



NETWORKING



Inspired by last month's advice on Marketing Plans, you have now defined your target markets and even specific clients you'd like to work with. So, how to convert these prospects to clients? The following four business development tips have been successful for me. Let me know if these, or others, are effective for you.

1. Get Involved Where Your Clients Gather

Focus your time where your clients congregate. Since our niche is the A/E/C industry, I've found SMPS, AIA, and USGBC to be fertile ground for connecting with potential clients. It's not enough to simply join an organization or show up for meetings. The place where meaningful relationships are built is working side-by-side on a committee or serving on the board of directors. People hire people they know. So embed yourself where clients can get to know you on a personal level.

2. Volunteer Where You Are Passionate

Give your time to causes that you are passionate about. Even better if you can donate your services where they may be noticed by a potential client. Let me give you an example. I'm passionate about sustainability. So serving as Marketing Chair of the USGBC-SD Chapter allows me to demonstrate my craft (see nametags in lower right) and exposes LecoursDesign to potential clients. Volunteering also allows you to practice new skills that a paying client might find too risky (you rarely get fired volunteering). Lessons learned in managing e-news blasts for USGBC directly inform this e-advice blast you are now reading.

3. Obey The Law (Of Reciprocity)

Give and you will get. The universe supports this in Newton's third law: For every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction. According to Michael Port in *Book Yourself Solid*, share what you know, whom you know, and how you feel. You'll be amazed with what comes back to you.

4. Position Yourself As An Expert

I've found the best way get in front of my target audience as a Guru is through public speaking. When I speak on Creativity, Branding, or Marketing at conferences or workshops, it always amazes me how many people come up afterward to give me their business card. If public speaking isn't your thing, make it your thing by joining a local Toastmasters chapter because public speaking is a learned skill. You can also complement speaking with writing. The trade publications your target reads are always hungry for fresh content. Propose an article where you can share useful knowledge (see tip 3) while demonstrating your expertise. Then be sure to send copies of your recent article to your target audience.

Thanks for Listening,

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Great BizDev Books:

Book Yourself Solid by M. Port
RainMaking by F. Harding

Brand I Admire:

Patagonia.com
Style, authenticity and sustainability tell their compelling story

Inspiring Website:

boston.com/bigpicture
large photos are powerful

Great Vendor:

freshform.com
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