"Training and retaining good lawyers"

ANALYSIS OF THE CHALLENGES

FROM AMAN ABBAS

CO-FOUNDER & CEO OF COMMWISER, PR & LEGAL MARKETING FIRM



Firms need long-term strategic planning in an increasingly competitive landscape.

Traditionally, businesses would ‘walk-in’ based on the reputation of a law firm or some prominent lawyers.

However, with intense competition coming from firms that have a similar kind of talent pool and increased pricing pressure, firms need a long term strategic business development (BD) plan.

Usually, the approach is reactive and therefore it poses multiple challenges. It is an established fact that firms with higher growth than their peers focus and spend more on their BD and marketing.

However, spending more is not enough. BD & marketing work effectively when they are tied to the firm’s strategy and planned meticulously for the whole financial year as a part of long-term planning for the next few years.

We need to look at the whole business development piece more strategically.

In this competitive environment, it is important to understand why a client should choose you among many offering the same kind of services.

For that, you need to recognize yourself – who you are, what you stand for, what are your markets and why you are most valuable.

The firms which excel invest in people, technology, processes and other touchpoints with their clients.

In addition to the traditional 4 Ps of marketing – Product, Price, Place and Promotion, Booms & Bitner added another three elements particularly in the context of the service industry, which are – People, Process and Physical Evidence.

Therefore, strategically speaking, when you think of marketing, you must think of all these elements in your advance BD and marketing strategy.

SOLUTIONS TO THE MAIN CHALLENGE: GENERATING MORE CLIENTS

FROM DAVID H. FREEMAN, J.D.
CEO OF THE DAVID FREEMAN CONSULTING GROUP



To succeed in this new reality, we need a new toolkit – or at least vary our existing tools to adapt.

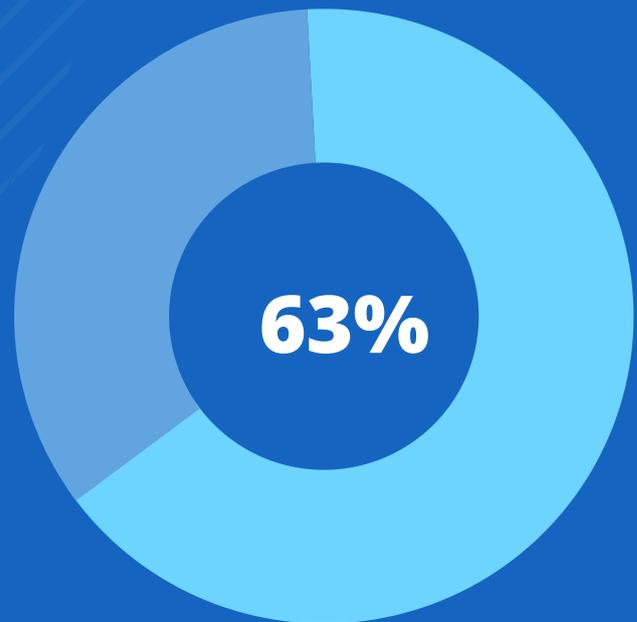
Let's start by blending the first and second biggest challenges together – new strategies and attracting new work.

These can be especially daunting in environments where COVID has eliminated many of our typical go-to techniques for client development, such as lunches, going to conferences, conducting in house presentations or getting together for social events.

To succeed in this new reality, we need a new toolkit – or at least vary our existing tools to adapt to this new reality.

One approach that has worked nicely for the lawyers I've been coaching is to offer virtual in-house presentations to clients, prospects and referral sources.

Using remote technologies like Zoom, you can actually get in front of



63% said identifying new strategies for generating clients was their biggest challenge

people from all over the world and make powerful impressions.

With a little skill, you can run sessions with breakout rooms and group interaction to make it a much more interesting and engaging session.

You can also invite people to interact in the chatbox to learn what issues they're facing and you can provide some suggestions in the moment.

SOLUTIONS TO GENERATING MORE CLIENTS (CONT.)

FROM DAVID H. FREEMAN, J.D.
CEO OF THE DAVID FREEMAN CONSULTING GROUP

Strategy tip #1

JOIN CLIENTS' STRATEGIC PLANNING SESSIONS

Clients and prospects engage in planning sessions - and many would welcome a smart, experienced lawyer in their process. Many lawyers have successfully been invited to provide services after joining such sessions.

One managing partner reported getting five pieces of new work using this technique.

You can offer to remotely dial in for a few hours, and perhaps also offer to have firm lawyers in other practices join in as well if the client would find value in their presence.

You can find clients and potential clients who care about learning more and sharing best practices relating to your area of practice.

For example, if you're a business lawyer, form a group for founders looking to grow their business.

Or, it can be for more social purposes (one lawyer created a virtual wine tasting for former colleagues who had worked in-house together – and he got work from one of them within weeks of that event).

Strategy tip #2

START YOUR OWN GROUP

This is one of my favourites, which again can be implemented virtually.

Personally, I have started three separate groups since March, and many lawyers have done the same.



ANALYSIS OF THE CHALLENGES CONT.

FROM ALISTAIR MARSHALL

DIRECTOR OF PROFESSIONAL SERVICES BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT



Following a tumultuous year of both real and perceived change in the legal world, it is not unreasonable to conclude that from a business development perspective, regretfully, little has changed.

The number one challenge stubbornly remains, implementing strategies and tools for attracting new business which inevitably requires an element of differentiation. This, in tandem with over-reliance on referrals as a route to market, continues to slow the progress of the majority of firms and individuals. The good news is, it does not need to remain this way!



OVERCOMING CHALLENGES STARTS WITH A STRATEGY

First of all, let me make this clear, strategy is not planning. Strategy is the making of an integrated set of choices that collectively position the firm in its industry.

This creates a sustainable advantage, relative to the competition and delivers superior financial returns and growth.

Strategy is not complex, but it IS hard. It's hard because it forces people and organisations to make specific choices about their future, something that doesn't happen in most firms.

Decisions need to be made about where you are going to play and how

you are going to win. As legal futurist Richard Susskind and many others are regularly quoted, "dominate a market, not the market."

Once you have decided the market you wish to become famous in you have to overcome a lawyers' biggest two challenges, visibility and credibility.

No one hires you if they have never heard of you and even if they have, you must ask, why should they choose you ahead of the competition?

Not getting to grips with this often leads to an over-reliance on your network and referrals to grow your practice.

FROM NOA MAYER

PRINCIPAL OWNER NOA MAYER CONSULTING & BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT



The biggest challenge most lawyers face is implementing existing business development strategies.

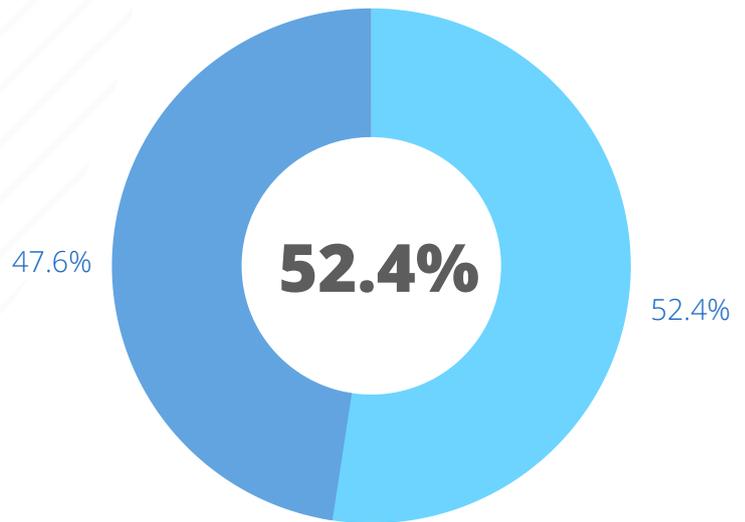
Most lawyers see the biggest BD challenge they face as finding new strategies to implement, to attract business.

I suggest otherwise, the biggest challenge most lawyers face is implementing their existing BD strategies.

There is always, of course, room for innovative and creative strategies for business development.

BD pioneers, in legal services as in any industry, are set to gain most from new and fresh approaches to BD.

However, most of us are not at the spearhead of innovation, are not professional BD experts, and cannot invent new BD strategies.



52.4% said attracting new business was their biggest challenge

This should not discourage lawyers seeking to develop their practices.

A stable, solid and certain way to increase business and attract clients is in the implementation of existing and known strategies.

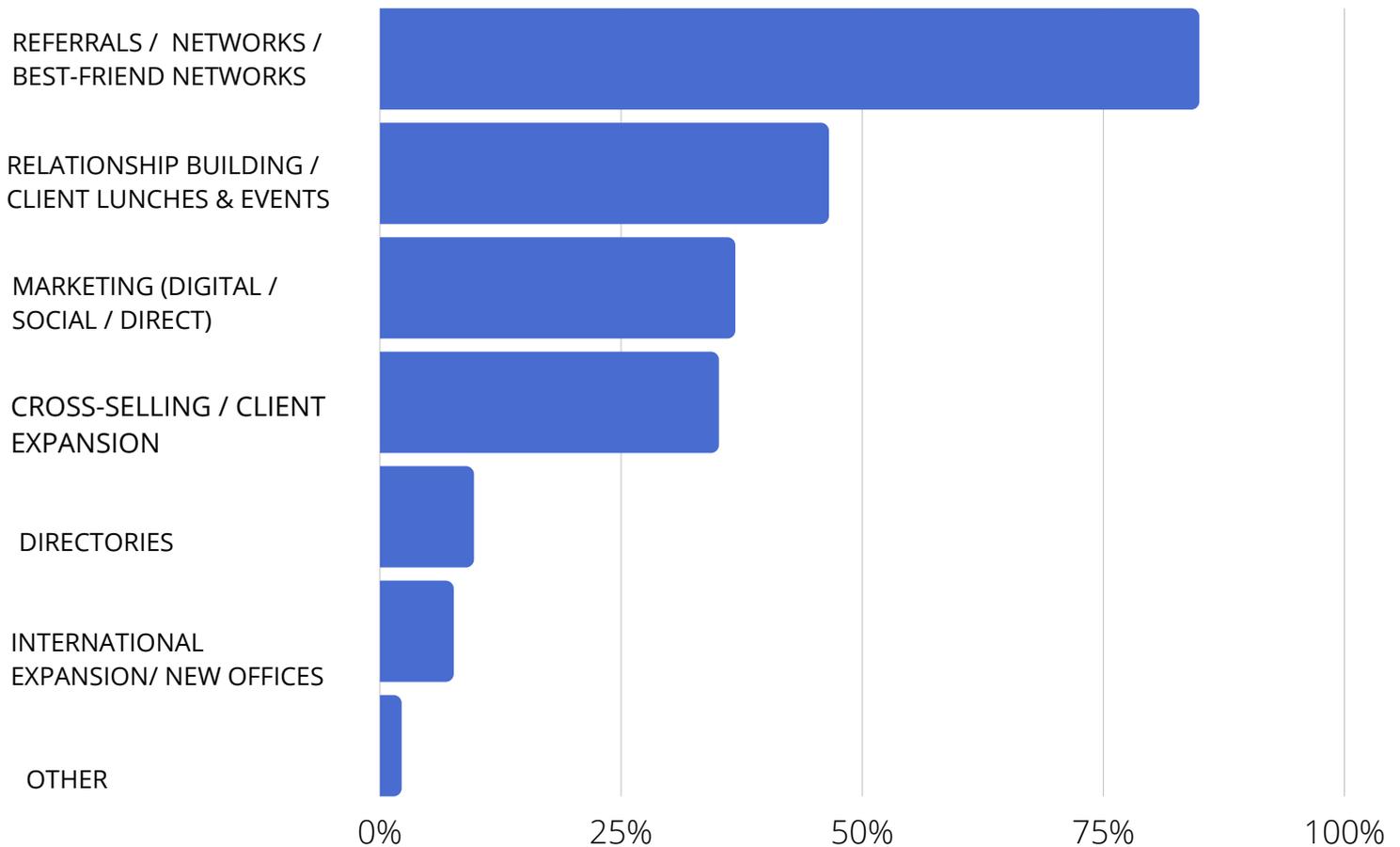
Client and relationship management is such a strategy – creating, developing, maintaining and deepening relationships is a well known and successful BD strategy.

Key insight 3

REFERRAL NETWORKS ARE THE MOST EFFECTIVE WAY OF GENERATING NEW BUSINESS

QUESTION: WHAT CURRENTLY IS YOUR MOST EFFECTIVE WAY OF GENERATING NEW BUSINESS?

Majority of lawyers are using referrals and are part of legal or 'best-friend' networks to increase business to their firm the most (84.4%), followed by relationship-building activities such as client lunches and events (45.6%). Marketing (37%) and Cross-selling/client expansion (35%) came in third and fourth place for generating new business, followed by directories (9.2%) and international expansion (7.6%). Other responses represented 2.2% of all respondents.



Other Answers

"Former staff, former interns"

"Nurturing key referral relationships and always delivering and exceeding expectations."

FROM ALISTAIR MARSHALL

Director of Professional Services Business Development



Referrals

Referrals are great because they are free and usually have win rates superior to other marketing functions.

However, you can only grow your practice at the rate that others are prepared to talk about you, which is dangerous as you are not in control of your own destiny.

Fact is that hardly any lawyer ever asks for a referral. Don't believe me? Go and ask the fee earners in your team how many clients they have asked for a referral from this calendar year.

Or alternatively, how many referrals have they given to others remembering that givers gain?

For many, random acts of coffee and lunch are the only business development activity undertaken and in a pandemic environment, this has been severely disrupted.

When 85% of lawyers say that word of mouth is the way they grow their practice, you can see why I worry for their future.

For many, random acts of coffee and lunch are the only BD activity undertaken, and in a pandemic environment, this has been severely disrupted.

Winning firms will have up to 20 ways of generating inbound leads via speaking, writing and networking both on and off-line and therefore so should you!

Cross-selling

Looking at the respondents' focus for 2021, cross-selling via existing clients is the number one strategy utilised as it should be.

Cross-selling is often the path of least resistance to new revenues. However, it regularly fails because the process is not undertaken properly as the focus is put on the selfish professional rather than the needy client.

It should allow for problems or risks of which the client is not aware, opportunities that clients haven't yet considered and solutions that clients have not anticipated on their own.

FROM DEB FEDER

CEO of Feder Development and Founder of Focus30, Business Development Strategist.



THE KEYS TO BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT IN 2021 ARE EMPOWERING INDIVIDUAL ATTORNEYS TO BUILD RELATIONSHIPS, ENGAGE IN CONVERSATIONS, AND PROVIDE NIMBLE LEGAL SOLUTIONS TO COMPLEX SITUATIONS.

When lawyers take an entrepreneurial approach to their careers, it allows them to see opportunities that would have otherwise been passed over.

While the pandemic has certainly created obstacles to the everyday practice and client development opportunities, the real result was shining a light on problems that already existed.

Teaching lawyers how to listen to clients, how to engage in real conversations that build relationships, and show up how you want to be seen as a professional, changes the business development prospects and opportunities for each lawyer, and the firm.

When lawyers shift from waiting for firm-level clients to be brought to them, to engaging in consistent communication and conversations with colleagues, clients, and collaboration partners, the business development strategy will never revert to the past patterns of pitch, wait, and pray.

Those that are successful at the relationship building and client conversations, understand that the practice of law is no longer left to those that provide outstanding work product.

With so much changing for business clients on a daily basis, lawyers were forced this year into learning to listen and validate new ideas, moving away from pitches, and merely providing legal expertise.

Clients want problem-solvers on their team. They also want individuals who are willing to collaborate and listen.

These collaborative relationships allow attorneys to engage in curious, confident conversations with clients, and referral partners right from the beginning.

As a result, the engagement in strategic conversations allows lawyers to be engaged in dialogues that bring them into projects sooner, at a more engaged level, and move the ownership of business development to attorneys of all level, and to practices of any size.

AMAN ABBAS

CO-FOUNDER & CEO OF COMMWISER, PR & LEGAL MARKETING FIRM.



The best and most cost-effective way of engaging in business development is to have brilliant camaraderie within the firm that promotes collaboration.

In any business, particularly in the service industry, the best source of getting more business is by referral and key to getting more referrals is to service your clients in the best possible manner.

However, referrals are hard to come by and require less marketing and more great client servicing.

Secondly, the best and most cost-effective way of engaging in BD is to have brilliant camaraderie within the firm that promotes collaboration.

Collaboration is the foundation of cross-selling within the firm's clients, that enables it to keep increasing revenues from existing clients rather than having to acquire new clients.

Outbound strategy

The pandemic has made us more digital than ever and probably this is a silver lining for the legal industry, which has otherwise been lagging in adopting technology.

One of the most interesting things I have seen was RSG Consulting awarding American firms for being the 'Most Digital'.

Being 'digital' means a whole range of technological intervention across everything a firm does, but also in the context of BD and marketing.

A digital approach is essentially creating your presence around your clients digitally. It allows lawyers to network and engages with clients and prospects across multiple locations.

Another important trend that emerged is video marketing. Today, over 70% of content consumption is in video format.

The pandemic has made everyone camera-friendly and therefore showcasing thought-leadership doing client engagement through video is one of the next level BD strategies that law firms must adapt.

SUE-ELLA PRODONOVICH

PRINCIPAL, PRODONOVICH ADVISORY



7 Steps To Asking For a Client Referral

Recommendations and referrals are the lifeblood of any professional services business but there's something that can make us decidedly embarrassed about asking for them.

Perhaps we're anxious about coming across as pushy or desperate or too 'salesy'. Perhaps we're worried that they'll think we'll become too busy to look after their work. Perhaps it's deep-seated fear of rejection.

Whatever it is, now's the time to put shame aside and start asking clients to recommend us for work. Because done properly, there's no reason asking for referrals needs to be uncomfortable in the slightest. Here's how you do it.

1. EARN YOUR REFERRAL

One of the most important things to remember about asking for referrals is you need to earn them.

Don't ask for more work the moment you start billing. You need runs on the board. You also need to know that your contact is happy with the work you've been doing.

So hold off until you've completed an engagement or an important milestone.

Then, within 30 days, ask them for

feedback on your service and the overall outcome of the matter.

2. PREPARE FOR CONVERSATION

Before you make any request of a contact be clear about your positioning. You'd probably like new clients that share some attributes of clients you already enjoy working with.

Ask yourself who is your ideal client? Which industry do they work in? What kind of personality do they have and what's their business style?

You can then be a little more specific about whom you'd like to meet. Is it people with a particular title or area of responsibility, such as in-house counsel or 'the person in charge of facilities'?

Use these insights to develop targeted positioning about the work, sectors or solutions that your contact will relate to and remember. For example: "I really enjoy helping HR Directors that work with fast-growing businesses in the IT services sector."

3. BE READY TO SHARE YOUR OWN BUSINESS OBJECTIVES

A high-trust approach to referral building is to share your business objectives with your contacts.

Let them know you are building a practice in a specific area, let them know your business relies on referrals and let them know how you work with referral sources.

SUE-ELLA PRODONOVICH

PRINCIPAL, PRODONOVICH ADVISORY

4. NOW IT'S TIME TO TALK

Now you've prepared it's time to talk. When you do get face to face, ask your clients if they know someone who faces (and seems willing to acknowledge) a similar business problem to the ones you want to help with.

Your clients usually know this kind of information about their circle of business friends, or can discern it with some confidence.

Let your clients know that you'd be happy to help their friends, colleagues and contacts and that you will personally ensure you will do the very best for them.

5. MAKE IT EASY FOR THEM.

Ask your source if it's OK to contact their friend/colleague/contact next week and to drop their name in order to get past any reservation. Or provide them with draft contents for an email introduction.

6. AND WHEN YOU GET A REFERRAL

Thank your referral source. Straightaway. Don't wait to see if the referral converts to work.

While we may be limited in our ability to reciprocate referrals, one simple way to show your gratitude is simply to say, "Thank you for introducing me to..." with a personal and handwritten note.

A good move for firms is to have some appreciation gifts on hand. A bad move is to tie up access to such gifts in red tape. Even worse is to make this a 'Partners Only' privilege.

At Prodonovich Advisory we have a simple and effective referral system. It's called the Veuve Exchange (VSX). If you recommend us, we'll send you a bottle of Veuve and we'll put a second bottle in our fridge, which you can access at any time you're in our office.

7. AFTER YOU'VE BEEN INTRODUCED

When you meet with the person you've been referred to, be prepared to offer something extra in exchange for their time.

For example, be willing to share some ideas in your first meeting. After all, you want them to thank the person who introduced you.

And make sure you call your referral source, say 30 days after their introduction, to keep them up to date with how the relationship is progressing.

AND FINALLY...Referral relationships usually work best when they're not all one way.

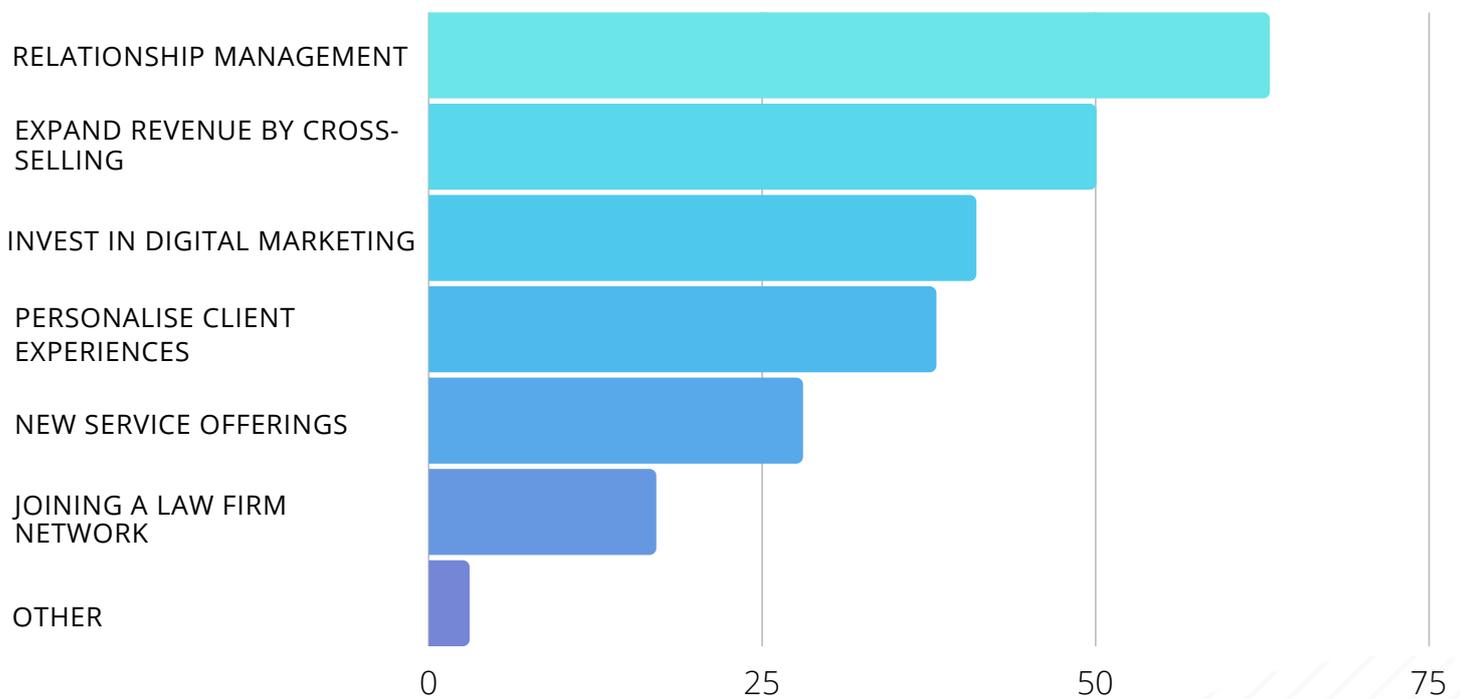
So keep thinking about your contacts' businesses and whether there is anyone in your network you could introduce to them, even if you don't necessarily work that closely with them. For example, if you're hosting a firm function or seminar, see if there's anyone attending that they may want to meet and be the one who facilitates the introduction.

Key insight 4

RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT WILL BE A KEY FOCUS FOR LAWYERS IN 2021

QUESTION: WHERE ARE YOU GOING TO FOCUS YOUR BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS IN 2021?

When asked what the key focus will be in 2021, the majority of lawyers will be focusing on relationship growth and management (64%). This was followed by expanding revenue through cross-selling (50.5%). This suggests that lawyers are looking to attract and retain high-value clients by building stronger strategic relationships. This can increase the opportunity to cross-sell and keep happy clients.



Digital marketing will be a key strategy for attracting clients with 40.9% of respondents saying they will be incorporating it into their business development in 2021. This is followed by personalised client experiences (38.2%), new service offerings (29.6%) and joining a law firm network (17.2%).

Other Answers (3.2%)

"BD training"

"Reaching out to new Businesses"

"Digital Acquisition"

"Conferences"

"Social media engagement"

FROM NOA MAYER

PRINCIPAL OWNER NOA MAYER CONSULTING
& BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT



The implementation and practice of relationship management are challenging, but with a structured process that is designed to suit each firm and each lawyer – it is doable and bears fruit.

An efficient relationship management process should include pre-set as well as ad-hoc "touchpoints" with contacts on topics that are relevant and valuable for them.

These "touchpoints" must be continuous, rather than sporadic and random. They must also be valuable and relevant for the targets.

Throughout time, a good business relationship will expand and grow to include certain personal content, in addition to the professional and business topics addressed.

Some of the "touchpoints" should be personal and individual to the recipient.

The contacts with whom relationships should be managed include existing and potential clients, employees, colleagues and referral agents.

Each of these groups should be contacted with specific content that is suited for their interests and needs.

A relationship management process can become overwhelming and difficult to manage.

A correctly designed process, supported by an efficient CRM will allow for effective contact management and process management, resulting in improved relationships and increased business for the firm.

As a goal for 2021, I recommend planning and designing the relationship management process, and starting its implementation.

Around one-quarter of firms have a contact relationship management system (CRM)

QUESTION: ARE LAWYERS USING A CRM TO MANAGE CLIENT RELATIONSHIPS?

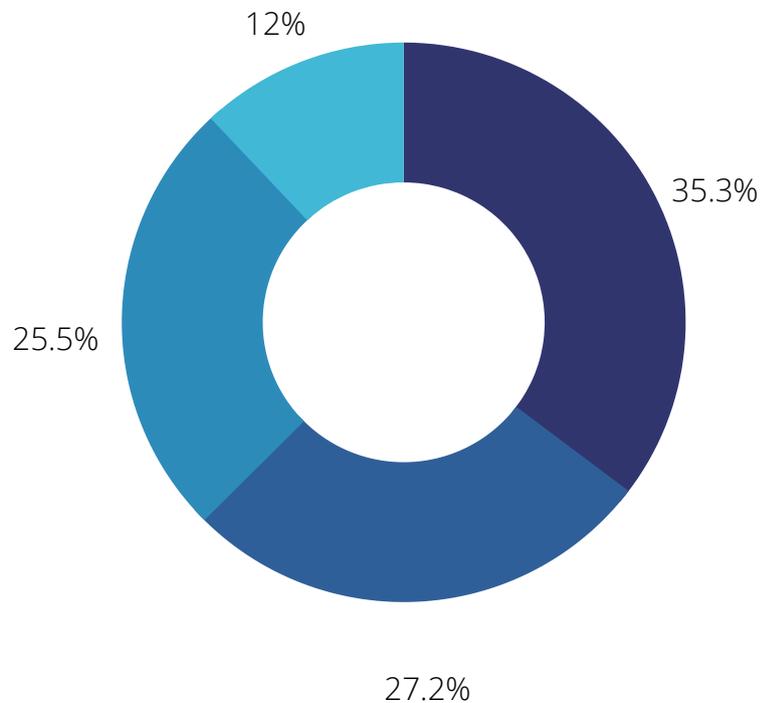
Just over a quarter (27.5%) of law firms are using a client relationship management system (CRM) to manage relationships with their clients and business contacts.

However, around a third (35%) of lawyers said that they do not have a CRM at their firm, but are currently considering using one.

Just over a quarter (25.5%) said their firm does not have a CRM and is not considering getting one, while about 11% said they do have a CRM, but do not use it.

The results suggest that about two-thirds of firms do not have a CRM. Without keeping account of client interactions and relationship intel, business growth opportunities could be left on the table.

These results also suggest that the legal industry is turning to technology and automation to manage their relationships.



To remain competitive and differentiate their firm in the market, lawyers need to streamline and centralise their business development and client relationships.

When used correctly, a CRM (preferable legal-specific) can improve business development efforts and increase firm growth.

Lawyers can take advantage of this simple technology to develop stronger client relationships to retain and gain new business.

Learn more about [NEXL Grow](#) - a CRM for lawyers who want to generate more high-value clients.

WHERE TO IN 2021?

What the experts say

"I think the focus in 2021 should be as suggested earlier – referrals and Cross-Selling. However, it requires robust planning, creation of ‘believers’ within the organization and a champion among the leadership who could drive this relentlessly.

So I would say that while these sources are well known, the focus should be on ‘how to’ and ‘execution’. Finally, one of the most important things to focus on in 2021 is on digital and social media marketing."

- Aman Abbas, Co-founder CommWiser

"2021 will be a year focused on managing and deepening relationships. Given everything 2020 threw at us, this should be the absolute bare minimum. The most innovative law firms have already started revamping their business models by ditching hourly rates for value-based pricing, and are now experimenting with recurring and subscription type revenue models.

Instead of focusing on generating more clients, firms should be aiming at finding the right clients, experimenting with value-based pricing, and creating a client experience unmatched by their competitors. This is, of course, easier said than done, especially if you only have lawyers working on business development.

My advice for all firms for 2021 is to get serious about business development and hire an in-house business development specialist (or team if budget allows) who is focused on sales, client account management, and the business of law. Lean on them to help your firm transition into a next-gen legal services provider."

- William McLaughlin, BD Roundtable

WHERE TO IN 2021?

Observations from Stephen Revell

Stephen Revell of Making Change Happen, a law firm and professional services consultancy



5 THINGS EVERY LAW FIRM SHOULD REFLECT ON IN 2021 AND BEYOND.

1. Rethink and re-emphasise the responsibility of all lawyers in the firm for client relationships and business development. Lawyers need to be at the front end of this and much of it cannot be “delegated” to a business development team.

2. Rethink how the business development team (if you are lucky enough to have one) can best support the business development efforts of your lawyers. This support needs to be targeted and regular and needs to be what the lawyers actually need, not what has been done before. There should probably be a reset of the tasks business development perform. It is more about client relationships than “marketing”.

3. Consider how technology can help manage client relationships and support business development teams. The tools range from systems which help generate real client contact activity to “nag systems”, which feed lawyers with all the information they need to carry out regular business development activity.

4. Make sure everyone is cross-selling everyone else. Business development is best approached with the firm’s full range of services in mind, rather than what a single lawyer or a single practice group can do for the client. To do this effectively, there needs to be a good analysis of the client’s needs. Are you researching those needs effectively and are you listening to what your clients are saying their problems are and what their needs are. Incidentally, this may need a fresh approach to pricing so be prepared for that.

5. Look at the way in which work is coming into your firm and the importance of referrals and networks. Ensure you are treating these channels with the respect they deserve. If networks of any sort are important to you for the flow of work then they should be treated as a client should be treated and the relationship maintained and managed. Often referrals from other law firms are not taken as seriously as they should be. With proper tracking of where work is coming from, you can see the importance of the various channels that bring you work.

Stephen is the editor of the 2nd Edition of the IBA’s book [Business Development – A Practical Handbook for Lawyers](#)

WHERE TO IN 2021?



Observations from Deb Feder

CEO of Feder Development and Founder of Focus30,
Business Development Strategist



Firms who support the entrepreneurial efforts of attorneys will change the client development trajectory of their business development plans in 2021.

LinkedIn has changed access to many conversations for lawyers and business professionals. Bringing a nimble platform for content and conversations, lawyers who learn how to use LinkedIn and similar business platforms correctly, can quickly engage in meaningful conversations and share their expertise, without waiting for the opportunities to pitch or a formal introduction. When done correctly, these conversations can lead to presentations, introductions, conversations, and client engagements.

Long-form thought leadership pieces are moving aside for more accessible methods of sharing ideas and expertise with clients. The rapid change in podcasts, video, informal interviews, and posts is allowing lawyers to bring a new level of personality and relationship-building to clients.

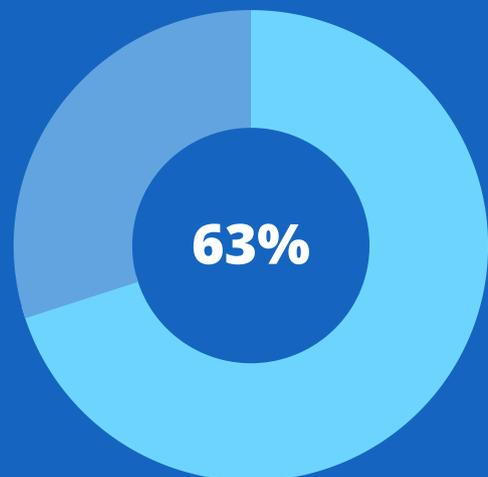
Understanding how to use these methods and narrowing down the focus of practice, is critical to the business development efforts of an individual attorney.

A willingness to niche

Lawyers who are willing to niche down their practice will see greater results with their business development opportunities and relationship building.

The pandemic has forced us to understand that providing solutions to all clients, across all issues, is a complicated and losing battle.

Understanding the clients in your industry and practice area, allows you to provide outstanding service, gain insightful knowledge on key topics, engage with referral sources and collaboration partners at a new level, and show up to the table with solutions for your clients.



63% said they will focus on managing relationships.

WHERE TO IN 2021?

Observations from Clinton Swan

Legal Business Development & Legal Tech Consultant



The more things change, the more things stay the same, despite the ‘unprecedented’ and ‘brave new world’ rhetoric of so many pandemic-era articles.

2021 offers no shortage of opportunity and development areas for legal business development efforts, but two areas that will add value across all tactical efforts are worthy of particular mention.

1. Effective use of digital channels alongside a focus on outcome-oriented lead-generation campaigns. This is a combination of skill-set and thinking item:

Understand development pipelines. Understand recipient value points. Take notes from your own online experiences.

Given pandemic driven awareness and acceptance of digital interaction, this is a great time to upskill and experiment.

2. CX or Client experience and servicing remain [the!] primary area of opportunity and potential differentiation for law firms.

Ultimately the ‘services’ part of professional services; the human-oriented aspects of client servicing will increasingly impact client retention, attrition and acquisition, as well as profitability.

And, remember that client experience is going to be fluid and relative.

You'll need to identify what resonates most with your strategy and enable those in your firm or team to deliver on those specific values.

Observations from Clinton Swan

Legal Business Development & Legal Tech Consultant

Take Advantage of Digital Channel: Considerations by Role

Take a moment to recognise that ‘online’ gives greater inter-personal opportunity & ability to gain insight into drivers and interest. Everyone has [new] pressures – which gives you an opportunity to dig into what they are / what they are wanting to achieve / and think outside of the box as to how you can help them (as a person) achieve their goals. Be interested, and consider your client’s clients.

1.Opportunities for Lawyers

COVID has forced a degree of tactical change on the business development front for lawyers, including pulling some individually tech-hesitant people into a range of digital interactions. This may have turned out to be not as scary as some might have imagined, and which in many instances will have teased at a deeper personal connection with existing contacts through shared experience and authentic personal-level interaction.

Partners and lawyers who choose to continue to actively pursue, explore and develop the potential that digital channels offer over the year ahead are likely stand to gain relative to their peers.

Importantly, lawyers should consider how to magnify the ‘human connection’ elements of digital channels – in the same way, that video conferencing during lockdowns has naturally prompted empathetic queries and conversation as lawyers and clients have naturally been drawn into each others’ ‘living rooms’. Also, think outside of the digital tool and interaction itself, and consider the client experience before and after an interaction. Ask yourself these questions:

- How can you set expectation?
- Convey and underscore value?
- Continue the conversation?
- Deepen the relationship?

There are numerous opportunities on the table that are much more accessible than a year ago.

Observations from Clinton Swan

2. Business Development & Marketing Teams

Chat in industry group forums indicates that many members of tactical BD & Marketing support/enabling teams over the course of the pandemic have had some chance to re-focus away from traditional networking events and accompanying glad-handling towards more targeted development of and attention to digital channels.

This includes webinars, channel support and enabling, digital presence training, social media support, lead generation campaigns, and application of design thinking principles around all of these.

For many, this has provided a chance to further develop and demonstrate specialist skill-sets, though perhaps not to a full strategic potential at this point. A question is around how much activity to date has been in pursuit of ‘activity’ as opposed achievement of articulated (outcome-oriented) goals at this point, given the reactive nature of the shift for many.

Events will re-appear at some stage, but the door should now be further open for functional advancement via raising of well thought out, outcome-oriented, lead generation proposals.

3. CRM teams

A number of those in specific CRM-support, coordination and development focused roles have more often had greater opportunity to add real and visible value, through driving of timely collection, coordination, dissemination, and briefing relating to client intelligence, needs and opportunity – amplifying the voice of the client into and across the firm.

COVID has in some instances provided an opportunity here to further breach some previously resistant internal silos in pursuit of better connection and info-flow. It is difficult to see backsliding in this area provided effort continues to be first and foremost value and outcome-oriented.

Observations from Clinton Swan

Content Marketing

Subjectively, across the legal market, the digital marketing arena which seems to have developed the least over the COVID shift is that of information updates; articles, reports, good old ‘thought-leadership’ and market briefings.

Not to say that the content out there is ‘bad’, but on balance there still appears to be substantial opportunity for firms to differentiate in terms of value-focusing updates, enabling clients, and considering how to reinforce that value with outcome-oriented items such facilitating related peer-group connection and conversation.

Summary

For the legal sector generally, there also appears to be tangible potential to learn from other industries in terms of pipeline oriented digital lead-generation.

A short-cut starting point here for those who haven’t developed or considered this area to date might be as simple as starting by defining a specific client action/outcome-item goal for before publishing an item, and mapping campaign items against a lead-generation pipeline funnel.

Why are you publishing it? What does success look like? How can you optimise for that success? How can you connect recipient reaction to the next step in the pipeline? How can you reinforce strategic positioning? How will the recipient use it, and how can you enable them to do so? How can you make the recipient look good if they flag or pass the item onwards?

Perhaps get in touch with peers in other industries and learn how their lead generation campaigns work – both in terms of new clients and repeat engagement.

THE RULES FOR BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT DURING COVID-19

Insights from Sue-Ella Prodonovich

Award-winning Business Development Adviser to Professional Services Firms



In March 2019, I wrote that the rainmaker was dead. The business world, I pointed out, has moved on from the wining, dining senior partner who can sweet-talk any client into opening their wallet. That guy belongs with shoulder pads, big hair and Gordon Gekko in the 1980s.

Today, buyers are more informed, better educated about your services and more likely to be turned off by smooth talkers than enchanted by them.

If you didn't believe me then, surely COVID-19 has convinced you that the world has moved on. Here's why and what I think matters much more in a pandemic-affected world.

1. THE SCHMOOZIN' JUST AIN'T HAPPENIN'

Wining and dining have always been the main tool of the rainmaker. The big lunch, the social event, even the cup of coffee. Well, guess what? Each of these is off-limits right now.

We're working from home and if we can meet, it can't be in any more than groups of two. Even as restrictions get lifted, it's likely to stay this way for a while yet.

That whole social side of things that the rainmaker needs, has gone for now.

There's no way to work the room, no forum through which to build those crucial face-to-face relationships, no way to grease the wheel with small talk so you earn the right to get down to business.

Even the world's most charming person finds it pretty difficult to schmooze over a 30-minute group chat on Zoom.

2. COMPETENCE IS THE NEW BLACK

Because of this, I think competence matters more than ever. Clients will be judging you on the work you do, not on the peripherals.

They'll want to know that you have the technical expertise, that you're making good commercial calls, that you also understand their frame of mind, and you're making their lives easier.

They'll also want to know what you don't know and the limits on predicting results. So you may find it useful grouping thoughts using scenario frameworks like one of the four

THE RULES FOR BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT DURING COVID-19

Insights from Sue-Ella Prodonovich

Director, The BD Ladder, BD & Marketing Consultancy.

VUCA categories, (Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, Ambiguity) or Deloitte's COVID-19 Thrive Scenarios or even dusting off De bono's Six Thinking Hats.

That's what good value advice look likes. After all, these really are the only things they can assess you on. They can't make a call on how hospitable you are or how much fun you are to be around.

3. IT'S ABOUT THE PERSON, NOT THE JOB TITLE

Even before the virus changed our worlds, I noticed clients were beginning to care a lot more about the person they worked with, regardless of their firm or the job title.

Some time ago I interviewed a General Counsel for feedback about why they were sending one of their panel firms so much work. They told me it had nothing to do with the partners or their pitches.

It had everything to do with a senior associate (who they had never met in person) who was giving them service and advice of a quality no one else could match.

This lawyer was so client-focused she'd even put every one of the client's leadership meetings in her diary.

A day or so before they took place she'd send them an analysis of all the issues they needed to know about and how to respond. Talk about making your client look good!

In these days where competence matters more than anything, my view is that clients will be increasingly looking beyond someone's position within a firm to work with the person they want. Professionals who can add that kind of value are the ones who'll win out.

4. MEASURED IS BETTER

Consistent with everything I've been saying, I think that right now is the worst possible time to be selling. It's just not possible to think about your 2020 targets when many of your clients will be thinking about their 2021 survival plans.

In this environment, it's better to take a measured approach. This is a time for authenticity, a time to see how you can help rather than how much you can bill and a time to share stuff that actually helps your clients without expecting anything in return.

As PwC's Leadership From the Kitchen Table noted: "During troubled times, it's tempting to pretend we have all the answers. Now is the time to be as honest as possible. Don't be afraid to

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Director, The BD Ladder, BD & Marketing Consultancy.

say that you don't know. Ultimately, authenticity is making peace with doubt and ambiguity. When you show up as your whole self, the connections that you've built in your business become deeper. They "safeguard" you from the need to be perfect, allow you to be vulnerable and recognised for doing your best (rather than being pulled up on your mistakes)."

If you do it properly, you'll be staying top of people's minds anyway, so that when they are ready to buy you'll be the first they call.

My experience from the 90's "recession we had to have" and our last big economic slump, the GFC, was that people pretty quickly worked out who the good eggs were - the ones genuinely interested in long-term relationships - and who was only in it for themselves.

A lot of this downturn should be about making sure you don't fall into the second category.

5. USE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO REBUILD

I hate the phrase "pivoting" almost as much I hate "the new normal". But for most of us, this quieter time really is a good opportunity to have a think about how we want our businesses to

look. I also think it's a great chance to see where your work is coming from and what you can do to grow your practice the way you want it to.

That's why taking the time to sit down and go through your client list over the past three years should be at the top of your 'To Do' list. Work out how much you billed those clients and, more importantly for our purposes - how they came to you.

Was it through a referral? Through another part of your firm? Did they call out of the blue?

This information is vital for rebuilding your practice the way you want it to be when some kind of normalcy eventually returns. Use this time to develop a plan that guides your BD efforts now and into the future, so that you can locate and cultivate the kind of clients who will propel your practice forward.

AND FINALLY...Remember this is a time of anxiety but it could also be a time of great opportunity too. By throwing out antiquated ideas of how to win work and instead focusing on doing what you do well and servicing the clients you want to serve, you have the chance to put yourself ahead of the pack when things pick up again. And, even though it may not feel like right now, one day they will.

IS CROSS-SELLING THE RIGHT FOCUS TO GROW YOUR LAW-FIRMS REVENUE IN 2021?

Insights from Ben Paul

Director, The BD Ladder, BD & Marketing Consultancy.



At the end of a very tumultuous year which had a pandemic, a recession, and lots of political uncertainty, it is no surprise that there is a need to generate new work.

We are in a global recession, because of COVID-19. The recession may well end up not hitting as deeply as first feared.

The speed at which many governments managed to plunge cash into their respective economies managed to keep money flowing.

However, industries which rely on travel, or in-person experiences will have been impacted. These sectors such as travel and tourism, events spaces, and experiences are clients of many law firms.

Therefore, the recession will have an impact on many firms and individual lawyer's practices.

Which brings us back to this excellent survey and its results. At the end of what was a unique year with different challenges it is not a surprise to see answers that seem to conflict across the survey.

A focus on existing clients or chasing new business?

The biggest challenge identified by 63% of respondents was "Identifying new strategies to generate clients".

Yet the top two answers on where people will be focusing their BD efforts in 2021 are on "relationship management" and also to "expand revenue from existing clients through cross-selling".

In fact, just over half of the respondents are focusing on cross-selling which is a priority based on growing revenue from existing clients, not getting new clients.

This suggests that while there is a need or desire to win new work, there is a somewhat understandable focus on the existing client base.

It is understandable because it is seen as a safer option. Developing and nurturing those relationships which already exist (relationship management), is a lot less scary option than going out and meeting new people, and trying to build new relationships from scratch.

Is cross-selling the right focus to grow your law firm's revenue in 2021?

Insights from Ben Paul. Director, The BD Ladder, BD & Marketing Consultancy

Why your cross-selling initiatives don't take-off

There are a few simple reasons why your cross-selling initiatives don't, work and how the main relationship partner for the client, let's call them Partner A, will ensure it doesn't.

1. Partner A doesn't trust their colleagues in the adjacent offices or in a different service area. They believe that introducing their colleagues to work for their client (Partner A views the client as theirs, not the firms) is too big a risk to take. They feel that any mistakes from the firm they work at, won't be forgiven by their client.

2. Partner A doesn't actually have as good a relationship with the client as they let others within their firm believe. This means they are far more concerned with protecting their existing patch, rather than growing it.

3. Partner A has a great relationship with the client, but only with one person, or people in one department. To grow the revenue would mean getting a referral.

This means they'll have to build a brand new relationship at the client. They most likely view this as either too scary or an activity which might endanger their existing relationship.

4. Partner A doesn't understand what their colleagues do. Therefore, talking about an area of law they are not experts in, is too intimidating a concept for them to do. They don't want to be viewed as 'not' being an expert, by their client.

5. Partner A sees no real upside in cross-selling. In short, the firm's structure means they are either not properly recognized or rewarded for passing referrals internally. Therefore, they don't see it as a valuable use of their time.

Therefore, perhaps your 2021 priority should be to chase new business

The best way to grow revenue is often to win work from new clients. It's a great way of growing your market share. In a potentially shrinking legal market due to the economic recession, it makes sense to start gaining new clients.

Is cross-selling the right focus to grow your law firm's revenue in 2021?



INSIGHTS FROM BEN PAUL, DIRECTOR, THE BD LADDER, BD & MARKETING CONSULTANCY

As more firm's start investing in their digital marketing presence, 41.1% respondents said this would be a focus for 2021, buyers of legal services will be exposed to more choices than ever.

The advantage of developing new client relationships from scratch is that that person you have never met before has no current perception of who you are, and what you do.

This means that you can build a new relationship from scratch, and in doing so, introduce your colleagues as part of the onboarding process.

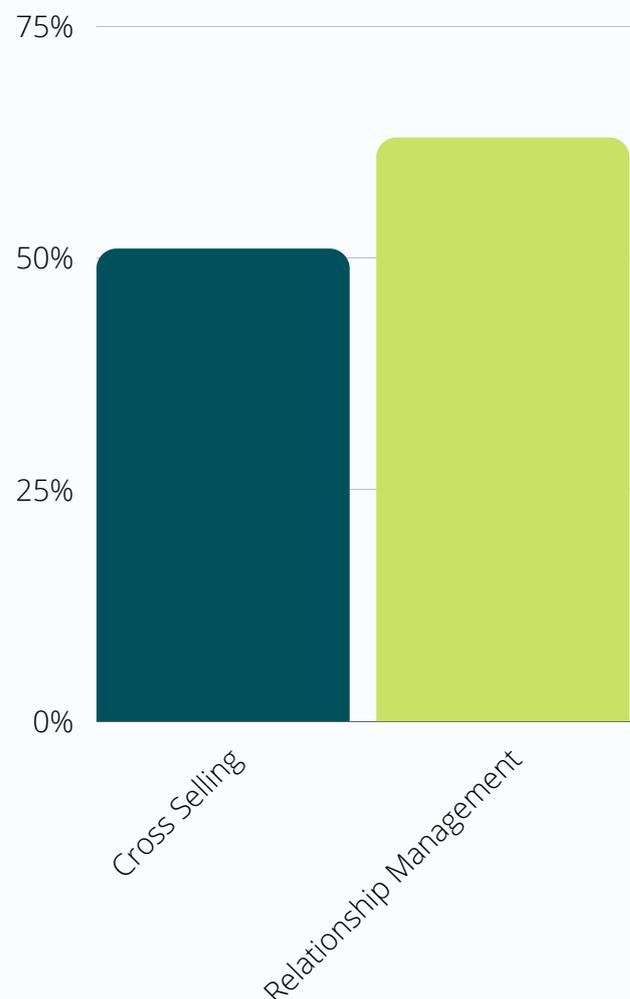
It is somewhat counterintuitively easier to win a new client with a multi-service offering from scratch than it is to effectively cross-sell.

Finally, as most law firms biggest BD challenge was "identifying strategies to generate clients", I'd urge you to invest your BD time and money in meeting that challenge.

Personally, winning new work is the most fun, and the most rewarding.

It is one of the best ways to grow any law firm quickly. It just takes the right research, a sensible approach that is recorded (hint – a CRM is a good way of doing this), and a good dose of courage and resilience.

THE RESULTS FROM SURVEY SHOWED 51% ARE FOCUSING ON CROSS-SELLING, AND 63% ON RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT.



HOW HAS COVID-19 CHANGED THE WAY YOU OR YOUR FIRM DOES BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT?

We asked 186 lawyers how Covid-19 has impacted their firm business development and how they have adapted. Here's what they had to share:

- "Firstly, this has mostly stopped me from meeting new people. Secondly, clients are also hugely financially affected due to the impact of COVID-19 on the general market. Thirdly, they wish to pay for their legal expenses but sadly they don't have sufficient money to do so. Resultantly, it's time to empathise with the client's situations as well."
- "We've realized how much sub-optimal BD we used to engage in. COVID has brought us closer to existing clients and deepen relationships. A surprising variety of new clients have just come to us as our message is strong and many existing clients recommend us"
- "Much easier to contact people online. What was once weird is now normal but lawyers typically work in silos so they have been harder to reach and harder to get them to sell themselves using digital media"
- "We have had to pivot to change our service offering. We have also had to allow client accounts to go to repayment plans split over 12 months for our existing litigation and conveyancing work."
- "We organise more webinars and we invest more in digital marketing."
- "Without the ability to meet face-to-face and attend or organise networking events, finding new ways to meet the right clients becomes ever more challenging. Social media only works if it targets the decision-maker and that is the key."
- "It has become more remote and digital and due to less interaction, things are a little tough in the market."
- "Defining new objectives adapted to the situation."
- "All offline events transformed into online ones and it's not an ideal way to build solid relationships."

HOW COVID-19 HAS CHANGED THE WAY YOU OR YOUR FIRM DOES BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CONT.

- "Hours and hours of Zoom and Teams meetings."
- "There's a lot less hand-shaking."
- "Everything is digital, we can reach more people with our webinars. Social media and digital marketing are more relevant. Also, as we are in a crisis, we are more able to see our client's needs, so it's easier to sell a specific service for that need."
- "We had to reduce our fee structures and also offer fewer new additional services"
- "Lawyers were left to their own resources, having to be more creative and trying to strengthen relationships with referrals."
- "It is more remote inevitably and hence new approaches evolved. Personal interactions are increased."
- "It's a challenge. New technologies are being implemented in our firm to augment business development such as VOIP and management systems"
- "Less personal contact, no travelling to clients"
- "The firm didn't have a team dedicated to business development and it does now."
- "There are fewer distractions during Covid because I don't have to give any speeches, host events, no need to be in group meetings, networking sessions, lunch meetings, etc. The single biggest tax on a lawyer's time needs to be work on client projects, yet it was often these events. Now I can focus on clients and I have more of them. I appreciate the chance to focus inward and see I don't need the rest too much."
- "BD is the same- it's about relationships. Covid just forced us to think of new ways to build relationships."

HOW COVID-19 HAS CHANGED THE WAY YOU OR YOUR FIRM DOES BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CONT.

- "We have experienced a technological innovation that wouldn't have happened without COVID. We have seen a development that would have taken 10+ years. We have implemented an online payment portal and CRM software this year."
- "Reinforced the importance of connection, looking after clients strengthens our relationship and referrals follow."
- "Firm was already virtual, minimal changes."
- "We used to work as a team when we were developing business, now its harder since we are on our own. We haven't had the time to develop a business plan to generate new clients."
- "We have worked hard on developing our client lists. Including target clients, clients we want to keep, and clients to cross-sell. We also have developed campaigns to strengthen our appearance in the current market."
- "I see this new "time" as an opportunity to develop new ways of contacting people. We have been online with different people much more than before."
- "It has become necessary to rely on digital channels and to be innovative and search niche market gaps. Networks have become increasingly important as well."
- "I feel for a corporate lawyer, having one-on-one meetings physically is very important in order to crack a potential engagement. Meeting potential clients virtually does not even come remotely close to in-person when creating an impression or having a great conversation. People are now simply constrained to have only virtual meets due to COVID-19."

CONCLUSION

FROM NEXL CEO, PHIL THURNER



Legal Business Development is becoming increasingly important for lawyers who want to drive firm growth and client relationships.

2021 is going to be an interesting year for law firms. We have all transitioned into a digital-first world, making now the time to not only adapt and move “in-person” activities online but capitalise on the opportunities this change brings.

Referrals have been mentioned as one of the most successful ways of winning new clients and we can expect this to continue. Lawyers need to grow a network and increase referral activities, both with lawyers locally and from other jurisdictions.

Lawyers are no longer bound by geographic restrictions and can take advantage of technology and online platforms to build strong referral relationships – as part of your business development strategy.

2021 is also the year to focus on your lawyers. Your firm’s biggest assets are your lawyers and the relationships they build.

It should be your obligation and your duty to enable your lawyers to build relationships to help your practice grow.

The right way to scale your business development effort is to empower your lawyers. Your business development team should act as guides to help your lawyers achieve the firm’s business development goals.

The right system will enable you to reach your revenue goals. In 2020, we saw firms focus purely on preserving revenue instead of pushing and investing in growth. It might sound counterintuitive, but it is during this economically challenging time that you have to invest even more into growing your practice. 2021 should be the year you move from a reactive business development approach to becoming more proactive.

Cross-selling is another opportunity for law firms. The survey shows that firms have already started to focus on increasing collaboration between practice groups. Did you know that the average client only buys 1.6 services from their law firm? Think about how many practice groups and services you offer and the opportunity at hand to increase the number of services clients buy from you.

There are three main levers to increase revenue from existing clients. Change how many services they buy from you, how often they buy those services from you, and how long they are going to buy them from you. 2021 should be the year you start working on all 3.

NEXL CRM



Attract high-value clients



Nurture relationships



Increase cross-selling

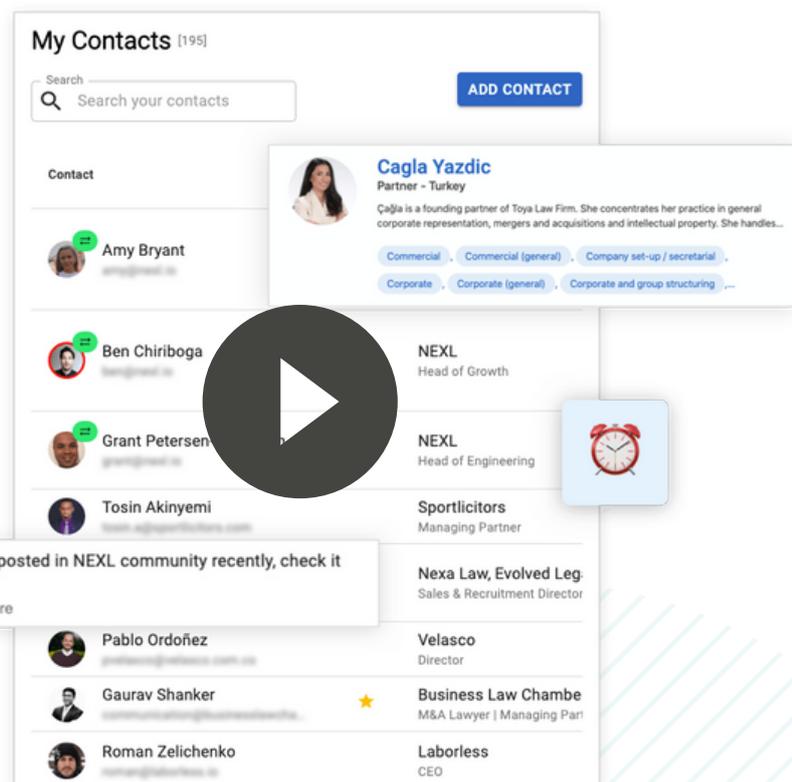
The only legal CRM that builds itself for you

Automated, no-data-entry Client Management System designed to help your law firm win more business, with less work.

Unlike complicated legacy CRMs today, NEXL's CRM was designed to be an easy to use and easy to implement solution, that gives your law firm everything it needs — without needing your lawyers to enter data.

Cross-Selling made simple

NEXL helps you understand your client activities across your entire firm to easily identify cross-selling opportunities. NEXL shows you which practice groups are talking to which clients so you can make the right introductions to increase revenue from existing clients.



Get a free NEXL CRM demo

MEET THE TEAM

THE NEXL TEAM BEHIND THE 2021 LEGAL BD SURVEY AND
REPORT



Amy Bryant

Product Marketing Manager & UX Designer



Ben Chiriboga

Head of Growth



Phil Thurner

Founder & CEO of NEXL





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