TRUELSON ASSOCIATES
Strategic Business Development

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Business Development – What Really Works

White Paper / Issue 7

As we have stated in prior white papers, generally speaking, the business development game is won face to face. Yes, there are related marketing activities that will assist in enhancing the process, but ultimately, the direct face to face meeting is the key to generating new clients, and furthering the relationship with existing ones.

How skilled are your key people in this type of effort? Are they skilled at the relationship development process?

In our prior white paper, we addressed the critical need for the sales management function to be a vibrant, active one. Even assuming that this is the case in your firm (and frankly, we seldom find this to be the case with professional firms such as yours), how are you managing those individuals in the firm who are charged with business development responsibility? What are you doing to coach and train these individuals to become highly skilled in these critical areas?

As with children, or athletes on a team, or with employees, the types of guidance and coaching that is appropriate for one person may be totally counter productive for another. In other words, one size does not fit all.

To address the obvious differences in people, we have employed a highly effective sales testing vehicle known as Integrity Selling. This process features a 110 question questionnaire, designed to portray the individual strengths and weaknesses for everyone taking this test. Once completed, it becomes apparent what facets of the business development process the individual is strong at, and where he/she can best use coaching and counseling. Most critical of all is the initial face to face meeting with a prospective client. And, herein lies the challenge.

Most professionals face such meetings with a degree of dread, worrying about how to best "sell" the firm, and how to go about "the close".

The initial call should not cause such concerns to surface. There should be no "sell" per se, and certainly, no attempted close in an initial meeting.

Simply stated, the purpose of the first meeting is to get to the second meeting. In other words, the challenge is to create the beginnings of a successful business relationship.

When we do coaching in this area, we state that the initial call should have three objectives:

1 Establish credibility for the firm and for yourself (this can and should be done in under a minute).

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2 Find out everything you can about the firm and the individual you are meeting with.

3 Get a commitment to an appropriate next step.

Questions we suggest include the following:

- When you started the business, what was your grand dream?
- At this juncture, how far have you come towards achieving that dream?
- How do you differentiate your firm and its products/services from your competition?
- What does "the next level" look like for your firm?
- What issue, or issues, if resolved, would most rapidly and most effectively take your firm to that next level?

Those individuals in your firm who can master the basics of this "consultative sell" will be those who are most successful at generating new business for your firm.

We can help make this happen.

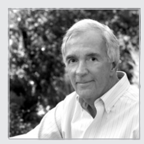
Truelson Associates has served over 200 clients in its 20+ years of existence. Of those clients, fully 80% of them have been professional and other service providers operating in a business to business mode. Law, public accounting, engineering, architecture, banking, and other financial service providers are heavily represented in that mix.

We offer services in these key areas:

- Strategic planning
- Business development planning
- Management of sales and marketing implementation efforts
- Management/leadership coaching

Unlike most consulting firms, we take a hands on approach to our efforts, functioning as part of our clients senior management team to achieve stated objectives.

We are proud of the results we have achieved for and with our many clients, and are happy to provide impeccable references to substantiate those results.



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