

10½ things we've learned about BD since March 2020

When we were told to work at home unfamiliarity and uncertainty temporarily put paid to all but the most essential tasks. Anything more peripheral – including BD – was placed on hold while we set up home offices, plugged in our laptops and tried to get something close to a sturdy Wi-Fi connection.

However, it soon became clear that if our practices were going to have a future, BD couldn't be shelved for long.

As a result, we quickly learned how to adapt our approach to business development and this new way of winning work has only continued to evolve over the last 10 months. We thought it would be worth sharing the 10½ things we've learned whilst working (from home) with lawyers, accountants, patent and trade mark attorneys, barristers and architects.

1. Personal networking hasn't stopped, it's increased

Our personal working relationships are still our most productive sources of new work so it's crucial we keep our conversations with our clients and contacts going.

To do that we'd suggest you adopt this simple 4-step model:

1. Make a list of the clients, referrers and contacts you want to focus on
2. Find a credible/relevant reason to get in touch with them to get the ball rolling
3. Send your invite incorporating both your chosen reason for getting in touch and 2 suggested dates/times
4. When you get to the end of your list, go back to the top

2. Clients aren't too busy to take your calls

If we have learned one thing over the last few months, it is we are all in this together. We all need support, we all need a sounding board, we all need an (occasional) agony aunt!

Don't be shy about calling your clients, they will be more than happy to talk to you and will value the additional perspective you can give them.

3. Concentrate on positive reinforcement

Your clients have had just as rocky a time of it as we have so when you are contacting them focus on the positive. Talk about the future, find out what your clients will need to navigate towards that future and provide the advice and reassurance they need to get there and enjoy it.

4 Personalise your virtual events

We're all on a lot of video calls every day so if you want to catch up with clients, make sure they are more than just another Zoom call. This is a time for the personal touch. Tailor your events to your guest list by choosing the time of day and the activity that suits them best.

And be creative. Your attendance will improve if your event is the one that stands out. All this requires is a Google search because over the last 6 months an entire virtual hospitality industry has sprung up.

5 Make your content valuable

Simply shoehorning 'COVID' or 'coronavirus' into your headlines does not make for a good blog. Instead think about the work you're doing for and the conversations you're having with clients. What are their issues? What are they asking you?

Using these angles will make sure your content is practical, relevant, valuable and easily digestible.

6 No more 'we're with you' emails

Mercifully, this disappeared VERY early on! Maybe it was because we all received so many in our personal inboxes, maybe it's because common sense prevailed.

Whatever the reasons we now know that this type of insincere, untargeted and anodyne marketing does nothing but irritate your recipients!

7. Make more use of 'saw this and thought of you'

Regular readers will know that we're big fans of the 'saw this and thought of you' style email but while we've been working remotely it's become even more powerful.

Clients like to hear from people outside their usual circle of family, friends, and colleagues. If those messages relate to something that's directly relevant to their business or their personal interests, they will be read (and appreciated).

8. Presenting on video is different to presenting in person

When you're presenting virtually you will need to do things slightly differently. Based on our experience, these are the tweaks we'd suggest:

- Share your materials in advance so people can pre-prepare questions
- As people are less comfortable speaking up on video, it's your job to encourage them
- Try to start your dialogue with your audience before the event (probably by email)

- Concentrate on facilitating a conversation not delivering a lecture
- People have more limited attention spans and more distractions when logged in virtually so finding ways to engage them is even more crucial
- Stick to a maximum of 60 minutes or break longer sessions up with intervals or exercises
- Learn your tech. Where do you need to angle the camera? Can you record your session so you have video you can use to market more sessions?

9. Webinars aren't the only option

Webinars are one option but as there are so many alternatives, try to mix your seminar calendar up a bit by experimenting with virtual roundtables, downloadable videos, podcasts and informal 'ask the expert' sessions.

10. And when it comes to content, blogs aren't the only option

Content production has mushroomed since March 2020 and people simply don't have the time (or the inclination) to read everything so try some alternative ways to get your message out there.

You could use video (whether that's 'talking heads' or animated infographics) or audio (sound files and podcasts) so people can take what they need in instantly consumable formats.

10½ Make it easy on yourself by collaborating

Your referrers and contacts need to stay visible too. Like you they will be producing events, content and presentations so why not ask if you can collaborate with them?

It'll get you in front of their audience and, better still, it's easier for you as they'll be doing all the organising!

Can we help your professional service firm grow?

Size 10½ Boots are a specialist marketing and business development agency that works solely with the professional services.

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



www.tenandahalf.co.uk
info@tenandahalf.co.uk