

# 10½ questions to ask yourself while you're putting your BD plan for 2019 together

## Tenandahalf top tips: October 2018

We are coming to the time of year when partners, directors and heads of department (not to mention your marketing and BD managers and directors) will be asking for your personal business development plan for 2019. It's easy just to re-date last year's plan but if your plan is going to generate the results you want it to, you'll need to do a little more.

With this in mind this month's Tenandahalf Top Tips cover some of the questions you may want to consider while you put your plan together.

### 1. Are you just going to cut and paste your previous plan so you have a plan to hand in?

If you are, our advice would be to save yourself the time! Your 2019 plan needs to have a focus; cut out the stuff that hasn't worked in the past or reduce the stuff that no longer generates the level of return it used to.

It's essential to identify the stuff that's worked well and either do more of it or refresh it a little so it generates an even better return in the coming year.

### 2. Do you have meaningful objectives?

By meaningful objectives we don't mean 'increase market awareness' or 'boost profile' we mean having numbers you can measure your progress against throughout the year.

The first number is often your billing target from which you need to work backwards enabling you to see what is needed to hit that number:

- Who are your key clients and how often do you have to see them?
- How often do you need to see your main referrers and how many new referrers would you benefit from meeting during the year?
- How many articles do you need to write?
- How many speaking slots will you need to deliver or how many networking events will you need to attend to meet enough new contacts to move your practice forward?

### 3. Are you committing to what you can do or what you think you should do?

As we've said far too many times over the last 13 years, there is a default setting across the professional services that BD has to be about networking and networking has to be about formal networking events.

No!

There are a number of other activities you can pursue that could be much better suited to your particular skills including writing, presenting or client development.

The rise and rise of available (and free) tech is only going to increase your options and we are seeing firms making very productive use of short video, webinars, YouTube and brand new social media platforms as they increase their presence within their particular markets.

But that's not to say networking doesn't have a part to play, it most certainly does just don't list out the same old events; think about the networking you like to do and start to consider less formal or even self-run events that will allow you to showcase the very best of you.

#### 4. Are your ideas practical and implementable?

Taking an ambitious stance may look OK when you're putting your plan together but the truth is over-stretching yourself is often the biggest blocker to progress.

Far too many people put down huge lists they think will impress their bosses but when they revisit their plan, all these lofty targets will do is scare them! As a lawyer, accountant, patent or trade mark attorney or barrister you have a day job so make sure what you are committing to is do-able in the time you have available for marketing and business development.

Similarly, you need to be mindful of the available budget. Hiring out the Albert Hall and London Symphonic to replay the Last Night of the Proms or leasing Club Wembley for the upcoming internationals for your clients and contacts may sound great, but is it practical?

"Live within your means" may not be the most exciting thing your mum ever told you but it is very much a rule to live by BD-wise.

#### 5. Have you included activities for all 3 of the potential sources of work?

However complicated people try to make BD (and they do try to make it complicated) there are only 3 potential sources of work:

- Your existing clients
- Your contacts
- New clients

The ratio you need to attend to each will vary from profession to profession and from practice area to practice area but your plan will need to address building visibility with all 3 groups if you are going to maximise the likelihood that your plan will deliver the results you want.

#### 6. Are you doing things you actually enjoy?

The simple fact is if you choose to do things you like doing, with people you like, you will be more likely to attend and be a lot more relaxed and therefore a lot more engaged when you do.

The first choice to make is are you a networker, a speaker or a writer. Then decide how you like to approach your area.

If you're a networker, is the Chamber of Commerce the right forum? Or would you do better tasting wine, playing 5-a-side, taking cookery lessons or weaving baskets in the traditional Himalayan way?

If you're a speaker, do you prefer roundtables, panel discussions, traditional seminars or external rather than internal events? Or are you happier switching on the PC, plugging in your headphones and doing something online?

If you're a writer do you prefer the quick conversational blog, an in-depth technical white paper or a top tips/FAQ type piece?

## 7. How are you going to fill in the cracks?

Although your plan will include a degree of 'face time', how are you going to stay visible to clients, contacts and targets in between face-to-face meetings?

Try to think about how you are going to incorporate your social media channels and your firm or chambers' e-marketing to stay visible in between meetings. Also think about whether you need to schedule regular email or phone contact with your most important clients as part of your plan.

## 8. Who do you want to meet?

Admittedly this should probably be higher up the list but ...

When you're putting your plan together stay focused on who you want to meet and who you want to generate enquiries from. Knowing who you actually want to influence will make it easier to choose the right events, the right publications and the right speaking slots.

It'll also make your BD much more time and cost efficient as you'll immediately be able to dismiss any activities that don't reach your target audience.

From a general point of view you may want to meet specific professions or particular industry sectors or reconnect with your clients.

From a more specific point of view you may have actual names you want to target so social media and their own websites will give you a steer as to where you are likely to run into them.

## 9. What are you going to do internally?

The main focus for pretty much every professional services organisation we've ever worked with is still very much on the external which is a little peculiar as the most likely source of new work is probably your colleagues.

While you're putting your plan together have a think about the various ways you can get in front of the your colleagues (your firm/chambers' social events, departmental meetings, partners' meetings, 'show and tell' style get togethers for people at certain levels etc.) to remind them what you do, who you do it for and remember: internal marketing is marketing too!

## 10. Who are you going to work with?

Whether you are planning joint client visits, informal networking with clients, self-publishing a special report or just going along to a new networking group, it is always much easier (and much less likely to fall by the wayside) if you agree to go with a colleague or contact.

Think who you could buddy up with on each of the activities you're proposing, tell that person and your BD will immediately become more dynamic.

## 10½ Are you willing to try something new?

Sometimes the best reaction (and the best return) comes when you add something brand new to your plan, something you've never done before and – preferably – something that will take your clients/contacts/targets by surprise.

Earlier this Autumn we brought together a few of our music-loving clients and embarked on a punk walking tour of Soho.

OK, it may not be what one would first think of when it comes to marketing in the legal, accounting and architectural sectors but everyone who came (including us) had a brilliant time and stayed out chatting long into the night.

This is exactly what *proper* networking is all about.

Or, if you are more of a content person, why not revisit the best blogs and articles you and your team produced during the year and band it together as a 2018 retrospective you can send out?

If your BD is going to be successful, it has to keep developing so please make sure 2019 is the year you try something new!

## How can we help your firm grow?

If you would like to discuss any aspect of your firm, practice or chambers' marketing or business development please email [claire@tenandahalf.co.uk](mailto:claire@tenandahalf.co.uk) and book your FREE initial 45 minute consultancy.



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