



# Tenandahalf's Christmas Annual 2021/22



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The [Tenandahalf Christmas Annual](#) brings together some of the best received pieces of practical business development and marketing advice we published in various places during the previous year.

We're sure you'll find something you can use to help your professional services firm grow.

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Helping smarter professional service firms [grow](#)

# January

## How did it feel? The BD lessons can lawyers and accountants take from surviving 'Blue Monday'?

Originally published as a blog at [tenandahalf.co.uk/blog](https://tenandahalf.co.uk/blog)

Your first Monday back at work wasn't as bad as you thought, was it?

Blue Monday (as the annual return to work is now known) is now purported to be one of the toughest working days of the year. However, I'm willing to bet the reality was you did wake up on time, you did successfully navigate your in box and you even survived to tell the story last night.

The Blue Monday survival experience can actually help your business development and here's how:

1. The reality of meeting new people at events is never as painful as the thought of it
2. Communicating any new year price increases will be understood by your clients ... after all, they've probably just increased theirs too!
3. Picking up the telephone to reconnect with a client, referrer or contact you've not spoken to for a while won't be that tough either

The lesson? Success is mostly about adopting the right mindset; face the fear and just do it!

# February

## If you're a lawyer or an accountant what makes a good blog?

This was originally published on our dedicated content marketing site [blogsforlawyersandaccountants.com](https://blogsforlawyersandaccountants.com)

For law firms and accountancy practices blogging offer enormous benefits. You can reach new prospective clients, share best practice, offer high-level advice, answer frequently asked questions, build profile in your chosen markets and position yourselves as experts within your local area or the industry sectors you specialise in.

But most of all, if your blogs are good, you can generate enquiries.

But with so many other lawyers and accountants now running blogs what does 'good' mean? Here are a few tips from our experience of both helping lawyers and accountants blog and of writing blogs to order for our clients.

### 1. Have an opinion

Whatever branch of the professional services you are in, remember first and foremost that people come to you for your advice. This means that while you can't actually give advice in your blogs, you can let people know what you think about the topic you're writing about.

If you sit on the fence, you will not convince your readers that you are the right person to approach when certain situations arise.

### 2. Use anecdotes

You understand the vagaries of tax legislation, employment law or landlord and tenant disputes but your audience doesn't. That's why they come to you!

Instead of exploring the technical aspects of your practice area, try to use anecdotes to illustrate the points you make. This will bring your points into focus for your readers and show that you have a genuine understanding of the issues your clients face (and of the solutions required to successfully navigate those situations).

### 3. Be creative in your approach

Try to do things your audience may not expect you to by using your broader appreciation of your target markets. For example, if you have a hospitality team, why not list inventive fundraising ideas you've seen?

#### 4. Be creative with your formats

Not every blog needs to be written. If you have someone in your team who's happy to be filmed, why not have them do a short piece to camera? Or, perhaps you could turn some of your top tips into a short animation or infographic? People assimilate information in different ways so mixing up your delivery will pay you back ...

... and Google LOVES video!

#### 5. Make your blog easy to read

Good blogs are easy on the eye. Be concise, keep sentences short, break the text up with sub-headings and images and make every new point a new paragraph to add in as much white space as possible.

If you can, try and use bullet points too. Not only does this break your text up even more for the reader (and drag their eye to your bullet points if they don't feel like reading the whole thing) but again, it will positively influence your Google rankings.

#### 6. Be totally targeted

Don't try to make every post for everyone. You will get much better results if you focus on specific issues and specific audiences with each post.

If you organise all of your willing bloggers across the firm into a rota you will cover every practice areas every month so all of your audiences are satisfied.

#### 7. Maximise your shelf-life

Unless you take them down blogs last forever.

This means it's always smart to pick evergreen FAQs whenever you can. For example, the dangers of a DIY will is good for private client practices, the hidden costs of moving are good for conveyancers and 10 ways to avoid a contractual dispute is a good subject for commercial litigators.

If you can't think of any evergreen topics you can either have a brainstorm on the questions you're asked more often at your next departmental BD meeting or just Google it.

Google now has a wonderfully helpful function whereby when you search using a question part of the results is showing you the most closely related questions other people are searching. Everyone one of those will make a perfect blog heading!

## The Virtual Barrister: A practical guide to remote business development

This article was originally published in *The Barrister* (but the tips we included are equally as applicable to solicitors, accountants, patent and trade mark attorneys and architects)

Although the current restrictions have hit us all hard, of all the professions we work with we believe barristers have been hit hardest. Not only have the courts had to all but close their doors in favour of virtual hearings but the volume of available work in many areas also has reduced. This has predictably had a direct effect on many barristers' fee income.

Usually less work, more pressure on maintaining revenue and greater price sensitivity would push barristers to get involved in business development. The only problem is the current restrictions have hit our ability to market hard.

With the majority of barristers now working from home, contact with instructing solicitors during client conferences or at court has been decimated. Similarly, with chambers and law firms unable to receive visitors, the option to run seminars or any other educational sessions in the traditional way has also disappeared.

We can't even have coffee, lunch or drinks with clients because those venues are all closed too!

So, with all these hurdles, how can barristers (and clerks) do the meaningful and productive business development required to protect their practices and, by extension, their chambers?

The good news is there is still plenty you can still do. Better still, what you can do is just what you've always done. It just needs to be done a little differently.

If we think back to March 2020 when the first lockdown hit, there was a widespread opinion that

business development would have to cease for the foreseeable future. After all, if we can't see anyone, there's nothing to do.

Mercifully, the economic reality quickly kicked in; if we just pull the shutters down and hope for the best, the chances our key relationships would be sitting patiently until the world resumed would be somewhat fanciful (particularly given there would be other chambers courting your clients as they sought to protect themselves).

Action had to be taken. That action generally split into 3:

1. Move everything onto Zoom.
2. Ramp up your production of new content.
3. Overinvest in social media.

None of these were wrong and doing something is always better than doing nothing. However, with the benefit of hindsight it's easy to see that with every chambers jumping on all 3 options at once, The Bar became a very busy marketplace very quickly.

The upshot was:

1. Everyone very quickly tired of Zoom (with a few exceptions).
2. Our inboxes bulged with more and more notifications of new articles, blogs, white papers and webinars.
3. Social media creaked under the weight of so

many increasingly active users making it hard to sort the wheat from the “I’m here because I was told to be”.

This meant that while self-protectionism demands activity, some careful tweaking needed to be made in terms of the way these three core marketing platforms were used. It is those tweaks that I’d like to share here.

## What should you do in person?

Just as they would be during more normal times, your primary source of work will always be the people you already know. However, as we can’t physically spend time with our clients and contacts, we need to employ some slightly different ‘virtual’ networking techniques.

For simplicity I split virtual networking into two, formal and social.

The formal side still includes networking although in our experience how much barristers get from networking now depends more on the platform the event it run on rather than how good the group is. Very early on, we learned that large events run on Zoom weren’t actually that good. Buffering, time delays and a lack of structure meant that all too often people either ended up talking over each other or conversations were hijacked by one or two people.

Since then, many groups have switched to more suitable platforms like Remo. These are as close to the traditional networking experience as we’re likely to get for some time. They allow you to ‘move table’ to maximise the number of people you meet, pre-organise meetings with guests of interest and use the ‘breakout rooms’ to have 1on1 conversations.

The other part of the formal side is seminars. Again, the approach has had to change slightly since March 2020 when seemingly every chambers rushed online to host webinar after webinar. As there were so many, people soon tired of them. This forced us to find more engaging and more interactive delivery mechanisms like panel discussions and Q&As.

Pre-recorded sessions have also grown in popularity. These allow your audience to log in and watch at a time convenient to them. As your guests maintain control of their attendance, stats suggest pre-records are actually more popular than ‘live’ events.

Meanwhile, the social side (which is often the most productive) relies on you finding reasons to get in touch with your most important clients and contacts so you can catch up. While we can do virtual coffees/drinks via Zoom or Teams, if you’ve been on video all day a good old fashioned telephone call is often preferable.

If you would prefer to meet in small groups (perhaps with two members of chambers and three solicitors from one firm that you work with regularly), you could look at organising one of the many ‘virtual hospitality’ events that have sprung up since March 2020. These are hugely varied now and, depending on the time of day and the preferences of your guests, you can choose from wine tasting, gin tasting, cookery lessons, murder mysteries and escape rooms to name but a few.

The good thing about these types of events is having a shared activity overwrites the need for small talk and as it’s enjoyable (and not *another* Zoom call), yours will be the conversation your clients remember most fondly.

## What should you do in writing?

I know this goes against the grain of every piece of PR and content marketing advice but I’m going to start with what you *shouldn’t* do in writing, shoehorning the words COVID or coronavirus into every headline.

If you take a few seconds on Google you’ll see there almost 6 billion blogs using those words.

This means that unless you have the SEO resource of Amazon or the BBC behind you, yours is very unlikely to make the top 500,000 in the search results.

Instead, try and think of the points of law you are working on most often and the types of questions you are being asked most frequently by your instructing solicitors and lay clients.

These should be your headlines and your content will be your answer. This approach works because if these are the words that keep coming up, they will be the words both your existing and prospective clients will be searching on. This means addressing them will infinitely improve your chances of being found online.

The sheer volume of new content being produced also dictates the length of your blogs and articles. Try and keep your pieces to between 500 and 750 words so they are long enough to attract the search engines but short enough to read quickly. If you have more points to make, you can always run a series of blogs. A series prolongs the shelf life of what you want to cover and reduces the need to keep coming up with new ideas.

## What should you do online?

*... to find out what business development you should be doing online (and to pick up even more virtual BD tips) please email us at [info@tenandahalf.co.uk](mailto:info@tenandahalf.co.uk) and we'll send over the complete PDF.*



# April

## Tenandahalf's LinkedIn Tool Kit

This extract is part of a special report designed to help clients get the most out of LinkedIn. If you'd like a copy of the complete report, please email [info@tenandahalf.co.uk](mailto:info@tenandahalf.co.uk)

### What are the different types of updates you can post on LinkedIn?

#### 1. Your or your firm's content

This is the most obvious option. If you write something for your website (or for anyone else's website) or one of your colleagues posts a new blog, share the link. To make your content work, you need to drive traffic to it and getting as many people as you can to share the links has to be the first step.

Also, when more people actively engage with a piece of content, it will immediately become more visible to the search engines and to the search function on LinkedIn. This will help the piece reach a whole new audience.

#### 2. News from your practice area

At the moment there are new updates and new directives coming out hourly never mind daily. People need to be alerted to the ones that will affect them.

If you can keep up with the latest developments as they're reported by the BBC, the trade press or your professional institute or association, those headlines and links will make practical posts your clientbase and your market will appreciate.

#### 3. News from the sectors you work in

If you focus on specific industry sectors, keep up to date with the latest from the relevant trade publications. Again, many of the headlines and links they publish will make good posts.

To make it easier for you to manage, sign up to their free e-newsletters and then you can share the link to your social media accounts in seconds via the share function on your phone. You can also set up Google alerts ([www.google.com/alerts](http://www.google.com/alerts)) using the key search terms relating to your sectors so that even more relevant headlines and links are sent straight to your inbox each day.

#### 4. Good news from the news

If you see a 'feel good' story that relates to your practice, your clients or your local area, why not post that? We're all fed up with bad news at the moment so share something that'll make people smile.

## 5. Something from your day

If anything interesting happened to you during the working day, why not post it? Sometimes it's these more unexpected offhand posts that elicit the best response.

## 6. Something from your inbox

Has a contact, a client or any other source sent you something you found useful/interesting/valuable? Use it as a post! If you appreciated it, many of your connections will too.

## 7. Something you had to look up

If you were asked a tricky question that forced you to open a book or go online or to a colleague to find the answer, why not share it?

If you prefix it with something like 'here's something I didn't know ...' or 'they say you learn something every day ...', people will recognise that reading your post will teach them something a little different ... but almost certainly valuable.

## 8. Re-share your contacts' updates with a comment

If one of your clients or professional contacts shares something you like, why not re-share that with your audience? You can even add something like 'this caught my eye and I thought it may of interest to my connections ...' to justify why you're doing it.

The good thing about sharing a contact's post is that, thanks to the laws of reciprocity, they'll either reply to thank you or feel indebted to share one of your upcoming pieces. Both options will boost your profile.

## 9. Disagree with an update you've seen

OK, this does take a little bit more confidence than the other options we've shared here but it is effective! Obviously, you can't be rude or dismissive, but you can politely disagree and offer your own point of view.

People expect social media to tell them things rather than debate things so if readers see a different point of view, it can often encourage greater engagement.

## 10. An online poll

If you want to get people involved in your posts, how about running a poll? Both LinkedIn and Twitter have easy-to-use polling functions and once you have the results, reporting them will make another post!

## 10½. Something a bit lighter

Your posts don't always have to be strictly business-related.

We're definitely not advocating a quick video of you doing shots or arm-wrestling the dog but if you want to share a song that popped up on Spotify, your new personal best for 10k or a photo of you topping a ton on the dartboard, do it.

Not only do people need a bit of light relief, they also need a reminder that irrespective of what ype of solicitor you are, you are still very definitely you.

# May

## When is a webinar not a webinar? When it's a meeting!

Originally published as a blog at [tenandahalf.co.uk/blog](https://tenandahalf.co.uk/blog)

Something I seem to be sharing a lot at the moment are my practical tips on how to get better outcomes from online events.

I have learned a lot from facilitating more than 200 virtual events in the last 12 months but the main thing is when you're planning an event, you need to be clear whether you're planning a webinar or a meeting. Making this distinction (i.e. when is a webinar not a webinar) is essential because:

- Your audience have to understand what their role is before the event
- You can meet your desired outcome and set next steps to work towards
- You can communicate with more impact so you showcase your expertise to maximum effect

### What is the difference between a meeting and a webinar?

Meetings make for more interactive sessions. You can encourage lots of audience participation or break your session into smaller groups.

The type of events that lend themselves to a meeting set up are 1on1s, informal conversations, business planning, panel conversations and workshops ...

... as long as everyone has their video on!

Webinars are geared for larger audiences. Typically, attendees don't interact with one another and cannot be viewed, and one or two people will do all the speaking although the audience can engage via the chat function.

### How can you get the best possible results from a meeting or webinar?

To get the best possible outcomes from your virtual event here are some practical tips that will help with your planning, delivery and follow up:

#### Planning

Planning a successful online event requires 5 key ingredients ...

### *1. Know your audience*

What are their needs? What is their current level of understanding? What format – meeting or webinar – will work best for this group?

### *2. Set objectives*

Set SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Timely) objectives at the outset

### *3. Choose the right video platform and format*

For example, if you are not using a slide-deck Teams might be preferable to Zoom. Or if you're planning a large event (100 plus) and want your guests to interact, Remo would be preferable to Zoom. Or if a panel discussion involving a number of experts is the best option, try using the 'meeting' mode on Zoom or Teams.

### *4. Share your materials in advance*

This make engagement easier as your attendees will know what will be covered on the day and can plan their questions in advance.

### *5. Promote your event on social media (and more widely using Eventbrite)*

Your success will be dependent on grabbing your audience's attention so choose an engaging title, articulate the benefits of attending and be clear who the event is aimed at.

## Delivery

When it comes to delivery, the 5 key factors are:

### *1. Know your tech and invest in a professional set up*

The key areas to focus on here are the quality of your audio and camera, the lighting and your clothing (colours work best and avoid green if you are using a green screen).

Corporate branding looks more professional. When using Zoom you will need a green screen to avoid a psychedelic appearance! Teams has an inbuilt green screen but will reverse your logo so Zoom is better if branding is important.

### *2. Engage, engage, engage*

Irrespective of your audience's prior knowledge, make sure your slides are visually engaging slides if slides are required. Cut out the bullet points and replace them with images, schematics, photographs and words in boxes.

Live polls and asking questions also help but when you ask a question, be patient and wait for a response. Avoid the temptation to fill the silence as silence conveys authority and confidence. Asking people to switch on their videos at the beginning will also help your engagement levels.

### *3. Develop a voice for radio*

Getting and holding your audiences' attention online is difficult. You have to compete with more distractions (phone, email, family, pets and home deliveries) than you would in person.

This means you need to come across as enthusiastic, warm, interesting, confident and authoritative. This requires relaxed vocal cords and a friendly tone of voice.

Your ultimate goal is to make the audience feel as though you are only talking to them.

Ignore the size of the audience and imagine you are having a conversation with one person. If you do you will find your delivery is warmer, less scripted and you will naturally use words like 'you', 'your' 'you know when...' and 'what I do is...'.

### *4. Appoint a chair*

A chairperson will not only introduce you and facilitate the Q&A, they will also increase your gravitas and manage the chat facility during your talk so you're not distracted.

### *5. Keep to the allotted time*

People won't thank you for running over and no one will ever complain because your webinar didn't go on long enough!

Follow up

Online events are a very efficient and effective way to promote your expertise, but they are unlikely to deliver the results you want if you don't follow up.

If you are going to invest the time and effort to host online events you need to get into the habit of recording webinars and sharing the recordings with 3 groups:

- The people who attended the webinar
- Those who were down to attend but didn't
- Targets who didn't sign up but you would've liked them to

You can also edit your recording down to a 1 or 2 minute taster and share that via LinkedIn and YouTube. If I had to summarise all the advice in this blog it would be this ...

... Have a plan (for before, during and after you event) and make engagement your no.1 goal.

## Why you need great content

This article was originally published by *Counsel* magazine

### As the Bar builds back, how barristers can benefit from investing their time to produce unique and valuable content

'Content is king' is a phrase I'm sure you've heard many times.

It has been a marketing (or, more specifically, content marketing) mainstay for years but over the last few months it has taken on far greater resonance at The Bar. The reason for this is twofold.

Firstly, your website is now your most important business development tool after your CV and your clerking room. Populated correctly it will generate new clients, educate your clientbase, showcase your latest legal thinking and give clients reasons to keep coming back and keep in touch with you. It also allows you to position yourself ahead of your competitors in the areas you are strongest in.

However, without unique, valuable, and relevant new content, none of this can happen.

Secondly, while we are working remotely and unable to see or interact with people in the way we used to, the internet has become our first port of call when we're looking for an answer or advice.

This means every chambers has to think seriously about how they can get to the top of the relevant search results. Unsurprisingly without unique, valuable, and relevant new content, that isn't going to happen.

While the digital benefits of new content are many, I don't want to get into the marketing geekery of SEO rankings, traffic rates, backlinks and domain strength. Let's take that as read and leave it to the marketers! Instead, I'd like to look at how you will benefit personally from investing your time to produce new content.

When I'm beginning a content project with a barristers' chambers the first question I am almost always asked is "what do I write about?"

The easy answer is you need to write about what is happening in your practice area, but I appreciate that this brief is often too broad especially with so much going on in your practice area at any given time. To try and add a little more focus the following suggestions often prove helpful:

*A recent legal update:* This is of course the most obvious option. What has happened? How will it change current legal practice/thinking in that area? And what will your clients need to do to insulate themselves against the possible effects?

*A recent case:* There might be sensitivities here, but outlining and anonymising elements of a recent case often provides a solid framework to explain a point of law, a certain strategy or simply promote a recent success.

*An awkward question:* If you are asked an awkward question by a client and were able to provide the required answer, this can make a good piece. If one solicitor or lay client needs to know the answer, there will be many more searching online for the same answer.

*Something you had to look up:* If you have been asked a tricky question that forced you to go back to the law books to find the answer, why not share what you've learned?

*The news:* Was there anything in the news related to your practice, your clients, or your local area? You can use the story to make specific legal points under the protection of wider general appeal.

Once you have decided what you'd like to write about the next choice is how and where you publish it. For simplicity I break the options into two:

#### *Internal:*

Articles, case studies, case commentary, legal updates, and blog posts (punchier opinion-led and more informal/conversational pieces) for publication on your website and for promotion via your social media channels.

#### *External:*

Publishing articles for or being interviewed by the publications your lay clients and instructing solicitors read.

Although the overall objective is the same for both (to boost your profile and stay visible), they do work in slightly different ways.

## Why do I need to publish internal content?

Internal content provides the perfect way to keep in touch with your existing audience. You can promote the links via your social media channels to alert your followers to the new pieces you've written. You can also email certain links directly to your relevant clients and contacts to give you an excuse to reconnect with them.

More importantly the pieces you publish online allow you to reach an audience searching specifically for the ideas, insight and advice you are writing about.

Your internally published pieces will allow you to combine your name, your chambers' name and the keywords linked to your practice and push them

through the search engine algorithms together.

If you get your topics and titles right, this will build your readership in the right areas and, over time, lead to people getting in touch to find out more. It will also make you more visible to the organisations looking for speakers, interviewees, panellists, and authors on the subjects you're writing about which will organically produce brand new business development opportunities.

It also takes us neatly to external content.

## Why do I need to publish external content?

Your internal content is a vital cog in your personal marketing machine. It will promote you online and give you anchors you can use to direct potential clients towards you. However, external publishing opportunities will help you reach a brand new and much larger audience who may not know they need you and, therefore, won't have been searching for you.

When it comes to finding the right vehicles to approach for external editorial opportunities, the start point is to think about the titles you know your clients read.

With regards to your instructing solicitors, they are most likely to read the relevant legal press as opposed to more general titles like *The Law Society Gazette* or *The Solicitors Journal*. For example, for family solicitors it may be *Family Law Week* or for private client solicitors it may be *Today's Wills and Probate*.

Having worked with many chambers I can confidently say there are titles for every practice area. Better still, they can be identified with nothing more arduous than a quick Google search.

Similarly, there will also be a range of titles for your lay clients of you feel that influencing them would be more beneficial. If you specialise in construction, you may want to consider approaching *Construction Magazine* or *Construction News*. If you specialise in pension law, Pensions Age or Professional Pensions may be best.

Regardless of whether you take the legal route or the sector route, when you identify the right publication and find the editor's name and email address, your pitch is simple. Identify an issue you know is affecting your practice area and offer to explain it and present a possible solution for their readers.

This is the point at which I can sometimes fall out with my colleagues in PR. They (understandably) feel it's their job to make this approach for barristers, but I am strongly of the opinion that it is actually more powerful if you approach editors directly.

When an editor receives something with a PR or even an internal marketing signature, their likely reaction will be to pass the email on to their ad sales team. If it comes from a barrister, it will immediately hold more weight. The editor will know they are being offered a credible piece rather than a press release.

## What do I do once my content is live?

For me, the answer to this question is the difference between having a content strategy and having a successful content strategy.

It is easy to sit back and wait for your freshly published piece of content to do its magic, but the truth is it will need a helping hand.

This begins with search engine optimisation. If you are publishing internally you need to make sure your marketing team has titled and tagged your piece correctly so it is recognised by the relevant searches. The good news is if you've been published externally, this will probably be done by the publisher's marketers but you still need to ask how your website can take full advantage.

Can you publish the first paragraph and link it back to the publisher's website? Can you publish a more sizeable portion of the article with a link to a PDF of the full article? Can you add a hyperlinked headline to your bio and CV? All publishers have their own rules so you need to ask what you can do either when you're commissioned or once you receive confirmation your piece has gone live.

Once your piece is live you need to promote it via social media. To maximise your audience, you can tag in the publication and the members of editorial staff you worked with. Just as importantly, remember to send it out several times on each channel at different times of the day over the week after publication. Sending it out once is far too easy for your followers to miss.

As I mentioned earlier emailing the PDF of your article to your relevant contacts is also a good idea. Even if the article is never opened, the fact you have reappeared in their inbox with a credible reason is often enough to remind them to respond as there was something they needed to ask you about.

The final option is what we call 'squeezing the lemon'. Once you have a back catalogue of content there are a number of different ways to repackage it for different audiences and different initiatives so you squeeze every drop of promotional juice from your efforts.

For example, could you turn your article (or a series of blogs) into a training session (which can be delivered virtually while the restrictions remain in place) you could run for your most important instructing solicitors? I

It is also important to say at this point that good business development is dependent on the right people doing the right activities so if you aren't comfortable presenting, perhaps you could team up with another member who is. You can then form a partnership whereby you provide the content and they host the event with you joining them for questions.

Or if seminars or webinars don't appeal, you could use the key points to produce a podcast or a few short 'talking heads' style videos. These have become increasingly popular alternatives to both presentations and content over the last few months as they are quicker and easier to digest and they can be accessed when it is most convenient for your audience.

And of course, when you have a back catalogue, it can be used to chase new external opportunities. An editor is much more likely to take a chance on you if you can show them a cannon of work whether that has been published internally or externally.



# JULY

## How can lawyers and accountants convert more leads into new work?

This was originally published as a blog at [tenandahalf.co.uk/blog/](https://tenandahalf.co.uk/blog/)

Have you ever wondered how lawyers and accountants could convert more leads into new work? Let us share a something we know works well.

If you are a lawyer, barrister, accountant, patent attorney or architect at some stage you will have pitched for work whether that involved writing a proposal or completing a formal tender. If you have, you'll also know what an arduous process it is! And that all too often you can invest a lot of time and energy for no reward.

There is however an easy way to increase your conversion rates. All you need to do is embrace the concept of social proofing.

### What is social proofing?

In Robert Cialdini's book "Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion" he describes how one of the ways we determine what is correct is by finding out what other people think is correct.

His argument is the more we see others doing something, the more correct we will think it to be. This is because as humans we feel we will make fewer mistakes by following the social evidence we see than we would by acting in the opposite way.

This is the reason advertisers love phrases like "fastest-growing" and "largest selling". They don't say the product is good because they know we're more likely to act it we're told lots of other people think their product is good. This is social proofing.

So back to the matter at hand, how can your law firm, accountancy practice, barristers' chambers, architectural firm or intellectual property practice take full advantage of the concept of social proofing to win more new work?

You can make better use of your previous clients and credentials.

### 5 ways lawyers and accountants can use their clients and credentials to win more new clients

1. Ask your clients for LinkedIn recommendations.
2. Write and use short case studies on your website, in your brochures and in your pitch documents.

And when you write case studies use the CAR (Context, Action and Result) structure.

Your **context** is the situation you found when you were instructed.

Your **action** refers to what you did in response.

Your **results** are what happened once you'd taken action.

3. Ask clients for a 2-line testimonial (you can even add these to your case studies to give them even more weight).
4. Encourage online reviews via platforms like Trustpilot and Review Solicitors. People really do make purchasing decisions on what they find online.
5. Ask your clients to write Google reviews.

## 5 more ways for lawyers and accountants use social proofing to win new clients

1. Invite prospects to a social or business event so they can meet your existing clients. They will talk positively about you to your targets although frankly, even if they don't get a chance to speak, their presence alone will act as an endorsement.
2. When you are presenting at an event mention examples of the organisations you've worked (that match your audience's profile) in your introduction.

One word of caution here. Make sure you use examples your audience will see as similar to them. Sometimes there is a tendency for the presenter to name drop a signature client thinking this will be impressive, but it can easily backfire if your audience doesn't find them an appropriate match.

3. When you meet new people subtly drop in relevant examples of clients you've worked for. We call this 'selling by suggestion'. It is much more effective than vapid elevator scripts or a self-aggrandising summary of your professional background.
4. Join the trade associations, industry bodies or networks your targets belong to. You will be perceived as 'one of them' because of your association. But don't confuse this point with belonging to your profession's trade groups, they will be full of competitors not prospects.
5. In your marketing communications use the language, terms of reference, and examples your targets use and understand.

## Why your law firm should focus marketing on specific industries or sectors

This article was originally published in our friends' Welch PR's *Straightforward PR* e-magazine

When it comes to targeting new clients, far too many law firms still seem to be happy trying to attract any new client as opposed to seeking out clients in sectors or industries where they can demonstrate expertise and specialist knowledge.

The trouble is, even if you do happen your way into a conversation with just any new prospect, the chances of you converting them into a client is becoming more and more remote.

More than ever before, clients want specialists, not generalists.

Moreover, as they will usually come across your firm in one of two ways (someone they know has recommended you or you've come up in a precise Google search), the first thing they will want to see and/or hear is you definitely have specialist knowledge of their industry/the type of work they want you to undertake and understand the specific issues they face.

More worryingly an enormous amount of the local loyalty firms used to be able to rely on has been eroded during the recent pandemic.

People now know location is no barrier to working together as we are all fully conversant with virtual meetings. This means it is even more vital firms are willing and able to market their knowledge of specific industries and work types and their understanding of the particular issues different clients face.

If you are going to continue to be successful in the face of a more demanding target market, a more challenging and competitive trading environment,

and an unprecedented level of choice, you will need to adapt your mindset to make the most of the experience you have.

One option is to adopt sector-based marketing. A sector focus offers you an alternative to trying to be all things to all clients. Instead, you'd think about the client segments you offer greatest value too. You'd then design your approach to targeting, approaching and - ultimately - converting those groups by using all the available marketing channels to demonstrate how your expertise, experience and approach makes you the best option for them.

### How do you choose the right sectors to pursue?

When it comes to choosing the sectors most likely to yield success for your firm there are three very simple criteria:

#### 1. *Track record*

Do you have clients and work examples you can use to sell your sector expertise? Without a track record it will be impossible to put together a convincing story for your target market/s.

But don't be disheartened if you don't have loads of clients operating in the sector/s you're interested in. To demonstrate sector expertise, you only need to have two or three clients, just enough to give you the insight you need to demonstrate you understand their world.

For example, if you've advised two hotels, you will know enough to show you understand the nuances of the hospitality sector expertise and know enough

to put together relevant and compelling marketing material.

## 2. Interest

Are there fee earners inside the firm with a genuine interest in the sectors you've chosen?

Interest will not only create a real and infectious enthusiasm which will rub off on targets, it will also ensure fee earners find the time they need to keep up with the latest developments.

For example, one of the lawyers I work with previously had a career as a recruitment consultant. She loved the legal aspects of recruitment, so she applied to law school with a view to becoming an employment lawyer.

Unsurprisingly, her client base now includes several recruitment agencies who appreciate she has a genuine understanding of what they do and what they face.

If you can't show a genuine interest, you will just be another lawyer looking for work.

## 3. Opportunity

Are the sectors you've chosen big enough to support the level of fees you want to generate? Is there a good spread of likely targets? Is there continued growth in the sector or is there a danger they're in decline?

While track record and interest are essential components of a successful sector strategy, there is little point in continuing if there isn't a clear commercial opportunity.

## What are your objectives if you employ a sector strategy?

The main objective is, of course, to help your firm stand out from your more generalist competitors.

Instead of using generic legal language, you will be able to discuss the most recent relevant developments and current trends.

More importantly, you'll be able to explain how you have combined this understanding with your technical prowess to help clients get to where they want to be.

As you are actively involved in the sector (rather than looking in and looking for work), you will be able to demonstrate the additional value you offer, a much deeper level of understanding of how to apply the law to your clients' exact requirements all explained in language/with reference points that make sense to them.

From a marketing perspective making sure this message gets across will require you to show:

- You are genuinely interested in your chosen sectors
- You understand the current and immediate needs of the businesses and people within your chosen sectors
- Proof you have a strong track record of working in your chosen sectors
- Evidence of who you have worked with and how you have helped them.

## How do you promote this message (and turn your experience into new work)?

In terms of tactics there is no difference between sector marketing and traditional marketing. You have four main types of activity for your fee earners to get involved with:

### 1. Client development

Sector marketing is not a replacement for spending time with your clients and contacts, they are still going to be your most likely source of new work, new opportunities, and new introductions. In fact, spending time with the people you know best is arguably even more important. They will give you vital sector insight and even recommend the groups you should belong to, the events you should go to, the publications you should read and the people you should know.

## 2. Networking

Getting out and about to meet new people at the right events and building profile within the right groups and organisations will play a huge part in making your sector a strategy a success.

For example, pre-Covid MIPIM, the annual real estate conference in Cannes, was a *must* for commercial property lawyers. It enabled them to not only spend time with their clients and contacts in one place but also introduce them to each other to strengthen their networks and their industry credibility.

## 3. Speaking

Winning speaking slots at the events your clients and targets go to is a highly effective way to increase your visibility and credibility within your chosen sectors.

Alternatively, why not run your own events? If you partner with the networking groups, trade associations, and other professionals in your sector you can put together panel discussions, seminars, and other educational events that you can your invite clients and targets to.

## 4. Writing

Producing content is another effective way of establishing your sector credentials and generating new enquiries.

In terms of where you can write, I split it into two:

### Internal:

- Your blog and/or website. These pieces will help your 'findability' via the search engines and give you links you can use as social media updates to generate traffic to your site.

### External:

Writing for the publications and websites your clients read (or for the newsletters/websites run by your professional contacts and industry bodies/networking groups) will help you reach a new audience of prospective clients.

More importantly, it'll also help you stand out from a more generalist firm in a pitch situation. For example, lawyers with construction clients should, the two key trade target *Building* magazine or *Construction News* titles in this sector.

The good news is a sector approach will help you make better marketing choices. As you will be targeting a carefully defined audience, you will be able to identify:

- Exactly which networking groups/trade associations to join
- Exactly which events you should attend
- Exactly which online forums to participate in
- Exactly which publications and websites your clients and targets read

(And, of course, once you have identified these publications, a skilled legal PR will be able to win you the editorial slots you need to influence their readers).

# September

## How can lawyers and accountants collaborate more effectively with contacts and referrers?

This was originally published as a blog at [tenandahalf.co.uk/blog/](https://tenandahalf.co.uk/blog/)

Lawyers and accountants are very focused on referrals. While referrals are always of course welcome, there are other ways to create new opportunities if lawyers and accountants collaborate more effectively with their contacts and referrers.

It is simply not always possible to exchange referrals.

As well as creating new opportunities, collaborating more effectively with contacts and referrers will also allow you to find more ways to add value to and strengthen your most important professional relationships during the times when there are no referrals to give.

Why should lawyers and accountants collaborate more effectively with contacts and referrers?

You may have heard the maxim 1+1=3. With focus and follow up this is particularly true in the case of business collaborations. Lawyers and accountants can benefit from finding business partners who are targeting similar types of clients.

Here are 5 benefits of collaborating with likeminded contacts:

### *1. You will save time*

The hassle factor of organising events can be halved as responsibilities are shared.

### *2. You will save money*

The cost of events, targeting campaigns, pitching, and marketing activities can also be shared.

### *3. You will extend your reach and build awareness to a larger audience*

You can pool databases and double your respective reach and access targets and start conversations you wouldn't otherwise be able to.

### *4. You will strengthen your brand*

Partnering with a well-regarded or well-known brand will strengthen your brand offer by association. Perhaps you will be able to piggyback a bigger brand as your clients and targets will see your partnership as an endorsement or accreditation.

## 5. *You will increase your market knowledge and understanding*

You don't know what you don't know. By having more interactions with your professional network, you will learn professional gossip, be able to benchmark experiences and have a personal sounding board to explore new ideas.

## What opportunities are there in addition to referring new business to your professional contacts?

Referring business is certainly a good tactic but it's not always possible.

If you are a junior lawyer or accountant, your contacts will often not be decision makers and therefore referral possibilities limited. Alternatively, you may be more experienced, but your referral opportunities will still be limited to a small number of people in your network.

Here are 5 alternative ways to add value and strengthen ties with your professional network:

### 1. *Make introductions*

Introductions are much easier to make than referrals as they don't hinge on an immediate business opportunity.

Find out who would be attractive contacts for people in your network and actively look out for opportunities to make connections from within your existing network.

### 2. *Contribute content to your contacts' marketing activities*

All your contacts will have one or more of the following:

- A website
- A seminar/webinar/training programme
- A podcast
- A client newsletter

All these vehicles need content.

Content takes time to create. You can make your contacts' job easier and add weight to their content by contributing pieces that bring together your experience, case studies and expertise.

### 3. *Offer yourself as a sounding board*

The strongest professional relationships are based on more than your technical knowledge. In these cases, contacts will see you as a confidante or trusted adviser. Make it easy for your contacts to pick your brain by being accessible (in person and remotely).

### 4. *Invite your contacts to business and social events*

More interaction means more opportunities. It allows trust to be established. Invite your contacts to any events – business or social – you feel would suit them in terms of their professional or personal interests.

## 5. Share market intelligence

If you see a report, article, or news item that you think will be of interest to others in your network, share it. Sharing market intelligence demonstrates that you have your 'finger on the pulse' and are looking out for those you know, like and trust.

### How do lawyers and accountants collaborate more effectively with contacts to improve the results their BD achieves?

Just like personal relationships business relationships that have longevity have the following characteristics:

- They are based on reciprocity. Both parties must contribute something (but that something doesn't have to be referrals).
- There is regular contact. Long gaps in time without contact can impact negatively on intimacy and understanding.
- It's not all about you! People want to feel valued and listened to, not just an accessory to suit your agenda.
- There is positive energy. No one wants to be in the company of someone who drains their energy and positivity.
- Communications are personal. There is a difference between a business contact and a business relationship.

### Who are the best professional contacts to ask about collaboration opportunities?

Anyone ... potentially at least.

Too many lawyers and accountants only explore opportunities with each other. If you look wider to financial advisers, bankers, mortgage brokers, and surveyors the possibilities are much greater.

To identify the right partners, you should consider these 3 things:

1. Who can give you access and/or make you more visible to your target clients?
2. Who do you get on with best and/or you feel most comfortable with?
3. Who can get you involved with activities and platforms that will connect you with your targets?



# October

## Optimizing client service in the post-COVID legal market

This was originally published in a new book called *Innovations in Client Experience* published by *Global Law and Business* (<https://www.globelawandbusiness.com>)

Client service has never been so important.

With so much else to worry about at the moment, this may sound like a strange thing to say. However, after such a traumatic year it is essential that your clients know their legal advisers absolutely have their best interests at heart, that they're on their side, that they are available to provide all of the assistance they need – either personally or professionally – to help them through the recovery and back into a more stable world.

And when it comes to providing the optimal levels of client service phrases like “all I need to do is stay available for my clients when they need me” and “doing good work is all my clients want from me” simply will not cut it. Service is the element of working with you that your clients can see and feel which means it is the element you must get right.

Your clients may not understand the technical intricacies of the work you do for them or how you found that all-important workaround to resolve the difficult situation they found themselves in. They will however know how easy it was to get hold of you, how you made them feel when they talked to you, how easy it was to access and implement their advice and whether you offered/delivered more than they expected.

Service is not just a woolly, touchy-feely add on to your legal services. Service is what keeps your clients happy, it's what makes them feel valued and it's what will ensure they stay your clients.

At this point I'd usually expect some push back. I'm told that if a client is a client, they will stay a client unless something particularly awful happens. That may have been true once, but it is certainly not the case now.

If we look at the key factors the pandemic has brought to the fore:

- Everyone is more cost-conscious than ever after a difficult year.
- Everyone is unsettled having faced issues we have never had to face before.
- Everyone has learned geography/proximity is no longer important in our working life having adapted to working remotely for over a year.
- Everyone has become even more reliant on sourcing suppliers (and, at the base level, lawyers are a supplier) online.

It is also becoming increasingly evident we are heading into a more volatile and unpredictable trading market. Admittedly, this is nothing new. The threat of boutique firms, alternative business structures, online delivery and more rigorous formal procurement have been around for years. However, like the paperless office and more sustainable practices, we never quite got round to addressing these threats, largely because they have never had the impact we feared.

That is until now.

After such a seismic shift in working and purchasing practices, these threats are about to amplify regardless of the size, location, or specialisms of your firm.

Clients will shop around to find the best product at the best price and with the best service. With so much purchasing promiscuity in prospect, I am not exaggerating when I say that if you are not providing the optimal level of service, you could very well be placing the relationships upon which your practice and your firm are based in jeopardy.

But there is most definitely a huge up-side to investing in optimizing your client service.

If you provide the highest possible level of service and the best possible client experience, you will not only safeguard your retention rates but also continually open new conversations. Over time, if managed properly, these conversations will lead to more cross-selling opportunities.

Maintaining a closer proximity to clients who are more disposed towards you will also generate completely new opportunities, new introductions and new insight into the groups, events, topics, and channels you could be using to market more effectively and win more new work.

And of course, the happier your clients are, the more likely they will be to refer you to their personal and professional networks, to their colleagues, families and friends.

You don't need me to tell you that referrals are the best source of new opportunities. If you have been recommended by someone the enquirer trusts, the prospects will be easier and quicker to convert. This will immediately impact positively on both your pipeline and profitability.

It is also a source of new opportunities that costs you absolutely nothing other than providing the best possible client service.

## How do you provide the best possible client service?

While this question can often cause huge consternation within a law firm, the answer actually lies very close to home ...

If you'd like to read the rest of this chapter (and the rest of this excellent book) you can order a copy at <https://www.globelawandbusiness.com/books/the-client-experience>

# November

## Why should lawyers and accountants invest time in podcasts and video?

This was originally published as a blog at [tenandahalf.co.uk/blog/](https://tenandahalf.co.uk/blog/)

Some lawyers and accountants believe that that now restrictions have eased many of the digital marketing initiatives that kept them going over lockdown will disappear. This is definitely not the case and I'd like to explain why lawyers and accountants should invest time in podcasts and video.

I repeatedly hear we are all 'Zoomed out', that it's increasingly difficult to engage people virtually in webinars and roundtables, that we need to return immediately to traditional networking events instead of pursuing all these techy alternatives.

However, at this point it is important to make a distinction between strategy and execution. Just because something is not working effectively doesn't mean the approach is flawed. It means the execution needs to be examined.

Marketing communications and BD strategies now have more (physical and virtual) channels than ever before, and podcasts and video are most definitely a big part of this new landscape.

### 6 reasons why lawyers and accountants should invest in podcasts and video

1. The digital outputs can be used as fresh content on your firm's website to boost your search engine optimisation (Google loves video!).
2. Audio and video allow your audience to engage with you as humans rather than technical practitioners.
3. Audio and video gives you new links you can use to stay in touch with your clients and contacts between face-to-face meetings.
4. Audio and video are cheap – you can do most things on your phone or tablet.
5. Audio and video provide an effective way to explain things in detail (to an infinite audience) when location is a barrier to seeing people in person.
6. Audio and video enables you to showcase your expertise in a more engaging way.

## 3 advantages podcasts and video have over more traditional alternative BD activities

Although there are obvious benefits linked to using more audio and video content, podcasts and video actually has 3 enormous advantages over some of the more traditional BD activities and these are the 3 reasons why lawyers and accountants should invest time in podcasts and video:

1. Audio and video give you a reason to follow up on conversations and, as we know, without follow up, your business development won't yield the results you want.
2. Producing podcasts and videos is less time consuming than producing, rehearsing, and delivering slides.
3. Delivering seminars is a one-off unless they're recorded; audio and video content can be resent, repurposed, rewatched and recycled.

Effective BD is about building closer professional relationships, engaging in networking events, using social media, and creating content in print and online formats. Podcasts and video complement and supplement all these activities perfectly.

# December

## 10½ tips that will help your business development while we're working in a hybrid environment

10½ practical BD tips originally shared via Twitter and LinkedIn on the run up to 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2021

As we head into 2022, we are still very much in a hybrid working environment with a couple of days being spent in the office then working from home for the remainder of the week. This isn't going to change any time soon so we thought it would be useful to share some of the top business development tips we've picked up (and seen work well) during 2021.

### 1. Be considerate of others

Everyone's personal circumstances are different. Some of your contacts may have health issues that you are unaware of or will have family members they need to protect. Always give people options, don't assume everyone wants to meet in person. And if you are meeting in person, take your lead from them when it comes to physical greetings.

### 2. Don't do what you've always done

You have more options than ever to engage with your clients and market with your contacts and referrers, so think more creatively and don't limit your BD to doing what you've always done.

As well as meeting in person or virtually, experiment with infographics, 'talking head' videos, podcasts, direct messaging and networking outdoors ('net-walking').

### 3. Keep your home-tech up to date

As we've been at home off and on for the best part of 2 years, you should have mastered the tech you're using at home but are there improvements you can make to your bandwidth, desk lighting, and audio quality? You might also consider a standing up desk as they are better for presenting and posture.

### 4. Turn your camera on when you're on video calls

It's a simple one but it's essential. You can not engage with anyone from a black square!

### 5. Work harder on your virtual events

When running virtual events, you will need to work harder and smarter to get people to sign up.

The novelty of on-line events has long since gone but this doesn't mean online events and video conferencing will go away (they won't) and it doesn't mean they don't work (they do).

However, it does mean that unless you're doing something of obvious business value and in a format people want to use, you won't get your targets to sign up in the numbers you want.

## 6. Record your online events

If you record your events, you can use the recordings to make your follow up easier and/or send the recording with a personal message to continue your conversations or reconnect with clients, contacts and targets.

## 7. Virtual quizzes are so 2020!

You need to try something different if you're going to hold your audience's attention. Some examples that we've seen work well are baking, cooking pizzas, and whiskey/wine/gin tasting.

## 8. Share materials in advance when you're presenting online

Many people still feel uncomfortable talking in virtual meetings so don't contribute as fully as they would in person. If you share materials in advance, you can make the virtual meeting less daunting and therefore generate more engagement.

## 9. Working from home doesn't mean anything goes

Whilst it is true to say that we have become more relaxed towards work attire you should still create a professional image.

## 10. Always check your tech in advance

If you're running a virtual event, test your connection, camera angle, lighting and everything else you'll rely on while you host/present/talk.

Successful virtual events come down to 3 things:

1. Preparation before the event
2. Having someone in the room who knows how to use the technology
3. Actively encouraging those attending to participate

## 10½. Don't shout, tell

Too many LinkedIn posts announce individual's attendance at events, few share anything of value. Rather than announce that you went to an event on LinkedIn, share what you learned and how your contacts could use that knowledge to their benefit.



All that remains is for us to wish you and yours a **merry Christmas** and a very prosperous new year from everyone at



And if you would like to get your BD off to a flying start in 2020, why not book a free 45 minute espresso chat with us by emailing [info@tenandahalf.co.uk](mailto:info@tenandahalf.co.uk)



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