

Annual Business Development Plan Worksheet

This worksheet is designed to guide you through the three essential pillars of business development: market positioning, marketplace education, and relationship building. As you fill out each section, consider your long-term goals and how you want to be recognized by the marketplace.

Name:

Date:

Defining Your Market Position and Professional Development

Objective:

Clarify your niche and how you want to be perceived in the marketplace. To become the go-to expert, identify the skills, experience, and resources needed to build credibility in your target area.

Target Niche/Practice Area for Marketing Purposes:

Describe the specific type of law and matters you want to be known as a go-to authority in. This should align with your strengths and interests, but also reflect where market opportunities exist.

Ideal Client Profile:

What does your ideal client look like? This could be based on industry, how they work/personality match, or the nature of the legal issues they face.

Professional Development Goals:

To establish yourself as the best person for this work, consider the type of experience you need, certifications or qualifications you should obtain, and the internal resources that will help you deliver (technology, etc.).

Identifying Your Target Audience

To effectively grow your practice, you need to first identify the categories of individuals or organizations who can hire or refer you into the work you've defined as ideal. This step ensures your outreach and visibility efforts are targeted towards those who can bring in the right opportunities.

1. Categories of People Who Hire You:

Reflect on the types of individuals or organizations responsible for hiring legal services in your ideal practice area. Who are they?

2. Categories of People Who Can Refer Work to You:

Think about the professionals who are well-positioned to refer potential ideal work or clients to you. What categories of people can help bring in these new opportunities?

3. Current Network:

Who do you already know that fits into these categories? List existing connections who can hire or refer work to you.

4. Network Gaps:

Where do you need to build new relationships? Identify any industries, decision-makers, or categories of referral sources you're not yet connected with.

Educating Your Target Market and Building Your Reputation

The fastest way to become an authority in your desired space is to enhance your visibility through strategic thought leadership activities. Before determining your messaging, it's important to first identify where your target audiences are already paying attention. This allows you to focus your efforts on the most relevant platforms, associations, and channels.

Associations and Professional Groups:

Industry Conferences and Events:

Publications and Media Outlets:

Choosing a Theme for Thought Leadership

Once you've identified your target audience and visibility channels, you can begin crafting your messaging. The key to effective thought leadership is selecting a theme that resonates with your audience's needs and concerns while aligning with your area of expertise. The themes you select should demonstrate a high level of sophistication.

Visibility and Thought Leadership Activities

To stay top of mind, engage in activities that position you as a thought leader. This could include contributing to publications, speaking at conferences, webinars, appearing on industry podcasts, and LinkedIn campaigns.

Planned Activities:

Building and Leveraging Relationships

Cultivate strong relationships with clients, referral sources, and other key individuals who can help you grow your practice. These relationships are essential for both immediate business opportunities and long-term success.

- **Top Clients to Expand:**

- **Top Prospects to Convert:**

- **Top Referral Sources:**

Who are the key individuals or firms that could refer business to you? These could include other lawyers, accountants, financial advisors, or business consultants who work closely with your target audience.

- **Staying Top of Mind:**

How will you maintain consistent and meaningful engagement with your clients, prospects, and referral sources? Regular check-ins, sharing relevant insights, and inviting them to events are all ways to remain visible and valuable.

Financial Goals and Metrics

Origination Goal (Annual):

Billable Hours Target:

Marketing and Business Development Hours:

Budget

Estimate the financial investment required to achieve your business development goals. This includes costs for attending conferences, joining organizations, investing in technology, and securing professional development opportunities.

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Accountability and Action Plan

Break down your goals into quarterly milestones and set a plan to review and adjust your strategy throughout the year. Set specific, measurable goals for each quarter. For example, you might aim to publish one article and attend two conferences by the end of Q1.

Q1 Goals:

Q2 Goals:

Q3 Goals:

Q4 Goals: