

10 Traits of Business Development Rock Stars

In the course of our consulting, we've talked with a ton of attorneys and other professionals about their practices and the skills needed to build a profitable and sustained book of business.

Regardless of practice area, firm size, or geography, we've discovered certain attributes and talents common to those who exhibit business development excellence – traits that *anyone* can adopt and implement.



Business Developer Rock Stars (“BDRSs”)...

- 1. Know the difference between marketing and business development.** Although important, marketing tactics such as advertising, direct mail, article writing, and speaking engagements don't close business, and BDRSs know it. The purpose of marketing is to foster new personal relationships and conversations, which then allow BDRSs to close deals.
- 2. Don't rely on good work to build their business.** It's not enough to be a competent lawyer, accountant, financial advisor, or other professional. To BDRSs, doing good work is the only price of admission.
- 3. Welcome help from others.** While confident in their abilities, BDRSs are always open to improving their efforts and appreciate coaching, introductions, tools, and technologies that can help them become more efficient and productive.
- 4. Use their curiosity to identify and create opportunities.** To present a solution and offer insight, one first has to determine an underlying issue. BDRSs are motivated to understand industry and business trends, social and cultural changes, and – above all – their clients' unique wants and needs.
- 5. Actively listen and make others feel heard,** BDRSs consciously engage with people by making eye contact, nodding their heads, turning their bodies toward their audience, and being in the moment. Instead of listening to the sound of their own voices, they seek out the ideas, opinions, and feelings of others.
- 6. Make connections for themselves and others.** BDRSs know that business development is about conversations – the more relationships they initiate, the more conversations they'll have. At the same time, BDRSs look for patterns and

similarities between network connections, and make introductions so that others can initiate conversations, identify business opportunities, share hobbies and interests, and cultivate their own relationships.

- 7. Maintain relationships and rekindle ones that fade.** BDRSs leverage different means of communication (personal meetings, phone calls, handwritten notes, email, social media, newsletters, etc.) to regularly “touch” their networks, changing the method and frequency depending on the type and stage of each relationship. When a relationship has faded, they aren’t afraid to reach out and rekindle it. To BDRS, every contact has the ability to generate business, and connections are seen as valuable assets that must be managed.
- 8. Know when and how to “ask.”** Consistent with active listening, BDRSs understand the distinction between asking for business and asking to build a relationship. By intuitively reading people and situations, they recognize how and when to sell, collaborate, or empathize.
- 9. Got your back.** If you’re a client, prospect, colleague, or referral source, BDRSs routinely earn trust and instill value by demonstrating care and concern while offering assistance, whether or not it relates to their business.
- 10. Don’t make excuses.** Above all, BDRSs are accountable – to themselves, their clients, their networks, their colleagues and organizations, and their families. They maintain this accountability by committing to a daily business development regimen, tracking their progress, and adjusting their strategy as necessary. There is no snooze button in the BDRSs’ world, just a positive attitude and a dedication to their goals and objectives.



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