

[10 Days to Launch Your Client Development Efforts: Day 8](#)

By [Cordell Parvin](#) on July 17th, 2013

A young couple started a business. They went to visit four lawyers who had been recommended. The first three lawyers made a pitch and tried to "sell" the couple. The fourth lawyer began with this question:

Why are you starting a business?

You can read about that story in: [Win More Service Customers: Engage People, Not Prospects](#).

I never tried to "sell" my clients and I only made "pitches" to clients when we responded to an RFP. I learned early in my career that I needed to learn how to ask questions and listen. So, on your 8th day, I want you to focus on learning to ask great questions that you can use when you meet with a potential client.



Let me share a story with you to illustrate the point. Several years ago I received a telephone call from the US head of a Dutch construction company. I had met him previously when the Dutch

company was a joint venture partner with one of my clients. I had helped the joint venture recover additional funds on a tunnel project.

When I received the call, I learned that the Dutch company was now in a joint venture with two other companies building a complicated bridge and tunnel project and was struggling because the design was defective.

I learned the joint venture was interviewing lawyers/law firms to help them prepare and prosecute a claim for additional compensation. I was invited to meet with the joint venture a week after the telephone call.

What questions would you have asked during this telephone call?

What homework would you do between the telephone call and the meeting?

I learned I would get a tour of the project and then would meet for an hour with the principals of the three companies who would decide which lawyer/law firm to hire.

How would you start the meeting?

What questions would you ask during the meeting?

How would you end the meeting?

How would you follow up after the meeting?

If you do not have good answers to my questions and want to learn more, I recommend reading Andrew Sobel's eBook: [Power Questions to Win the Sale: Overcoming Nine Critical Sales Challenges](#). After you finish reading it, come back to the questions again.

Cordell Parvin Blog

DEVELOPING THE NEXT GENERATION OF LAW FIRM RAINMAKERS

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.