

10½ things you can do to help your business development on the run up to Christmas

Tenandahalf top tips: December 2016

As we start the descent into the Christmas period we have inevitably started to hear too many people tell us that they'll be putting their BD on hold because "it's too busy" or "I'm too busy" or "people don't want to hear from you at this time of year" or 100 other connotations of the same.

Hogwash. This is the best time of year for BD and so that you can derive the maximum benefit from the upcoming BD season, here are 10½ ways you can take full advantage while your colleagues and competitors sit back and twiddle their thumbs.

1. Send a real-life, hard copy, good old fashioned Christmas card

Nothing says 'insincere box ticking exercise' like an electronic Christmas card.

If you genuinely want to send season's greetings to your A list clients and contacts, buy a box of Christmas cards (in the majority of cases you'll be making a charitable donation by doing so which is even better), handwrite them and pop them in the post.

People like to have something tangible and react much more positively to something that you have put some thought into and taken time and effort over.

2. Host something small and informal

On the run up to Christmas we're all awash with invites to formal cocktail parties and receptions.

Some you need to go to, some are even enjoyable but for everyone there is only a finite number of times you can straighten your dickie bow and paint the smile on.

Instead of falling into step with the norm, set yourself out by hosting a small, informal meet-up in your favourite bar or pub. Invite half a dozen people that a) you know you need to see and b) you know will get on and could well be of useful for the others to meet.

3. Use the season as an excuse to "have that drink"

If you're anything like me you will have a small nagging voice at the back of your brain reminding you about all of those people you've told yourself you need to catch up with but you've never quite got round to doing anything about it. Use Christmas as the excuse to get in touch and invite them out for a coffee or a drink and a chat (on you).

4. Finally try that new place you've been told about

Over the last year have you been told about a restaurant "you simply must try"? Well, here's your chance! Identify your highest billing client from 2016 and invite them, letting them know that this place has come highly recommended and you couldn't think of a better person to try it out with. No one could refuse such flattery in an invitation.

5. Take full advantage of the last Friday

The last Friday before Christmas falls on the 23rd which is perfect BD-wise. Most people will see the week through before heading off for their holidays. It's also likely to be a very quiet day work-wise so why not take advantage? Hire off a decent sized room in your offices, get some mince pies and other refreshments and invite your clients and referrers in to bring Christmas Eve in with you.

6. Use breakfast strategically

As this is a time of year when people are out and about (and could be feeling fragile as a result), stand out from the crowd by inviting people out for a bite before work rather than after work.

Although it may say more about the Tenandahalf team than I should perhaps be revealing ... we're massive fans of a bit of breakfast (especially if we've been BDing the night before) so it's an invite we always welcome!

7. Plan your Jan

As things do start to slow down, use any gaps between fee earning to look forward to January. Make a list of who you need to see, why you need to see them and then send the invitations out now.

Just completing this one small, quick and painless exercise will mean you'll come back in the New Year more organised and with more purpose and you don't lose the first chunk of January playing catch up.

8. Apply a lighter touch to your e-communications

This is always a bit of a tricky one as many within the professional services get a little nervous when the potential to add a bit of humour to your marketing communications is mooted. However if you are going to do it (and find out for yourself that it is an approach that's actually generally well received and can be applied to future communications on a more consistent basis), why not do it on the run up to Christmas?

So what could you do? Some of the good ones I've seen include an employment team who packaged up all of their best Christmas party horror stories, a divorce team who put out a list of the best known Christmas family dramas (Den and Angie topped that particular list if you're interested) and an accountancy practice who sent out a link to an Elf game then kept a leaderboard for the week before Christmas that ended up with a few Christmas gifts being dispatched for the winners.

9. Apply a crystal ball to your e-communications

If the idea of inserting a bit of humour does leave you cold, perhaps you could try a bit of clairvoyance?

Based upon your knowledge of your sector/s or geography you could make some predictions as to how you think things might develop during 2017 and highlight the potential red flags that could appear and affect your clients and contacts.

My only advice is, based upon 2016, you may want to stay well clear of predicting any results linked to referendums or elections!

10. The end of the year is the best time to look back ... and forward

Given we're ticking into the end of the calendar year, offering to meet up with your key clients and referrers to take stock of the last year and plan for the coming year is totally logical.

It also gives you a stronger hook to use to land a December meeting and, as the person you're meeting knows they'll leave with something of value, a stronger likelihood they'll accept your invitation and who knows ...

... you may even leave your review meetings with some new work.

10½. Just make sure you do something!

OK, there's quite a few ideas here but don't allow that to be an excuse to do nothing - choose the one or two that are most applicable to you, your clients, your practice and your network and just do them.

They all work and they will all impact positively on your personal marketing.

Size 10½ Boots are a specialist business development agency that works solely with professional service firms.

If you would like to discuss any aspect of your firm or Chambers' marketing or business development please call email claire@tenandahalf.co.uk and book your FREE initial 45 minute consultancy.



Our 2016/17 'Best of' Christmas Annual is now out.

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