

5 Steps to Making Business Development a Habit

Now that we are through January, some of you may be realizing that your New Year's resolutions have begun to fall by the wayside. Why is it so hard to make a new commitment and simply stick to it?



Jaffe Staff

Basically, the answer is that we are all creatures of habit. According to [recent research conducted at Duke University](#), habits account for about 40 percent of our behavior on any given day. In addition, our minds tire as the day proceeds, and we fall back on our instinctual nature, which is in part the habits we've built over a lifetime.

How do we form a new habit and commit it to our repertoire of intuitive behaviors? As a business development coach, I help attorneys bring in new business and develop more business from the firm's existing clients. I often find that this endeavor is more aligned with psychology than with business strategy. As part of my job, I've studied many, many theories regarding creating a new habit and have observed themes throughout the literature. They include:

- Consistency
- Simplicity
- Repetition
- Accidents
- The Buddy System

By applying these themes to the [business development process](#), lawyers can achieve more success. Let's look at these themes more closely so we can keep things simple and easy to fit into our busy schedules.

1. We are going to be consistent – we will do something to develop business each workday. It can be as easy as sending an email to a referral source or making a quick call to a contact to catch up.
2. Simplicity keeps our initiatives straightforward and doesn't require too much mental energy. Instead of developing a full-blown strategic plan to bring in business, break the process into daily tasks, and do something toward achieving your goals each day.
3. Repetition is imperative in creating new habits. Repeating our processes each workday ensures consistency, creates habits and will, over time, ensure we reach our goals.
4. Of course, *life gets in the way*. Hiccups and missteps will happen. The key is to get back on track as quickly as possible. Forget about guilt: It's just a waste of time. Instead, spend your mental energy on getting back into that routine.
5. Finally, remember that most things in life are easier when you have someone by your side, so create a Buddy System with a colleague. You can share ideas, motivate one another and hold each other accountable.

We also need to remember that our minds do tire as the day wears on. Be sure to plan some of your business development activities early on in the day so they don't fall off the list. I once worked with a business coach who called this the "kiss the frog" method. His methodology was to get routine tasks taken care of as soon as you begin work (you've kissed the frog) so you won't fail to complete activities later in the day.

You really can make developing business a regular part of your workday if you commit to making it a habit. Go ahead and start today. The sooner you start, the sooner you'll have a new and productive habit.

If you would like more information about [business development for lawyers](#), contact Terry M. Isner at tisner@jaffepr.com.