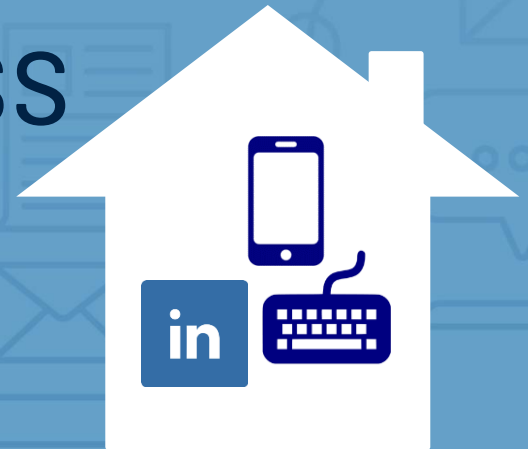


“How can I do business development from home?”



Part 2: How can I get more from my content?



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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

But in this part, we look at creating new content.

2. Doing more content

“What business development can I do with content?”

At the moment people are going to be looking for answers to the very specific challenges they're facing and the chances are, they'll start their search online. This means that if you are going to position yourself as a potential source for those answers, you need to be producing a regular flow of content.

A successful content marketing strategy has to be a conveyor belt; you need to keep the blogs and articles coming. With a trickle of new content the chances of you hitting the right person with the right subject at the right time is pretty much zero.

However, your content will only be read if it adds value. Every piece you write needs to address your audience's needs and provide advice they can use to improve their/their business' current position.

If you're in any doubt as to whether your latest idea will add value, why not pitch it against our RSVP checklist to make sure the topic and angle you're considering is:

Relevant (to your audience)

Strategic (it'll help your audience take the next step they need to)

Valuable (it'll tell them something they don't know, something you know will help them)

Practical (it'll tell them exactly what to do next ... even if that's to call you for more information!)

And once you have your new pieces of content, you need to do everything you can to promote them. We can't second guess when your audience will be looking at their email, LinkedIn or Twitter and if they are, whether they'll have the time to click on the links. This means you need to put out every link on every channel a few times.

In terms of the types of content you can produce, we split it into 4:

- Articles for your website/marketing
- Articles for referrers
- Podcasts & webinars
- Editorial for the trade or local press

We'll look at all 4 in more detail in this part of the report.

2. Doing more content

For the
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For
contacts

Pod &
Webinar

Trade
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Although content has a huge part to play at the moment, you'll undoubtedly have noticed it's a somewhat competitive space. Many firms are publishing new content daily. This has saturated the market (and the search engines) making it very difficult to be heard.

To combat this we'd suggest 2 things:

Avoid 'covidwashing'

Covidwashing is the practice of shoe-horning a mention of the virus into every headline. At the start of May there were more than 3 billion blogs indexed with a COVID related headline which gives you an idea of the scale of that competition. Try and write more practical pieces based on the issues you know your clients and prospective clients are currently facing.

Experiment with new formats

Instead of just blogging, try top tips or 'listicles' ('x things to do when ...') and mix up short form FAQ type pieces with longer form articles. Better still, chase external publishing opportunities to supplement your self-published content (we'll come back to that).

In terms of where to find inspiration here are a few proven sources of new content ideas:

A recent client question

For us this is the best option. Think about a particularly tricky question a client has asked you recently, write down the question (that's now your title), then answer it in two paragraphs (that's your blog). Because you'll already know the answer, it'll be quick to write and because your clients are asking that question, it'll play better in the search engines and generate more enquiries.

The news

The reason for using what's in the news is simply that if it's in the news, it's in the public eye. This means people will be searching online for more information so if you're 'appropriating' these headlines, there is a far greater chance that they'll stumble on your piece.

However, there's only one story in the news at the moment and there's no need to re-report that. Instead, pick out the aspects of the current crisis that are most relevant to your clients and make some practical suggestions that will help your readers minimise or manage that particular issue.

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Everyday life

Has anything happened to you that you could relate to your practice? Have you heard any stories from family or friends that are vaguely relevant to what you do for clients?

Your last technical update

As a solicitor or an accountant you have to keep up with your CPD. Is there anything in the last update that your clients, contacts and targets could benefit from?

You may need to dumb down the source material a bit as your blog is meant for an audience outside your profession but, by using Tenandahalf's CAR structure, you can extract the main point and provide the Context, tell your reader how it will affect them and explain the Action they'll need to take to get the Result they want.

Search engine searching

When you search on any of the key words associated with your practice, Google now handily gives you a list of all of the main questions being asked about those topics. All of these can easily be turned into a blog or an FAQ. And because you know this is exactly what people are searching, the finished piece stands a much better chance of reaching the maximum number of readers.

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Like you the other professional service firms you work with regularly will also have newsletters, websites and other marketing platforms. Offering to write for those will:

1. Allow you to reach a new but relevant audience.
2. Give you another reason to get in touch with a contact and once that conversation starts, who knows where it may lead.
3. Garner some goodwill and provide you with a stepping stone to explore more ways to co-operate as normality starts to return .
4. Cut a corner for you because if they publish your piece, the next logical step would be to ask them to write for yours!

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In the first section we talked about alternative ways to repackage your content. Aside from the written options, you may also want to consider webinars and podcasts.

With seminars currently out of commission, more and more firms are running webinars. However as there are so many on offer, your need to make sure yours stand out.

Firstly you need to choose your topics well. People want to learn so be prepared to go niche and dig deep when you do.

Then choose your format. Instead of just talking over slides, think about running interactive Q&As or panel sessions for clients, contacts and targets working in the same sectors or areas. This is really easy to organise using platforms like Zoom and Teams.

Better still, this type of webinar also ticks another BD box – ‘virtual networking’ events. Your guests will be able to talk to each other and, if there’s common ground, carry on their conversations offline which again will reflect well on you.

Podcasts are also proving popular but again your title and topic need to be a bit different if you’re going to catch the eye. Your delivery will need to be slick and here are a few tips that may help with that:

Choose the right tech

This will be pivotal to the success of your podcast! We’d always recommend using a digital audio recorder but, given current restrictions, we’ve found the record function on Zoom is more than fit for purpose.

Choose a co-host

Conversations are repeatedly proven to be more engaging and more effective than monologues so choose someone you have a good rapport with to sit in with you. Co-hosting also makes the whole process a lot less daunting as you can give each other a bit of mutual support.

Prepare, prepare, prepare

Before you do anything, create a structure for your podcast. Pick a topic, list out what you want to say then split who’ll say what on a piece of paper so you can use it as a prompt during recording. And if you’re going to have a guest, share your questions in advance – the better prepared your guest is, the better the podcast will be.

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Limit the length

Once you have your plan, you'll know how long the podcast should be. Stick to those timings, don't be tempted to waffle or extend it for the sake of it.

Sound enthusiastic

Your podcast is supposed to give you a way of trying to get new people to start new conversations with you because they liked what they heard. If you're monotone and a bit flat, that's not going to happen so be prepared to inject a bit of enthusiasm.

Tell, do, repeat

As you would with traditional presentation, tell your audience what you're going to cover, cover it and then end by repeating what you've covered. One way to tackle the last stage without over engineering it would be to say "so what are the key points to take away ...?" then list them out.

It's about your subject, not you!

Don't spend a lot of time telling personal anecdotes or showing off what you know over and above the topic at hand in micro-detail; stick to the topic at hand and keep the conversation moving.

Avoid yes/no questions

If you want to provide real value you need to ask your co-host or guest questions they can answer meaningfully; don't lead them into blind alleys. Use prefixes like "Tell us about...", "What do you think about ...?" and "Give us examples of..."

Post-production

Boosting the sound quality and adding an intro and/or outro will all add a bit of gloss to the finished article. Audacity is good (and free) but a quick Google search will show you all of the viable freeware options.

Don't be afraid to do it over

The beauty of digital recording is it's free so if you don't like it, do it again (or do some bits again and edit them in).

Promote it

Once you have your finished file you need to get it out into your universe or it's not worth doing! There are loads of different podcast platforms which will help you reach a new audience and give you the links you'll need to promote it on social media.

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Research titles/editors

As we do have a little more time in the day at the moment, take the time to research the publications your clients are most likely to read and the websites they are most likely to go to for information.

For commercially focused practices, this only requires a very quick Google search on 'magazines for [relevant sector] in the UK'. For private client practices, you could look up either specialist personal finance publications or the most prominent local papers, magazines and websites.

And when you find the right titles, jot down the editor's name and email address as they will be your first point of contact.

Find an angle (RSVP)

As with all content marketing, your idea has to be of value to the publication or website's readers. It has to teach them something they didn't know but something they can use to improve their lives or their business. We'd suggest the decision making process is two-fold:

- A. Pick a hot topic you know is worrying your clients
- B. Reassess it in terms of our RSVP model

Be prepared to pitch

Once you have your angle and your editor's contact details, drop them an email. This email should outline the issue you've identified, explain why their readers will be interested in finding out more and end by offering to write that article for them.

Be prepared to try again

Your initial approach may have been missed for a hundred different reasons but no response doesn't mean no interest. If you don't hear back immediately, wait a week and resend the email with a polite note to confirm your original email was received and reconfirming your enthusiasm to write the article.

And try again

It may be third, fourth or even fifth time lucky but given the potential prize, it's worth it! And if 3 emails go unanswered we'd suggest you pick the phone up.

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Promote the links via social media

Make sure you promote the links to your article via all of your social media channels and – as with your ‘firm’ content – put it out several times at different times of the day and ask your colleagues to like it and share it to boost your audience.

Add it to your website

All publications have different rules for republishing articles but if you ask your editor what their policy is, you will be able to promote the original version of your article on your website. It'll most likely be that you can reproduce the first couple of paragraphs with a link back to the publisher's website but as Google loves a backlink that is actually a big marketing win.

Newsletter and e-marketing

Make sure you add a link (or better still a link behind a jpeg of the magazine's cover or websites' homepage) to your next e-marketing piece. Being associated with an external publication will only add to your credibility.

'Saw this and thought of you'

Email the headline and link to your article to your relevant clients and contacts with a personal note saying "I recently had this published and thought it may be useful for you ..."

Stay in touch

Your piece has been published but that publication or website hasn't stopped! They'll still need more content for future editions so every couple of months go back to them with a new idea. And use that email chain or that phone call to position yourself (or a colleague) as someone to invite to host a webinar or guest on a podcast.

“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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