

# THE BALANCE BEAM

A Newsletter for Members of New York ***Flex-Time Lawyers LLC***  
2004 – 2005 Season

## ***Business Development Beyond Rubber Chicken Dinners***

*By Deborah Epstein Henry*



*Business development and marketing are all about networking. Networking is all about building relationships and connections. If you ask anyone whether women or men are better at developing relationships, the majority will say that women are more relational and connected than men. If this is so, then why are women lawyers not reaching the levels of success in business development and marketing that their male colleagues are? In this article, I focus on resolving the four perceived problems with women and business development, and discuss how women can use relationships to develop clients for their practice.*

In consulting to thousands of (mostly) female lawyers and numerous law firms, I have repeatedly found four recurring problems with women and networking.

First, the framework within which women see business development and networking is one created by men and therefore feels awkward and is not one where women naturally thrive. For example, men have traditionally had success bringing in clients on the golf course, at spectator sporting events and at rubber chicken (i.e., political or

fundraising) dinners. These are not necessarily forums where women feel comfortable and therefore they often lack success in developing clients in these venues.

Second, although women have tremendous success developing personal relationships, unlike many men, women often feel uncomfortable translating personal relationships into professional ones.

Third, women with children often feel the most time-pressed and marketing is the first thing they drop once children come along.

Fourth, many women feel there are either not enough senior women in power or that it is still such an old boys network that they do not have enough access to the powerbrokers to bring in big business.

What follows below are suggested ideas about how to get started, including general networking tips as well as proposed solutions to obstacles -- perceived or real -- that women encounter in developing business and networking.

**Getting Started: Gathering Information, Making Inquiries, Doing your Homework; and, Developing your Name.**

- Take an inventory of existing contacts you have, both personal and professional. In developing a list of these people, note who you know, who your contacts know, and who you would like to meet through your contacts.
- Ask people in your library, or marketing department, mentors and colleagues where existing business comes from in your firm and practice area. This is critical because before being effective in developing business, lawyers need to know their target audience.
- Single out rainmakers in your firm and learn from them or other sources how they have developed their client base.
- Speak with mentors and friends outside the firm about how they have developed business or how their colleagues have had success in doing so.
- Research what meetings and conferences are attended by those in your practice area and target audience.
- Read CLE brochures, announcements in legal publications, recognitions and awards to learn who is at the forefront of the issues concerning you and your practice.
- Research what publications are “must reads” for those in your practice area (both by partners and in-house counsel).
- Determine if there are opportunities to write articles for

these publications as part of non-billable work you are already expected to do for your firm.

- Initiate mentoring relationships with different types of people for whom you have done work or for whom you would like to work or who you otherwise admire.
- Develop a relationship with the assigning partner and/or administrator. These people are instrumental in your professional development because they help determine both the type of work you do and the colleagues with whom you work.
- Develop a relationship with the marketing person at your place of employment because that person may be instrumental in helping you market yourself both internally and externally.
- The end product of your research is to develop a plan composed of:
  1. the people you are targeting and how to reach them;
  2. the meetings, conferences, organizations, events and venues you plan to participate in and attend;
  3. the reading and research you plan to do; and,
  4. the writings and speaking you plan to do.The plan should also include your methodology for follow-up and a schedule to revise your plan on a bi-annual (or annual, at the very least) basis.

**Changing the Networking Venue for Developing Business to One where you are Comfortable and can Thrive.**

- There is no magical venue to develop client relationships. The key is to participate in activities that you enjoy. You will likely meet others who you can relate to through such participation.
- In addition to thinking about networking at the traditional cocktail party, think about networking based on a common interest through participation in an organization or event.
- When thinking about participating in organizations that may help to expand your networking, rather than joining everything of remote interest, be selective and participate in fewer activities and play a leadership or more integral role.
- If you have the opportunity to dictate where networking can occur for yourself or your firm, consider less traditionally male venues. Examples include art openings, auctions, cooking classes, golf clinics, self-defense workshops, shopping excursions, reading clubs, spas, and wine tastings.
- When designing an unconventional networking outing, be sure that the environment lends itself to relationship-building and conversation. For example, if you have a networking event at a spa, you don't want the attendees getting private facials and massages. Instead, you want the opportunity for conversation during manicures and pedicures.

- While it is important to create new networking venues for you to thrive, this does not mean that you should exclude yourself from the more typical, male driven business development opportunities that surround you, e.g., attending a spectator sporting event. If you are at ease in this venue, then you will be broadening your opportunities by participating in them too.

**Translating Personal Relationships into Professional Ones and Sealing the Deal.**

- Every time you introduce yourself, there is an opportunity to start a business relationship. Use your last name or your professional last name (if it's different) in your community and in the activities you participate in outside of work so people can identify you.
- When you introduce yourself, you should be able to describe what you do and your specialty in a sentence or two, in layperson's terms. Many times, people know each other for years and don't have a real sense of what they do.
- To translate personal relationships into professional ones, it is critical to focus on follow-up and repetition. This is a way for people in your life with whom you have relationships to gradually change the context in which they know you.

- If you know someone from a social setting and you want them to start thinking of you in a business context, start by sending them an e-mail from your work address with your professional signature line at the bottom.
  - Offer to meet the person you know socially for lunch near your office, if possible, and pick up the tab, if you have the marketing budget. This is an opportunity for the person who knows you socially to expand her vision of you into a professional context.
  - If your firm gives you a marketing budget and you have a friend (or a friend's spouse) who is a prospective client and you want them to think of you professionally, offer to take them out on the firm and have them get to know you better.
  - If you have friends in common with prospective clients, share with them that you have mutual friends. This will, once again, broaden the context in which these prospective clients will think of you, and enhance your credibility as a person.
  - If possible, visit prospective clients at their site. This enables you to gain knowledge of the clients' interests and get to know the business better. Clients are seldom visited by their lawyers and it shows that you are developing a real interest in their business.
  - Use changes in your life or others as an opportunity to keep in touch or get back in touch with someone.
- If you have discussed a legal issue with a friend with whom you want to develop your professional identity, follow-up with an e-mail with articles or client alerts that address the topic you discussed.
  - Send firm holiday cards as a way to keep in touch and remind friends who are prospective clients that you are not just someone whom they know socially.
  - Write handwritten notes to keep in touch and follow-up after making contact with someone.
  - If you are uncomfortable selling yourself to friends because you feel you are bragging or because you don't want to jeopardize your friendship, you can refer them to colleagues. This enables you to still originate the client but keep a distance from the actual work and the potential awkwardness or tension that may result from working with a friend.
  - Women often feel uncomfortable with networking because they think it is using someone. In fact, when it works, it's about giving and listening and being generous with your time. If you remind yourself that networking is a gradual process of mutual benefit and exchange of information, you will increase your comfort zone.

**Maximizing your Marketing Via Activities in which you Already Participate to Lay the Groundwork and Develop the Awareness and Visibility to Bring in Business.**

- You may feel that you are too busy to focus on marketing.
- Here are some basic reasons why networking is critical for you: Empowering yourself both internally and externally because of your increased desirability and connections; Minimizing vulnerability and maximizing opportunities; Enhancing job security and the likelihood of promotion and advancement; Laying the groundwork for more marketing when you have more time later in life; and, Avoiding missed opportunities or paths to success.
- Make a list of every activity you already participate in and think of all of the networking opportunities in those venues. For example, if you decide to attend your college reunion and there happens to be a talk you can give while you're there, try to see if you can do so.
- Think, plan, and know how you want to present yourself and your strengths and interests to the various people you know (and don't know) who participate or attend those activities with you.
- In your professional life, if you belong to bar associations, trade associations, and other professional organizations, use these opportunities to make connections with others who may refer business to you.
- Maximize your visibility through the non-billable work you are expected to do through your firm. For example, make an effort to attend the departmental meetings, firm retreats, and other events at the firm that command a large attendance.
- In the non-billable work you are expected to do, choose visible work to participate in like recruiting. Be deliberate and plan ahead to schedule occasional long lunches with both prospective lawyers as well as colleagues so that you can network with them.
- Work with a diverse group of internal lawyers and for different clients. This is an opportunity for you to develop alliances with different colleagues and learn from lawyers with different work styles and strengths. It also puts you in a more secure position to have a multitude of lawyers who know and support you.
- Be "present" even when you're not in the office by sending e-mails, personal notes, and circulating relevant articles.
- In your personal life, if you volunteer through your children's school or participate in a religious organization or do charity work, use these opportunities to develop relationships that may lead to new business. Or, if you are in a book club, coach your kids' sports teams, or belong to a gym, these are places where you might meet people of influence.

- Recycle what you do. If you are asked to give an internal presentation or write a memo for your practice area or department, convert it into a client alert and then use it to solicit speaking engagements and convert it into an article. Once the initial non-billable assignment is done, the conversion process is easy and does not take significantly more work.
- Use the resources available to you through your firm library, marketing department, and assistant to get help with the work. For example, the library can research the best publications to publish your article and the marketing department can develop the list of contacts of who should receive the article and your assistant can prepare the letters to try to get the article published.
- Once your article is written or you've given your talk, be sure your marketing department publicizes it both internally and externally to maximize the visibility for your work.

**Developing Relationships so that you have Access to Decision Makers and Powerbrokers to Bring in and Inherit the Business.**

- You may not have access to decision makers today but if you nurture the law school, personal, and professional relationships you have now, these individuals will one day (if they're not already) be decision makers and power brokers.

- In the meantime, you have the opportunity to develop your name through giving talks, writing articles and establishing relationships with often the more junior person who will rise up through the ranks.
- Examples of ways to be helpful and to reach decision makers include going to an event where a senior in-house lawyer is speaking and then following-up with a helpful article or client alert on point with the issue discussed.
- When trying to build a relationship with a prospective client, see if you know people in common who can vouch for your credibility.
- If a company always uses a certain firm for its work, develop a relationship to do the work when the other firm is conflicted out of it.
- Invite prospective clients to talks you plan to give because it is an excellent opportunity for them to see you as the authority on an issue and to see you conduct yourself in a professional environment.

- Although you might not be ready to bring in business based on your own skill, an interim step is to become known as a resource or “go-to” person so that you have the power to direct business to your colleagues. Once when I was coaching my son’s soccer team, a father of one of the kids asked me if I could recommend a “really tough litigator” to represent him. Rather than be insulted that he did not think of me as that “really tough litigator,” I was pleased that he saw me as a resource and it gave me the opportunity to secure a lawyer for the father and also initiate the business by referring the case to my colleague.
- If you are able to refer a case to either a colleague or another lawyer because your firm cannot handle the matter, that person will think of you when he or she later has the opportunity to return the favor.
- If you are too junior to feel you have access to many business development opportunities, become invaluable to your colleagues by demonstrating an excellent work product and work ethic.
- If you cannot envision ever bringing in the types of clients your firm services, then it is that much more important that you market yourself internally to your colleagues.
- As you market yourself internally, work with as many colleagues as possible to build up the internal support for your work and also benefit from the

different teaching styles of the lawyers around you.

- Build strong relationships with your senior colleagues so that when it is time for retirement, your senior colleagues will want you to inherit their clients because you have done a good job servicing them.
- You need to become indispensable to the existing clients of the firm, so that they remain clients of the firm and in turn, insist on working with you.

### **Guidelines for Attending the Traditional Networking Cocktail Party.**

- In addition to networking through the personal and professional relationships you already have, when you attend the more typical networking event, it is important to keep a few guidelines in mind to maximize the impact.
- It may be helpful to attend with a friend from a non-competitive area as long as you don’t just talk to that person all night. It can serve as a means to expand your network by meeting her contacts at the event and having her meet yours.
- When you attend a cocktail party, think in advance about how long you are going to be there, if there is anyone in particular that you want to meet who you know will be there, if there are certain types of people there who you would like to meet, and how many people you would like to meet while you are there.

- Try to avoid staying in conversations too long if your plan is to meet a number of people while you are there.
- Be able to state your professional affiliation and what you do in layperson's terms concisely.
- Practice and be comfortable wrapping up a conversation and exchanging business cards.
- Follow-up after networking events is critical to any success you might have in meeting someone. Write notes to yourself on the business cards you collected so that you remember who you met, what you discussed, and what, if anything, you promised to do afterwards.
- Follow-up within two days of meeting. Do what you said you would do or say you enjoyed meeting each other.

**In sum**, women are no longer hiding their femininity when it comes to business development. Instead, they are embracing it as a means to differentiate themselves from men and find solidarity with other professional women. There is more of a recognition that the traditional networking model was created by men for men and that in order for women to reach similar levels of networking success, they need to create a new model that is natural for them. That is not to say that women should shun the successful techniques men have developed. It is more that they should participate in those that they can and embellish them with other techniques that suit them. By using the social and professional venues that they already participate in, women can broaden their base and start reaching greater levels of networking success.

## Resources

What follows are some recent work/life and diversity resources for lawyers.

- ✓ Catalyst, "Beyond a Reasonable Doubt: Building the Business Case for Flexibility. The Catalyst series on flexibility in Canadian law firms," <http://www.catalystwomen.org/knowledge/titles/files/full/canadalaw3%2014%2005%20FINAL.pdf> (2005).
- ✓ Boston Bar Association, "Facing the Grail: Confronting the Cost of Work-Family Imbalance. An implementation Plan for Addressing Work-Life Issues in the Legal Profession," <http://www.bostonbar.org/prs/wfcpplan.htm> (2005).
- ✓ National Association of Law Placement, press release and chart summarizing the availability and use of part-time schedules in law firms, <http://www.nalp.org/press/details.php?id=5> (2004).
- ✓ *Diversity & the Bar*, "Call to Action. Sara Lee's General Counsel: Making Diversity a Priority," by Melanie Lasoff Levs, <http://www.mcca.com/site/data/magazine/2005-01/saralee0105.shtml> (January/February 2005).



- ✓ MCCA, “Diversity in the Workplace: A Statement of Principle,” including an extensive list of general counsel signatories, <http://www.mcca.com/site/data/corporate/GC/Statement.htm> (2003).
- ✓ The Association of the Bar of the City of New York, Statement of Diversity Principles and Diversity Practices, [http://www.abcnyc.org/pdf/diversity\\_principles.pdf](http://www.abcnyc.org/pdf/diversity_principles.pdf).

### ***The New York Wrap-Up***

***Flex-Time Lawyers LLC*** completed its third season in New York. It held ten meetings during the 2004 – 2005 season. Meetings were hosted by Kirkland & Ellis; Brown Raysman; Davis Polk; Sullivan & Cromwell; Dewey Ballantine; King & Spalding; Allen & Overy; Pillsbury Winthrop; Sonnenschein Nath; and Kramer Levin.

Below are the guest speakers from the third season.

- Elaine Aarons, a UK partner at Eversheds discussed the Firm’s “Lifestyle” program offering flexible work options to all employees through the equity partner ranks.
- Ann Crittenden, author of *If You’ve Raised Kids, You can Manage Anything*, who discussed her book’s findings that parenting skills are indeed transferable to the workplace and that lessons of leadership can be learned from raising children.
- James J. Sandman, Managing Partner of Arnold & Porter LLP who discussed the role of men and management in the work/life balance debate at law firms.
- Collaboration with The Association of the Bar of the City of New York’s Committee on Women in the Profession to help develop “Best Practices” for New York’s Legal Employers in Recruiting, Retaining, and Promoting Women Attorneys.
- Lee S. Attanasio, partner, Sidley Austin Brown & Wood LLP; Audra Cohen, partner, Sullivan & Cromwell; Mark Welling, Managing Partner, Allen & Overy’s New York office; Kristin Leary, Work/Life Projects Coordinator, Skadden, Arps; and, Jeannine Rupp, Director of Professional and Personal Life Integration, Kirkpatrick & Lockhart discussed “Breathing Life into Flex-Time Policies & Managing Expectations along the Way.”
- DeAnne Aguirre, Senior Vice President and Managing Partner, Organization and Change Leadership Business, Booz Allen Hamilton and Deborah Holmes, Esq., Americas Director, Center for the New Workforce and Corporate Social Responsibility who discussed “Improving the Status of Women Lawyers by Adopting Best Practices from the Accounting and Consulting Fields.”

Other topics covered throughout the third season included: “Time Management & Work/Life Balance in a 24/7 World,” “What’s In A Leader?,” “Negotiating & Re-Negotiating Flex-Time,” and, “Networking & Business Development for Women Beyond Rubber Chicken Dinners.”

In its third season, the New York **Flex-Time Lawyers LLC** mailing list grew to over 1,000. Membership is comprised of law firm, in-house, solo practitioner, and non-profit lawyers as well as legal recruiters, legal administrators, lawyers seeking to re-enter the job force, and others looking for a work/life resource in the law. Press coverage for the third season included National Public Radio’s *Radio Times*, *Working Mother*, *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, *Workforce Management* and *The Philadelphia Lawyer*. **Flex-Time Lawyers LLC** continues to collaborate with the press as a means to dispel misconceptions about flex-time lawyers, educate management and employers, share information to effect change, and spread the word to prospective members.

### **Upcoming Meetings**

**Date: Thursday, September 22, 2005, 12:30 p.m.**

**Location: Morgan, Lewis & Bockius,** 101 Park Avenue (at 40th Street), 39th Floor, New York, NY.

**Topic: The Nitty-Gritty of Making Part-Time Work.**

**Date: Monday, November 7, 2005, 12:30 p.m.**

**Location: Weil, Gotshal & Manges,** 767 Fifth Avenue (between 58th & 59th Streets), 25th Floor Dining Room, New York, NY.

**Topic: Opt-Out Retrospective.**

**Guest: Lisa Belkin**

### **Flexible Recruiting**

With **Flex-Time Lawyers LLC** beginning its fourth season in New York, employers are increasingly using the organization as a job resource when looking for candidates to work a flexible or reduced schedule.

If you are a lawyer interested in finding a new position, please e-mail [dehenry@flextimelawyers.com](mailto:dehenry@flextimelawyers.com) and include in the “re” line of the e-mail your name and “employment position.” Be sure to also include with the e-mail: 1. your resume; 2. a brief description of the position you are seeking; and, 3. your preferred contact information with your practice area, law school graduation year and current title and affiliation. **Flex-Time Lawyers LLC** will keep your information on file and contact you if there is an employment opportunity that meets your credentials and interest.

If you are an employer seeking a flexible or reduced schedule lawyer, e-mail a job description to [dehenry@flextimelawyers.com](mailto:dehenry@flextimelawyers.com) and you will receive a response with further details about finding the right candidate.

***Flexible Feedback***

***Flex-Time Lawyers LLC*** members should feel free to give feedback about the meetings and suggestions for improvement. This may include topic, speaker, or format suggestions as well as any other constructive input. E-mail your comments and suggestions to: [dehenry@flextimelawyers.com](mailto:dehenry@flextimelawyers.com)

Thank you for your interest and support of ***Flex-Time Lawyers LLC***. I look forward to seeing you back on September 22.

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