Building a Sustainable Growth Strategy in the Legal Industry’s New Normal
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The legal industry has settled into a competitive new normal and taking a strategic approach to firm-wide growth is the most assured way to guarantee success in a stormy climate. Competition is fueled by industry-wide firm consolidation and corporate’s ever-increasing reliance on in-house legal departments. Firms are facing stagnant requests for legal services and a heightening of clients’ expectations for delivery.

To meet all these demands, firms need to grow new business with well-informed attorneys skilled at attracting and retaining clients. There needs to be a game plan to sustain a long-term, revenue-generating pipeline of clients.

Firms are beginning to react and form proactive growth strategies; however, 40% of firm COOs say their business development strategy lacks sophistication. There is an opportunity for CMOs and CBDOs to lead innovative change within their firms to create firm-wide growth. Marketing programs and business development actions inform growth strategies—and the key to execution is in the firm’s ability to Identify, Track, and Manage these opportunities.

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IDEA

Build a Growth Strategy that Identifies Where to Focus Efforts

Business development means pursuing strategic opportunities by cultivating partnerships and existing relationships, and by identifying new markets for services. Creating a focused business development strategy will ensure the success of your growth goals.

What a Growth Strategy Includes

The cornerstone of any successful growth strategy is the ability to identify where to allocate resources and efforts. Without this key foundation, developing a proactive and results-producing approach becomes very difficult. You must IDENTIFY what markets and opportunities will most likely produce results for your firm. Analyzing legacy and current customer information, as well as win/loss data, will help achieve this.

In addition to data insights, this process requires collaboration across the firm. Collaboration is the number one challenge of firms seeking new business. The right technology can facilitate pivotal data insights and enable the cultural shift necessary to achieve firm-wide participation. Business development and marketing leaders will be essential to this process, becoming change agents for innovative processes and client delivery methods. Working together to create a growth strategy can serve as a catalyst for internal collaboration.
Identify

How to Build a Growth Strategy

Building your growth strategy starts with analyzing and deriving insights from the data your firm is already collecting. The analysis of legacy and current client data—especially win/loss metrics—is essential to determining what target markets (e.g., industry, practice area, service) and potential clients will produce the best results. Win/loss metrics are crucial to this step: 60% of firms already rely on these metrics to determine the potential success of future campaigns and actions. However, because of technology constraints, very few firm leaders use this pivotal piece to inform their growth strategy. A CRM system, like the industry-leading solution LexisNexis® InterAction®, centralizes and streamlines your win/loss and other CRM data. When Business Edge builds on InterAction to provide the insights into that data, firms are empowered to build a targeted growth strategy.

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KPIs

| Number of new accounts |
| Percent of growth in specific markets |
| Revenue goals |
| Milestones based on time tables |
Gather Data to Turn Leads into Opportunities

From a tactical perspective, there are as many different approaches to business development as there are law firms. A defined, customized process is necessary to achieve growth objectives: activities should drill down to a multitude of factors, including a firm’s culture and service offerings. It’s clear that developing and implementing a successful tactical approach is best accomplished alongside the right technology.

Technology is the key to turning intimate client details into measurable data insights. It provides attorneys, as well as business development and marketing leaders, the targeted information to expedite the client/opportunity discovery process. Software solutions, such as Business Edge, enhance attorney collaboration/interaction and help save work that should be spent on billable time. Having the right people, tactics, and tech tools are key factors in effectively executing a business development strategy.

When you TRACK data such as engagement across the firm, you can craft an ideal solution around each potential market and client. With data in hand, your team is empowered to determine the best course of action for each pursuit, helping them create steps to take that will deepen your engagement with specific clients.

When Business Edge is used on top of your InterAction solution, all team members approach client engagement from the same direction. Randy Pulley, Director of Business Development, Kilpatrick Townsend & Stockton LLP, appreciates these opportunities for firm collaboration. “The Management Committee has a great view of what’s going on across the firm and they might say, ‘There’s a potential conflict with this client. Let’s be mindful of that going forward.’ Business Edge helps team members follow pursuits all the way through a client decision.”
Using intuitive dashboards, you’ll get to view the most effective activities, allowing you to establish repeatable procedures to advance the relationships. Your business development strategies become more manageable with input and assistance from all team members—everyone is a participant with Business Edge transparency.

As part of their 2018 study, legal consultancy firm Major, Lindsey & Africa acknowledged the advantages firms can have: “Great opportunities are available for those who are willing to adapt to the evolving needs of the profession and the changing conditions of the marketplace.” Included in the study results, 68% of survey respondents reported spending 10% or less of their time on business development. And less than a quarter reported they were satisfied with this amount of time.
Create Actionable Pursuits and Increase Attorney Engagement

A firm’s culture that incubates a business development strategy will bolster the process for selling legal services—with the support from both firm partners and executives. Working together, marketing and business development leaders can change a firm’s trajectory by facilitating an understanding of how technology tools can transform the new business process.

Successfully MANAGING your new business opportunities so they turn into recurring revenue will keep your firm’s pipeline robust. As Pulley comments, “You need to stay in front of the client until they make a decision. Win or lose, there is always a next step. Either way, you should build on the relationships and the research you put in.” Gain a holistic, real-time view into engagement to provide oversight and accountability with attorneys and legal professionals within the firm.

You can streamline your team’s efforts by analyzing what engagements drive the most success with which audience or type of opportunities. This type of data will arm your client development teams with targeted information, expediting the client/opportunity discovery process, enhancing attorney collaboration, and saving work hours that would be spent on this otherwise tedious task.

**Business Edge** can enhance your firm’s main initiatives and facilitate the development of stronger relationships with clients, prospects and referral sources.
Team members who are equipped with accurate and current client information used for building relationships can confidently participate in their firm’s business development strategy. As you put more importance on building better client relationships with a focus on a firm-wide brand image, Business Edge can enhance your firm’s main initiatives and facilitate the development of stronger relationships with clients, prospects and referral sources.

All signs point to a refined business development strategy and the ability to adapt to strategic insights as part of a law firm’s success. Data that is measured and analyzed for what’s working (and what’s not) will help firms adapt and streamline these efforts. Identifying targets and looking at the road maps won’t be enough. Business development and marketing leaders who facilitate strategic, long-term growth and the tools necessary to define strategy will be crucial to navigating a path to success in the competitive legal landscape.