



AND THE ART OF LEGAL NETWORKING

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INSIGHTS & COMMENTARY ON
*Relationship Building
within the International
Lawyers Network*

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Networking Matters For A Long-Term Legal Career

BY LINDSAY GRIFFITHS ON JANUARY 27, 2016



One of the things we like to talk about here at Zen is networking, so today, I'm bringing in guest blogger, [Thom Singer](#), to offer you some words of advice while I'm off doing some networking of my own (as well as learning) at this month's Legal Marketing Association NJ lunch!

If you make networking a second tier priority, you will have second tier results.

Growing a legal practice can be an all-encompassing experience. Many lawyers put so much attention into their current client matters that they fail to honor the time to make, grow and keep their business relationships. The immediacy of issues surrounding today's problems leaves little space for things that do not create instant billable "ROI."

The pressure inside law firms to meet an annual billable requirement takes away the focus from all other activities. With limited hours in the day, and the intensity necessary to be a successful attorney, it becomes easy for a lawyer to push the cultivation of relationships to a "nice to have" activity instead of a "must have activity."

While time is limited and precious, it is important for lawyers to remember that all opportunities come from people and that law is a relationship business. If you have the right network in place, most of the challenges faced (including developing future business) will quickly be solved through a few well thought out phone calls.

However, you cannot wait until you have a need to try to build a network. If the only time you show up at business events or place calls to those you already know is when you have need, you will find it difficult to get the responses you desire. Building long-term and mutually beneficial relationships takes time, and even in our fast paced digital world, you cannot create a friendship through sending a LinkedIn request (or a bill).

It is through people that you can quickly find new business or other things required to have a successful practice. There are no short cuts to meaningful connections with people who know, like, and trust you as a person and who understand your business.

Lawyers often make the mistake of only wanting to network with other lawyers. While this is a good idea for certain practices, if you only socialize with others who hold JDs you will never have a well-rounded life. There must be diversity in your network. This also goes beyond the types of jobs people have... and includes diversity of race, religions, sex, and age.

Out of sight is out of mind. Even when you are busy serving your existing clients, you cannot disappear from your extended business community. There will come a time when you will need other people, and you cannot expect them to be sitting around waiting for your call. You must cultivate the connection always and everywhere.

Make networking a priority and stop over-thinking the value of every person you meet. The best business

leads often come from places you least expect. When is the last time you really made networking a priority? If you cannot think of the answer then you cannot complain about your results.

Thom Singer is experienced in legal marketing and business development. He is the author of eleven books including “The ABCs of Legal Marketing” and regularly speaks at law firm retreats inspiring attorneys to embrace their brand and increase their sales. He also teaches lawyers ways to improve their presentation skills as the firm’s secret weapon for business development success. More information at www.ThomSinger.com.

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