

The family factor - the secret ingredient in developing business opportunities



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**“Families that play together, stay together”.
That’s what my late grandfather always used to say.**

But what does his message have to do with developing business opportunities in a law firm? In my opinion, everything.

Business development is about people. It’s about relationships. Not just momentary relationships, but committed relationships. Relationships one would most likely find in a family.

What unites a family and makes it strong? Trust, common values and support. When you know there is always someone there that’s got your back, who will catch you when you fall, guide you patiently when you fail, and encourage you towards making your dreams come true.

What would you do if you knew you couldn’t fail? You would have the courage to be innovative, daring and creative. You wouldn’t be afraid to lose face. When you’re in a secure environment - you dare, and when you dare, that’s when the magic happens. That’s when you start to achieve amazing things.

This, I believe, is precisely the type of environment you need to create in your law firm in order to engage minds and encourage vision, towards achieving your business development goals.

A law firm is a people’s business. And all involved must be committed to the process of creating a secure environment and a supportive atmosphere. The partners, the associates, the administrative staff. The guard at the entrance to the building. Everyone, must be committed to the process. Which means that everyone, needs to feel that they are, truly, part of the process, part of the family.

Since business development is the subject at hand, you might ask where the clients are in this process. The most obvious answer would be, that the clients are those corporations and individuals that your firm renders its services to. And that the entire process, is aimed towards giving them the highest level of service and professional advice that your firm has to offer.

Well, that is correct, but far from complete, and a very narrow view of a much broader picture. In my opinion, the list of clients also includes all those within the law firm who are involved in, and committed to, the process itself. They are the senior and junior partners, the senior and junior associates, the article clerks, the administrative staff, your colleagues, your suppliers and yes, even the guard at the entrance to the building. These are all your clients. And you should value and nurture your relationship with them. The way you treat them, is the way they will treat the firm’s ‘real clients’. They are just as much the firm’s ‘real clients’, as those corporations and individuals, represented by the firm in complex litigation and large scale commercial transactions. ➤



> No matter who you are or what position you hold in the firm, this complex and sensitive network of relationships works in all directions. Bottom-up. Top-down. Horizontally, vertically and diagonally. All intertwined. What goes around - comes around. And it is only when these internal, family-like relationships, are in complete sync and harmony, that the 'real clients' - those corporations and individuals, who seek your undivided attention and trusted advice, will truly feel at home.

I believe that developing a synergy with clients is, first and foremost, about establishing a family atmosphere within the firm. A spirit of trust and integrity, which leads to a feeling of security and commitment. Where the members of the firm don't just come to work. They come to grow their family business, which they feel part of, care about, and genuinely hope for its success.

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Indeed, the firm is a business, and it should take pride in being persistent, competitive, driving towards uncompromising excellence and setting challenging goals, milestones and deadlines. The execution, bottom line and end results, are what ultimately count. But the journey, the people along the way and their personal stories, should be recognized and valued, encouraged to look beyond the day-to-day machinations of work and towards something greater, of a higher value.

Business development is not a one man show. It's about team effort. It's about acknowledging that people get fired up and use initiative to create new, bold, daring strategies only once their passion is ignited, to come each day to work with motivation and enthusiasm. It's about who they are, what they do, and who they do it with.



Every member of your firm engages, at some point and to a certain extent, with your 'real clients'. Whether it's the secretary who schedules the meeting, the article clerk in the elevator on the way to the conference room, the assistant who serves the coffee. Even the cleaner who cleans the office. These, are your clients as well. Their satisfaction from the work environment, their smile, their genuine desire to go the extra mile. The positive things they feel and say about the firm. They are your marketing channel. Your face. Your brand.

This is not a simple task, and therefore, as in every strong family, the firm's strategic goals will be achieved in greater ease where there is a strong, trustworthy and respected leadership, which believes in, and encourages cooperation, partnership, teamwork, sharing and supporting one another, and which regards transparency and openness, gratitude and appreciation as signs of strength and a way of life.

Some say life is a series of relationships and what you make of them. So is the art of developing business opportunities. It's about your every interaction. Not only with your 'real clients', but also, with your 'family' members within the firm. If they feel at home, your 'real clients' will feel it too.

Gilad Tuffias is the head of business development at Fischer Behar Chen Well Orion & Co. Gilad is a certified mediator and serves as the Deputy Chairman of the Israel Bar Association's Hi-Tech Committee. Since 2003, he has been the co-founder and manager of 'Common Future', Israel's first academic endowment fund, at the IDC Herzliya, and in 2005, he was awarded for his spirit of volunteerism and outstanding contribution to Israeli society, by the South African Zionist Federation.

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