

Building Your Own Law Practice: Why Business Development and Mindset Go Hand in Hand

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Maybe you opened your own practice right out of law school. Maybe you spent years at a firm and decided it was time to build something of your own. Either way, you made a bold business decision, and you now wear two hats: the attorney who does the work and the owner who has to bring the work in.

Growing a practice comes down to two things working together: business development and mindset. Most advice covers the first one. The second one is what makes the first one stick.

Business Development: The Work That Brings Clients In

Know who to talk to. Your best source of new matters usually isn't a stranger. It's the people already positioned to send work your way: attorneys who practice in other areas, CPAs, financial advisors, bankers, and your past clients. Make a short list of the people who serve the same clients you do, and start there.

Choose the right rooms. You don't have to attend every event in town. Pick two or three places where your ideal clients and referral partners actually spend time, such as a bar association committee, an industry group, or a local business organization, and become a familiar face there. Depth beats reach.

Build trust before you need it. Referrals follow trust, and trust takes time. Check in, share an article, make an introduction, and be genuinely helpful. When the right matter comes along, you want to be the first name that comes to mind.

Become known for something. Be clear about what you do and who you do it for, then share what you know. Write a short article, speak on a panel, or post a practical tip online. Every time you teach, you build credibility.

Play the long game. A conversation today may turn into a client next year. Business development is an investment with a long runway, so steady effort pays off more than occasional bursts of activity.

Where Most Plans Stall

Here's the part few people talk about. You can have the best business development plan in the world and still not see results, because a plan only works if you follow through on it, week after week, while also handling every client deadline on your desk.

When you're on your own, the legal work always feels more urgent. Business development slides to next week, then next month. That's why mindset isn't a "nice to have." It's the foundation everything else is built on.

Mindset: What Keeps You Moving Forward

A strong mindset. Building a practice comes with slow months and long sales cycles. A strong mindset keeps you steady and focused while the results are still on their way.

Self-leadership. You're the CEO of your practice now. That means making business decisions on purpose: where to invest your time, which opportunities to say yes to, and what to stop doing.

Self-accountability. No one is checking your calendar anymore. You set the standard, and you hold yourself to it. The most successful solo attorneys build a simple system that keeps them on track.

Consistency. One coffee meeting, one follow-up email, one LinkedIn post. Small actions done every week compound into a steady flow of clients.

Seeing the bigger picture. When you know where you want your practice to be a year from now, it's easier to protect time for growth, even in your busiest weeks.

Focusing on what you can influence. You can't decide when a referral comes in. You can decide how many relationships you build and how consistently you show up. Put your energy there.

How They Work Together

Business development tells you what to do. Mindset makes sure you actually do it, consistently, and long enough to see the results. When the two work together, growth stops feeling random and starts feeling like a plan.

Ready to Build Your Practice?

This is exactly how I work with solo attorneys. Over three months, one hour a week on Zoom, we work one-on-one to build your roadmap for a steady book of business, combining the business development strategy with the mindset to carry it through.

"Working with Donna has enabled me to move my initiatives forward, as she has not only helped me identify them but holds me accountable each week to make sure I am taking steps forward. She is a true professional, and I would strongly encourage other CEOs and business leaders to work with her to maximize your personal growth and impact."

Joe Campolo, Managing Partner
Campolo, Middleton & McCormick, LLP

Let's talk about your practice.

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