

Eight strategies to launch 2012

As the new year begins, it's always appropriate to think about how to achieve your business development goals. What should be on your program for this year? Here are some ideas:

1. Set goals and write them down. Knowing where you want to go increases the chance you'll get there. Your goals and plans will change as the world changes ever more quickly around you, but having goals and plans is still a good idea. Writing them down makes them more real to you, and gives you a way to track your success.
2. Take care of your existing clients. Do a great job for them - that's critical. Listen carefully to them. What's on their mind? How can you help them? What can you do better? Listen to them talk about their challenges and aspirations and you'll soon be helping them more broadly.
3. Find prospective new clients. You need to reach out to prospective new clients and/or get them to reach out to you. Lead generation is challenging for many professionals and firms. Can you successfully execute a strategy of providing outstanding content via your website or social networks to attract prospects? Where do your prospects look for information (and indirectly, for expertise); you might even consider asking them! Cultivating a network of allies might also be a good strategy to think about.
4. Design the conversations you want to have with prospects. Structure discussions so prospects discover your value as you help them understand their needs and the value to them of successfully meeting those needs..
5. Build your own skills. Decide what you will learn how to do this year. New skills let you do more and do better, and make you more interesting. You have more to say and are more valuable when you bring new insights that come from the intersection of what you've done with what you've learned.
6. Stay in touch with people. Every year you should know more people. You need ways to systematically stay in touch. Adding a newsletter, making more phone calls, having more breakfasts or doing something else may be required to adequately stay in touch.
7. Get your digital act in order. You probably have a website but maybe you need more. Explore what you can do with your website, search engine optimization, LinkedIn and Facebook.
8. Track your progress. That's how you'll know if you're doing what you hoped to do, and if the results are what you want. Find a discussion partner (someone in your firm or

someone else you trust) to help you when you get stuck and help you stay accountable to yourself for making the progress you want.

You can't do everything at once or maybe even this year. But you can pick the most important arenas *for you* and begin.

What to do this week

Before the first month of the year ends, put your plan together. You don't have to know all the answers – your activity for February can be to fill in the holes while you get started on what you know will be a good idea – actions you can take with no regrets.

What are these tips?

These monthly tips are intended to help professionals create more business and enjoy their work more. We focus on how to start relationships, how to build relationships, and how to convert those relationships into sales.

Can you answer my questions about business development?

We'd be delighted. Please send any questions you have to questions@bridgewellpartners.com and we'll do our best to help you out. Or call us at 312-863-3489. Or visit www.bridgewellpartners.com to learn more about how we coach and train professionals to be better at business development and to enjoy it more.