

“How can I do business development from home?”



Part 1: How can I get more from my phone?



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“How can I do business development from home?”

During these challenging times it's easy to put business development to one side.

Surely everyone has enough to worry about without you bothering them?

And, from a more practical perspective, as you can't get out to see anyone surely you can't do any business development anyway?

Actually, yes you can.

And business development has never been more important.

Although the working world may look very different, when we come out the other side of this the one thing that will never change is that your clients and contacts will still be the core of your practice. They'll maintain your billings and they'll generate the new opportunities that will help you return to where you were.

Therefore, maintaining those relationships has to be your priority.

The only problem is while we're forced to work from home we can't get out to see anyone, we can't have coffee/lunch/drinks and we can't host or attend events. This means that if you are going to protect your practice, you'll need to tweak your tactics.

In this series we're going to look at the 3 business development activities we can all do from home:

- Doing more on the phone
- Doing more content
- Doing more on social media

In the first part we look at how you can get more from your phone.

1. Doing more on social media

“What business development can I do on my phone?”

Over the last few weeks the marketing tool we've seen make the biggest difference is the phone. Although it's something we all have in our pockets, it's often overlooked because our default is almost always email. However, the phone is now the most efficient and cost-effective way to maintain some sort of 'face time'.

In general terms there are 2 types of BD you can do on the phone:

1. Professional

Your clients are rightly worried at the moment. Their worlds are volatile and their futures are unpredictable. However, like you they are desperate to return to some sort of normality and will need your support and your advice to make that happen.

You can play an invaluable role in that process. By taking the time to discuss these plans with your clients, you will be able to add enormous value by providing a different perspective, sharing relevant insight and best practice and helping them set their priorities (and you'll no doubt be involved when those priorities are put into practice).

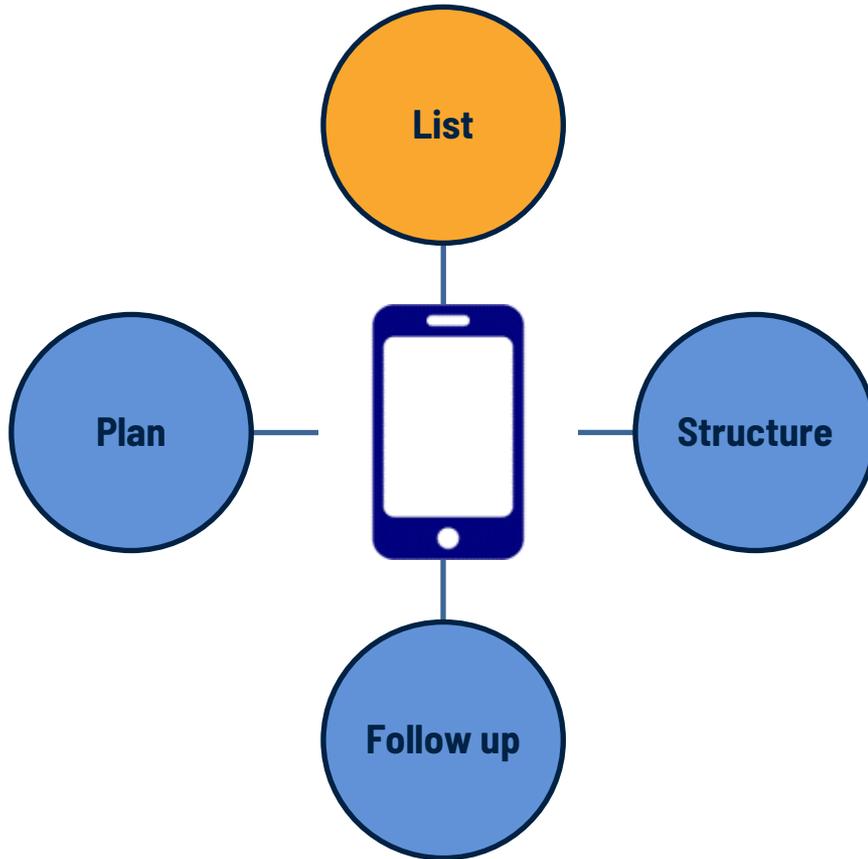
And if you're also having similar calls with your professional contacts, you may even uncover some new opportunities which will help relieve short-term billing pressures.

2. Personal

You know your main clients and contacts well so why not just call them to see how things are going? It may be that you end up talking about something totally unrelated to work but who cares? The goodwill you'll engender just by being there will strengthen your working relationship and give you the perfect place to pick up once business resumes in a more recognisable context.

In our own business we've ended up swapping Spotify playlists with clients, joining in with quizzes and even playing darts via Zoom! Are there any business benefits? Maybe very few but it has definitely helped us maintain our most important relationships.

1. Doing more on the phone



As with all things in business development, getting the best results from your phone requires a process and we'd suggest that process is made up of 4 steps:

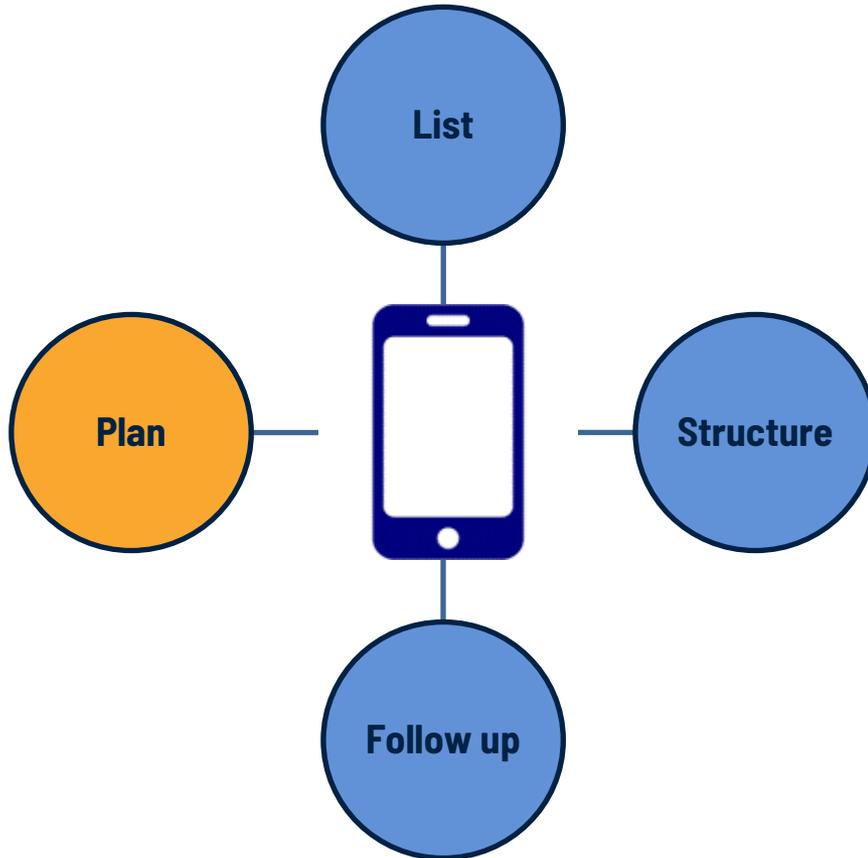
1. List

Working through a list makes everything easier. You'll know what you need to do, what you've already done and what to do next.

That's why the first step has to be to put your list together and here are some of the criteria we'd suggest you consider:

- Who has instructed you, referred work or introduced you to a potential opportunity over the last 12 months?
- Who do you know but either haven't seen for a while or think there may be value in getting to know better?
-
- Who do you actually like and enjoy speaking to?

1. Doing more on the phone



2. Plan

Before you call anyone on your list, decide what you want from the call. Knowing where you want to end up will help you direct the call and make sure it ends with a concrete follow up step.

The first thing to do is work out your reason for calling. It's always better to have something stronger than "I just fancied catching up" in your back pocket. Try to find an article you can share or a question you can ask and include that in the email you send to set the call up.

With regards to planning the structure of the call, we like the 'ODE' model (and it works for any type of meeting, not just a phone call):

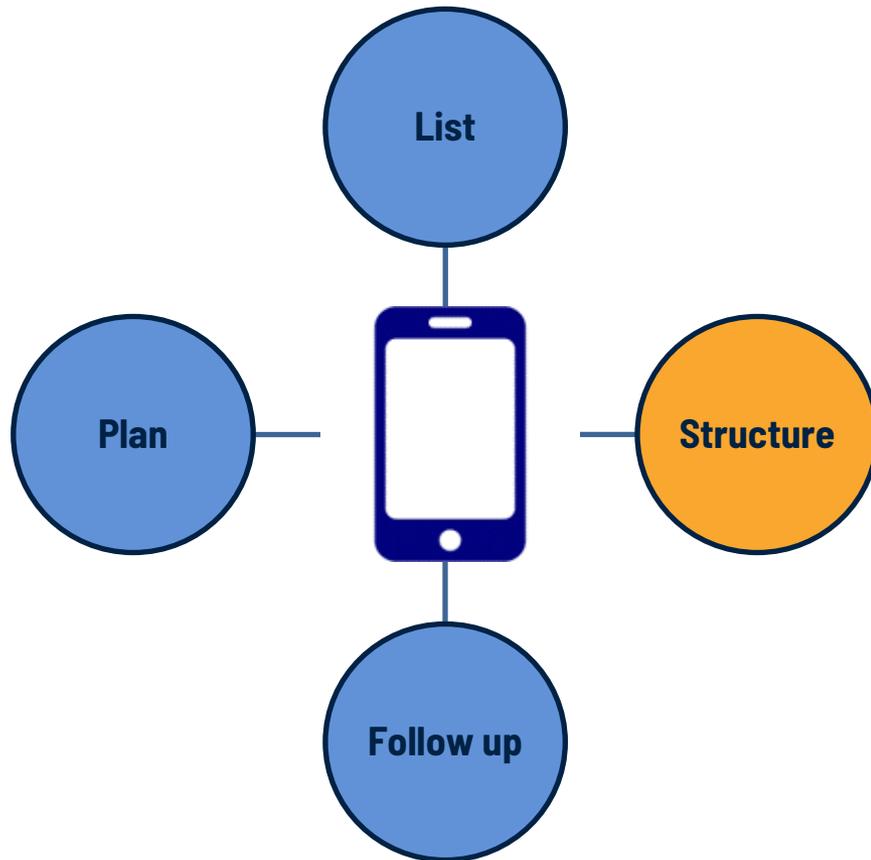
O stands for the optimum outcome (e.g. an instruction)

D stands for the desired outcome (e.g. agreeing to a follow up video call involving a few more people from each side)

E for essential (e.g. you've caught up and reminded them you're still out there and thinking of them)

And lastly, play to your client/contact's preferences. If you know they're a morning person, ask for a slot in the morning. If they prefer Facetime, suggest Facetime. The more relaxed your contact is, the more you'll get out of the call.

1. Doing more on the phone



3. Structure

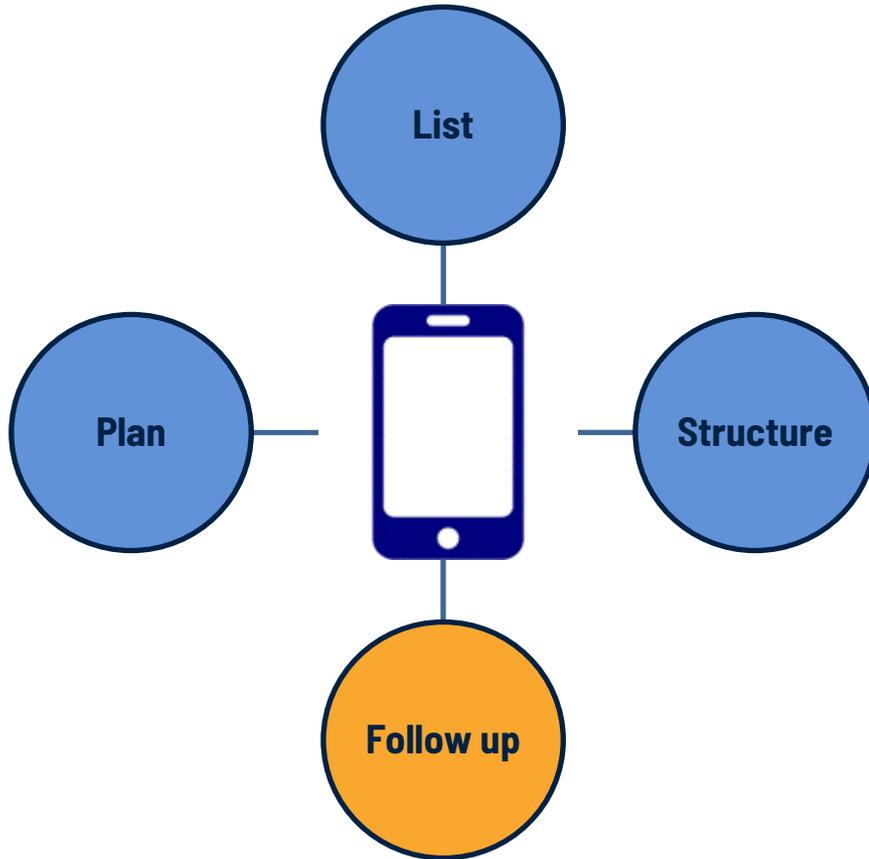
In terms of the call itself there are a few key pointers to bear in mind:

- This is about chatting not selling. Overtly trying to sell something (or pumping your contact for introductions) will turn them off and undoubtedly do more harm than good.
- The best conversations involve you doing 30% of the talking and 70% of the listening. This will vary from person to person but bear it in mind – the closer you are to achieving this ratio, the easier the follow up will be (and we'll come back to that in the next section).
- Always finish by agreeing next steps and when you'll speak again.

And, from a physical point of view there are several things you can do during the call to improve your delivery:

- Standing up puts less pressure on your diaphragm and puts your head in a more elevated position. Both will impact positively on your voice making you sound clearer and more confident.
- Using your hands will amplify the messages you're trying to convey. It doesn't matter that the other person can't actually see you (unless you're on a video call) – they'll hear it in your voice!
- Energy, enthusiasm and a positive tone of voice injects even more confidence into any conversation.

1. Doing more on the phone



4. Follow up

One phone call in isolation won't deliver results. Each call is a single step in a longer-term process so having a reason to follow up and keep nudging each conversation forward is crucial.

Telephone calls are no different to face-to-face meetings. There always has to be a follow up step, even if it's only a quick email summarising what's been agreed and who needs to do what by when. The good news is if you listen properly during each call, you will hear the follow up step.

To make sure that happens we'd suggest you get into the habit of using secondary questions during your conversations.

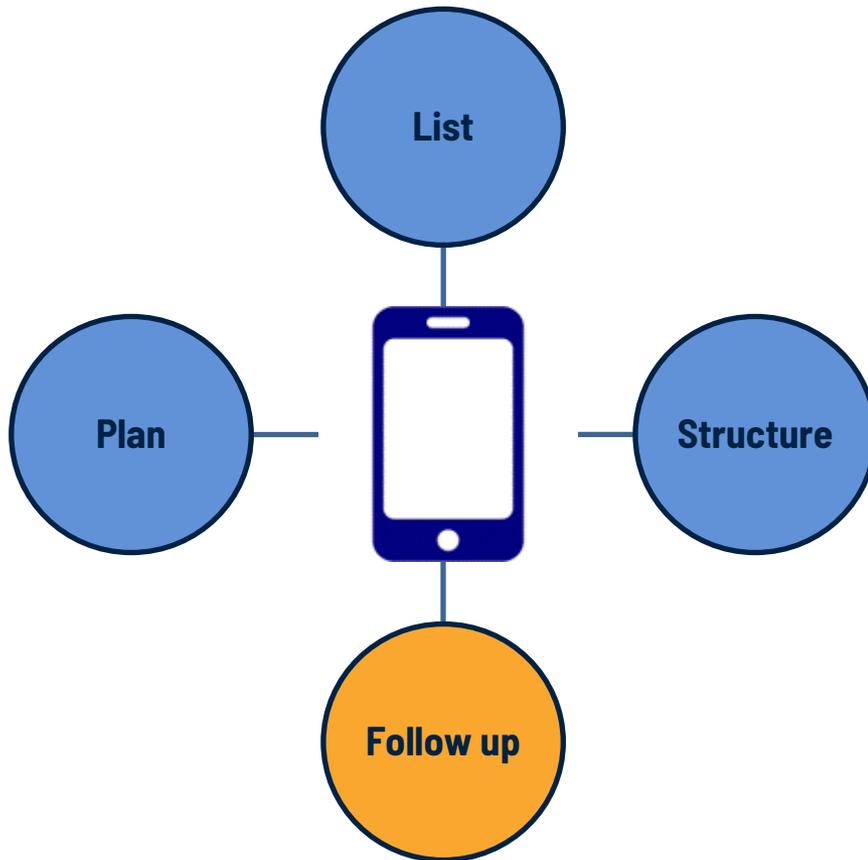
For example, if the person you're speaking to says "it's very difficult to do business at the moment", ask why. Once you have their answer, ask a few more questions:

"What would make it easier for you?"

"What can I do to help?"

This is when you'll hear what to do next and that might be ...

1. Doing more on the phone



- They want you to jot down a few bullet points on how to tackle a specific issue in an email.
- They may want you to share an article, a blog or a report you mentioned.
- They want an email introduction to someone who might be able to help with a specific issue they're facing.

And remember, the follow up needn't be (and seldom is) anything to do with business. They may just want you to email over a link to an App, a Spotify playlist or a holiday resort website.

So there is absolutely no doubt as to what will happen next, when you finish the call confirm what you're going to do next and when you're going to do it.

It is then down to you to do that by the agreed date.

We can't stress how important this is. If you don't deliver, you risk undoing the goodwill your call should have generated.

1. Doing more on the phone

“What other business development can I do on my phone?”

Your phone can do much more than make calls. Here are a few more phone-based BD ideas we've seen work really well over the last few weeks:

WhatsApp

WhatsApp is no longer a novelty; it's now firmly accepted in business circles so why not set up some new groups of colleagues, clients and contacts who share professional or personal interests? It'll not only give you an excuse to stay in touch, it'll also give you an opportunity to make a few new introductions which will reflect well on you.

Share

The lockdown has generated endless jokes, memes and videos but, for obvious reasons, you need to know your contacts very well indeed if you're thinking about sharing these!

A much safer option is to share music. While we're working from home most of us are listening to music and now we're a few weeks in, we could probably do with some new stuff. If you know a client or contact likes their music, why not share a few tips, playlists or potential new sources?

Run a quiz

Online quizzes have gained in popularity over the last couple of weeks – especially when they're run on a Friday afternoon – and given how many free online platforms are available, it's really easy to put a quiz together and promote it via social media straight from your phone.

1. Doing more on the phone

“What other business development can I do on my phone?”

Take a video

As they say a picture is worth a thousand words and it's repeatedly proven that people really would prefer to watch you for a minute than plough through a few hundred words covering the same topic.

Again there are loads of apps you can download to your phone to help you put a video together but based on what we're seeing on LinkedIn, it looks like the video function on an iPhone is more than fit for purpose.

Record a podcast

While you have a few more minutes in the day why not record yourself talking about an issue and package it as a podcast? Don't worry about having access to professional recording equipment, we record our CoffeeCast using the voice memo function on an iPhone (although admittedly it does then need to be topped and tailed on Audacity).

However, podcasts seem to work better if there's a few of you in the discussion so if you want to give podcasting a go, Zoom could be a better option.

Run your social

Apps like Hootsuite allow you to tee up the following day's social posts from your phone while you're watching TV or having a sit down in the garden in the evening.

Similarly using the various social media apps from your phone rather than from your desktop makes it quicker and easier to have a scroll through and post, like and share whenever you have a few free minutes.

“How can I do business development from home?”



If you need any help doing business development from home, you will find more practical tips, ideas and suggestions at www.howtodobusinessdevelopmentfromhome.com and www.tenandahalf.co.uk.

If you have any more specific questions on the different activities covered by this series of special reports (or about anything else related to marketing and business development) please email us at info@tenandahalf.co.uk.

If you would like to book our free 30 minute 'taster' webinar on the different ways to do BD from home, please send an email to info@tenandahalf.co.uk with the subject line 'BDFH webinar'.

And if you'd like to keep up with our latest Top 10½ Tips, blogs and videos search [#Bdfromhome](https://twitter.com/Bdfromhome) on Twitter and LinkedIn.



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