

CHICAGO LAWYER

INSIDE OUT

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hen we think about business development, potential purchasers of our services immediately come to mind — including people, companies and organizations. Long-term strategies and serendipitous introductions

can fuel momentum.

Clarity comes when we're talking with potential clients. We are successful when converting communication to engagement. Law firms measure these efforts in revenue.

But there is no quantitative means to gauge the personal and professional traits that drive results. It's really the strength of our emotional intelligence. Simply put, emotional intelligence drives business development.

LEAD WITH LISTENING

Whether looking at business development as in-house counsel seeking to retain outside counsel, or a private practice attorney trying to land an engagement, there is a strong connection between emotional intelligence and success.

For the lawyer who develops business, the first step is to lead with listening and to understand potential clients as people and professionals. A simple "tell me about your job" will yield valuable insight about where the in-house lawyer fits within the context of the organization, what works well for them and what keeps them up at night.

It is also important for in-house counsel to engage and know outside counsel in a meaningful way — and to be honest about whether real opportunities exist. The best rainmakers know that while this message may mean pausing an opportunity, it does not mean dismissing a relationship, as is often a short-sighted mistake.

When you can meet with in-house counsel as a private practice attorney, you can absorb important details quickly. For example, do they feel like they have enough internal resources? Do they need outside help? These questions spark conversation about how they feel about existing resources. Sometimes they are satisfied with their support system, but will remember you for special projects and when conflicts arise. Other times, they think they are receiving poor legal advice, paying too much or both.

The attorney who flexes emotional intelligence like a muscle will maintain the relationship over time, knowing that in-house lawyers can be terrific referral sources, which can be just as valuable.



SMART BUSINESS

How emotional intelligence can drive development

BY TINA MARTINI & DAVID SUSLER

Know, like, trust: Whether you are in-house, working for the government or in private practice, the simple truth is people must know, like and trust you. In-house lawyers need the trust of their colleagues, who are their internal clients. Outside counsel must develop trust by respecting their colleagues and client relationships if they want the opportunity to work on those client service teams.

High emotional intelligence drives thoughtful and strategic business development efforts. Rely on what has worked and strategize on how to best replicate and proliferate those efforts elsewhere.

Flex patience to find opportunities: Business development successes belong to those who are patient. Even if all the ingredients are there to successfully launch a new attorney-client relationship, there may be other reasons for difficulties in landing business. For example, there may be a high-level executive who trumps the decision-making process or the business they have to offer could have been already assigned to another party.

The lawyer who is generous with their time and advice is likely to stay on the radar. When solutions are provided, the relationship will grow.

Making the paradigm shift: Whether the dance of business relationships comes naturally or not, it starts with a paradigm shift — a fundamental change in how we think, speak and act to create a new approach. It often involves a shift in beliefs, practices and perspectives, and it can be inspired by new knowledge.

As authors of this column since 2010, we have been honored to share our thoughts on

the ever-evolving legal and business landscapes. We continue the discussion in two books we recently published as part of our Paradigm Shift Series: "Change Yourself" and "Change Your Business."

"Change Yourself" focuses on individuals, and "Change Your Business" targets organizations. The goal is to help our readers explore their careers and lives — no matter where they are in their journey — and to find sustainable balance and success through avenues such as emotional intelligence, business development, personal branding, leadership, mentoring, professional skills, navigating uncertainty and leaving a legacy.

We believe in the notion of paying it forward. Our hope is that these books provide at least one takeaway readers find insightful and transformative.

We wish you all the best on your professional and personal path in the new year and with experiencing your own paradigm shift. [CL](#)

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