

# Let's Not Do Lunch: 6 Ways Prospects Prefer to Meet Today

People seem to have less downtime than ever, and in-house counsel are no exception. Earlier this summer, several local in-house lawyers spoke at a Legal Marketing Association luncheon I attended. One of the topics was the invitations from outside counsel to meet for lunch or attend events, such as baseball games or golf tournaments, to develop or strengthen business relationships. The speakers made clear that they had little time to accept many of these requests and suggested that attorneys be more strategic in their outreach to develop relationships with in-house counsel.

To that end, here are six strategic ways to strengthen the bonds of the in-house/outside counsel relationship.

## Host a CLE Seminar

Since in-house lawyers are pressed for time, the panelists indicated an event that allowed them to multi-task was preferable. Because all attorneys must complete a required number of CLE hours each year, a law firm seminar that provides CLE hours would be a welcome invitation. This also allows the law firm to showcase its strong practice areas, as well as the skills and experience of their attorneys.

## Charitable Events

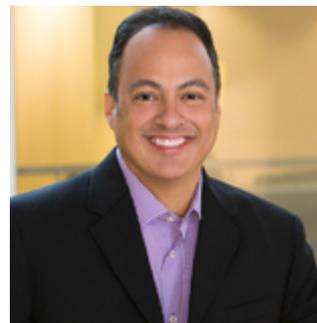
The in-house attorneys indicated that they are always looking for ways to give back to the community and support worthy causes. That's why having your law firm host or sponsor charity fundraisers and benefits is a great opportunity to not only support a worthy cause, but also expand your list of contacts.

## Attend a Conference Together

Another tactic is to determine whether your client or prospective client will be attending any industry or [legal conferences](#) in the near future. If so, make plans to meet at the conference and arrange to sit together for one or more of the sessions. Many of these conferences include a luncheon with a guest speaker. Make plans to sit at the same table, since this is a good time to meet before the guest speaker begins his or her presentation.

## Co-author an Article

Another strategic idea is to ask general counsel to co-author an article. First, develop a topic or list of topics and ask the general counsel if he or she is interested in the subject matter. Next, ask your internal or external public relations professional to [shop the topic](#)



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or topics to relevant publications. Once you secure interest, you can relay the deadline, word length and other article guidelines.

The advantage of this tactic is that it helps both of you develop your reputation as thought leaders in the industry. Bonus: Once published, the article can be shared with clients and prospective clients via email and social media, and posted on your firm's website.

## Are You Ready for Some Football?

It's fall and that means football season. With millions of adults playing fantasy football across the U.S., it's likely that some of your clients and prospects are playing. Fantasy football provides a fun way to stay in touch with your contacts, and it's more convenient for time-strapped attorneys than dinner or a sporting event. Keep in mind, too, that men aren't the only ones playing. According to a recent survey, women now account for more than 20 percent of all fantasy football participants.

## Take a Coffee Break

Finally, while taking a client or prospect out for lunch or dinner might seem like a kind gesture, the panelists indicated that it actually represents an inconvenience. If you do want to dish over food, consider setting up a breakfast or coffee date before the workday begins.

Remember, relationship-building with clients and prospective clients is not a sprint but a marathon, so it will take time and effort. Being strategic will increase your success.

Do you have other tactics that have worked for you? Email me, [Carlos Arcos](mailto:carcos@jaffepr.com), at [carcos@jaffepr.com](mailto:carcos@jaffepr.com) or post a comment below.