

[Client Development: One Incredibly Important Skill to Work On](#)

By [Cordell Parvin](#) on June 3rd, 2014

What is the client development skill you should be working on?

STORYTELLING



I will be sharing thoughts on storytelling this weekend with the women lawyers who will gather in Fort Worth for our Third Annual Outstanding Women Lawyers Roundtable.

If you are surprised I would pick that skill to work on, take a look at this Entrepreneur Magazine article: [Why You Need to Become a Better Storyteller](#) or this HBR Article which includes an interview with screenwriter Robert McKee: [Storytelling That Moves People](#). (I wrote about Robert McKee and his well known book in: [What is one “key” ingredient to your success you are overlooking?](#) Here are just a few important lines from the HBR article:

Persuasion is the centerpiece of business activity.

I think we would all agree with that premise.

Most lawyers cannot or will not give a presentation without PowerPoint slides. The authors believe that is not a very effective way to persuade people. They say:

The other way to persuade people—and ultimately a much more powerful way—is by uniting an idea with an emotion. The best way to do that is by telling a compelling story.

So what is a story? The authors answer:

Essentially, a story expresses how and why life changes.

How do storytellers discover and unearth the stories that want to be told? This is one I will let you read for yourself and figure out how you can best use the points for your own client development. At the risk of being “touchy-feely,” go back to when you were young and told and listened to stories.



If you want more help or ideas, take a look at this Copyblogger post: [The 5 Things Every \(Great\) Marketing Story Needs](#). Start with Number 1. The mistake many lawyers and law firms make is to make themselves the hero in the story. It is far more effective when your potential client is the hero.

Cordell M. Parvin built a national construction practice during his 35 years practicing law. At *Jenkins & Gilchrist*, Mr. Parvin was the Construction Law Practice Group Leader and was also responsible for the firm’s attorney development practice. While there he taught client development and created a coaching program for junior partners. In 2005, Mr. Parvin left the firm and started Cordell Parvin LLC. He now works with lawyers and law firms on career development and planning and client development. He is the co-author of *Say Ciao to Chow Mein: Conquering Career Burnout* and other books for lawyers. To learn more visit his Web site, www.cordellparvin.com or contact him at cparvin@cordellparvin.com.