

# How Senior Lawyers Can Develop Business, Even as They Cut Back

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**KEY TAKEAWAY:** There can come a time in a senior partner's life when they want to reduce their workload and enjoy life more. Unfortunately, there is rarely a good protocol for doing this successfully. Without an explicit way to address this issue, senior lawyers can appear to go into "hiding," pulling back on their business development efforts. The best approach pairs the senior partner with a younger lawyer to create a

## The Impact of Working in a "Warrior" Culture

Law firms are often described as having a warrior culture. Like young soldiers, young lawyers are welcomed to their professions via a period of intense immersion – called boot camp in the military and the associate track in a law firm. At this stage of career development, the demands are intense and the expectations are that you will "suck it up" and do what is asked of you. Only those who can adapt to this culture will survive.

At the next stage, career soldiers and career lawyers plunge into their "gung ho" cultures – and all that goes along with this commitment, including long hours and a sacrifice of personal life to professional needs. If a soldier is called upon to defend his or her country, all other aspects of life are put on hold. If a lawyer is needed to represent the firm and its clients, all other aspects of life are put on hold.

## When Being a Warrior Loses its Appeal

Is it any wonder that many of these seasoned warriors eventually decide that they have had enough? They have fought the good fight that leads to professional success, but now they want to enjoy the parts of their lives that they have put on hold for so many years. How many senior lawyers dream of being carried off the field on their battle shields?

This is the phase of the work/life process in which personal fulfillment starts to demand equal attention with professional success.

When this happens, lawyers who were previously enthusiastic and successful business developers may decide – consciously or unconsciously – that they will not seek any new business. They are not ready to retire, but just when their skills, reputations, contacts and client relationships are at their peak, they can go into "hiding." According to the complaints we get

from some clients, many firms are at a loss of why these senior partners are not performing at the same levels.

The root of the problem lies in the fact that their personal business development plans have not changed to keep pace with their evolving personal priorities. Since their old plans don't meet their current needs – and this is the only way they know how to development business – they are simply abandoning the old plans.

### **How to Salvage a Senior Partner's Many Talents**

What senior partners need is a new way to develop business – not for themselves, but for others at the firm.

Coaches can help senior partners assess their evolving professional and personal priorities and come up with a modified business development plan that works for them – and for their firm – at this stage of their careers.

This is a win/win solution to the problem. The law firm continues to benefit from the skills, reputation, contacts and client relationships of the senior partner while the senior partner is able to focus more time on personal priorities. Once senior partners have formal “permission” from the firm to transition to a new kind of business development model, they stop hiding out and once again become valuable business developers.

### **The Key to the Plan's Success**

The key to this new approach is for the senior partner to pair up with a junior partner to develop a deliberate joint marketing plan.

A junior partner's business development plan might include the acquisition of new skills – developing the professional and personal skills necessary to be one of the best lawyers in the market area defined in the personal branding process. A senior partner's plan, by comparison, might include teaching those skills to others – both inside the firm as a mentor or outside the firm as an instructor or professor.

A junior partner's business development plan might include building a reputation. This can involve publishing, speaking, providing comments to the media or taking a leadership role in an industry group. The plan of a senior partner, who has a well-established reputation, might include co-publishing or co-presenting with junior partners, passing media inquiries along to a junior partner, or helping a junior partner gain a role in the selected industry organization.

A junior partner's business development plan might include building a network of contacts within a defined market area and then cultivating them in a disciplined fashion. A senior partner's plan could include sharing an extensive list of contacts and making the appropriate introductions.

A junior partner's business development plan would include turning some of these contacts into clients. A senior partner's plan could include working with these junior partners to show them how to turn one-time engagements into clients for life. In addition, senior partners should be thinking about how to start the process of transitioning the relationship with their own clients-for-life to the next generation of firm partners.

### **Win/Win Approach**

Using this new approach, everyone wins. The firm retains the talents of their best people. The senior partner is able to continue practicing law and contributing to the firm. And, the junior partner is given a head start in his or her business development efforts.

# Overview of Revenue Wise Services and Contact Information

## FIRM OVERVIEW

Revenue Wise is a full service firm that specializes in helping law firms grow revenue. We use a combination of coaching, training, and consulting to help lawyers, practice groups, and ultimately, law firms become more successful. We can also license our materials, so your in-house staff can deliver the programs.

**Past clients have averaged an 800% return on their investment in our programs.**

We have been serving law firms for over 20 years and count some of the nation's top firms as our clients, including Orrick, Littler Mendelson, Fenwick & West, Kecker & Van Nest, Kilpatrick Townsend & Stockton, Holland & Hart, Lindquist & Vennun and many other firms.

Our services are grouped under these areas:

- **Lawyers Services.** We help your lawyers become better business developers.
- **LinkedIn and Social Media Services.** Many consider our LinkedIn for Lawyers program the best available.
- **Practice & Industry Group Services.** We help your team leaders and members increase revenue, deepen client loyalty, and improve overall team performance.
- **Client Development Services.** We help your firm systematically develop and deepen client loyalty.
- **Firm Services.** We help law firms develop strategies, structures, and plans that measurably grow revenue.
- **Marketing Department Services.** We work with marketing leaders and their teams to optimize the performance of their departments.

## QUESTIONS

If you have questions about our services, please write or give us a call.

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