



AND THE ART OF LEGAL NETWORKING

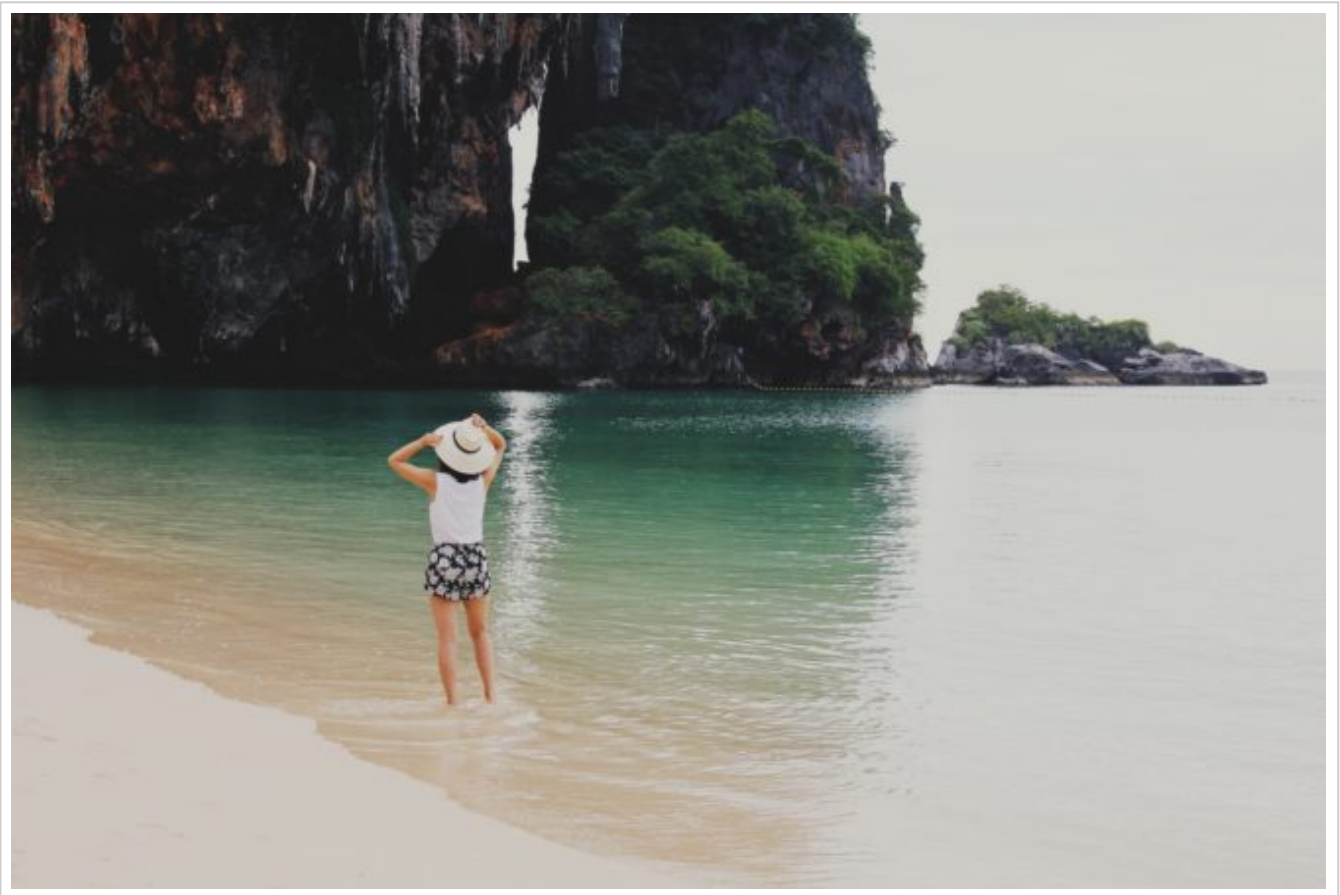
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INSIGHTS & COMMENTARY ON
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Nine Business Development Tips to Practice on Your Summer Vacation

BY LINDSAY GRIFFITHS ON JULY 6, 2017



Who wants to think about work while they're on vacation?

I know, the idea is to get AWAY from work. And I fully endorse that. But there are two things I know to be true:

- You never know who you'll meet, and where – you may meet a potential client or referral source while you're sitting on the beach!
- Sometimes, doing thirty minutes of some type of work during a vacation day actually can make the rest of your day feel MORE enjoyable. (I didn't make this up – Gretchen Rubin, of the Happiness Project, figured this one out)

With those two things in mind, you can start implementing the following business development tips during your summer vacation and set yourself up for future success!

- **It's a marathon, not a sprint.** While it would be nice to meet someone and immediately get business, that's unfortunately not how it usually works. Sometimes, the stars align, but generally, BTI's GC Survey tells us that it takes 14 "touchpoints" before someone will respond to you. So take a few minutes to map out a list of your top prospective clients and set up a calendar reminder, in whatever way works for you, to follow up with these individuals to offer value in some way on a regular basis.
- **Carry business cards.** While some people will say that business cards are going the way of the dodo, I've found that people do still exchange them. But make them memorable by having one that's unique (try square instead of rectangle), colorful, and has just the most relevant information about you on it. Make sure you always have one or two with you (and a pen) while you're on vacation.
- **Your elevator speech isn't about YOU.** We've all heard so much about having our 30-second elevator speeches "at the ready." And this is true. But for lawyers (and for other professionals!), these thirty second commercials should explain how you solve the problems of your potential clients. It tells people a) who your clients/potential clients are, b) what you can do to help them, and c) why that person should keep talking to you. David Ackert suggests that you finish the sentence "I tend to help clients who are..." Spend a few minutes making sure your elevator speech meets these criteria.
- **Business development is about the pre-, during and post-engagement.** Don't think that all you have to do is show up to be successful, especially these days, when there are so many research tools available. Let's look at two opportunities:
 - Opportunity one: It may seem that there's no way to be able to do any pre-vacation research here, but not so! If you jump into your LinkedIn and do a search in your contacts by location, you can find out whether anyone you know is located in the place you're headed to. They may have some tips for what you should see or do there, and you can offer to meet up for a drink (on you) to reward them for their insights. It allows you to deepen a relationship, and it's focused on the social side, so you're not really taking away from your vacation.
 - Opportunity two: Let's say you meet someone while sitting on the beach, or playing mini-golf, and they might be a potential future client or referral source. Since you have

business cards with you, you've already exchanged those, and you should make sure that you follow this up by connecting with them on LinkedIn. Add them into your calendar of follow-ups so that you also have them scheduled for additional opportunities to add value in the future as well.

- **Social media can supercharge your efforts.** We referenced this above already, but it's truly the case. Use social media to connect with anyone that you've met – if the connection is strong enough, you can reach out on Facebook, or if you're more comfortable leaving it on LinkedIn, that's okay too. Don't forget that these platforms (including Twitter, Instagram, and others in that list) are also great for research purposes too. They can help you identify additional points of overlap in your network, ways that you might be able to add value for that person, or other opportunities for follow up and conversation. Yes, it's a little bit like stalking, but just think of it as doing your due diligence. As long as you're up front with the person when you talk to them – “hey, I looked you up on LinkedIn, and saw that you enjoy rowing. I rowed at university too!” – it won't be as weird.
- **Act like a host.** This is a situational tip, but it can work well. Perhaps you're having a staycation this year or you've made a few new acquaintances in the destinations you're visiting. Why not act like the host for an evening and bring everyone together? Introductions across your network can be very valuable to those within your network, which increases your value to them as well. Host a dinner party at your home, and bring together people that haven't met before, but may have the potential to do business together at some future point. The idea here is not to make this like a business meeting, but to introduce people that you believe will also genuinely like each other – the evening should, above all else, be fun for everyone involved (since it is your vacation after all!). The same applies for any group you meet while traveling. Bring people together over food and drinks and help to make the connections that may lead to future business, or just may lead to better friendships.
- **You have two ears and one mouth. Use wisely.** Epictetus said “We have two ears and one mouth so that we can listen twice as much as we speak.” This is essential when developing business, because listening allows you to better identify your companions' problems, issues, and needs so that you can better assist them. It's also been found that when someone spends time listening to someone, rather than telling them about themselves, the speaker finds the listener to be highly intelligent. Show off your intelligence by doing more listening than sharing. Vacation is a great time to practice this, because you can test yourself with people you've just met, who may or may not be future business prospects.
- **Practice your handshake.** I can't tell you how many times I've recently shaken hands with someone who has a weak handshake. While you don't want to pull someone's arm out of their socket, having a firm grip when you meet someone projects confidence. If you're not sure whether your handshake is up to snuff, check with a trusted friend and get them to help you work on it until you're confident that it projects the image you'd like people to associate with you when you meet them.

- **Learn about cultural differences before you go somewhere new.** You may assume that everyone does things the way that you do when traveling, but whenever you're visiting a new city, it's worth doing a quick google search to see whether there are cultural norms that you need to be familiar with surrounding meeting new people. Things such as handing your business card to someone from Asia with two hands, and not putting their card away immediately are fairly important. And while Asian business people are savvy enough to understand how westerners handle meeting someone new as well, it can show a great deal of respect to research their cultures before traveling there to get the general list of dos and don'ts. This applies for any country you're traveling to.

What are some other business development tips you're going to try out this summer?

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