

The Second-Best Way for a Law Firm Partner to Do Business Development

Let me get this out of the way: the very best way for an attorney to acquire business is through relationships. This would include family, friends, and family friends. As a young [attorney placement](#) recruiter, I placed a visit to the Beverly Hills office of Finley, Kumble, Manley et al. based in NYC. Marshal Manley was the resident partner in charge. I met with him in his beautiful, spacious office there on Wilshire Boulevard in Beverly Hills. His office and his demeanor reminded me of the movie *Wall Street* with Michael Douglas. During our brief meeting, I said to Mr. Manley: "Mr. Manley, what does it take for an associate to make partner at your firm?" Marshal Manley said: "Ted, tell who his father is!"

Ok, now that that is out of the way, the second-best way to "market" your legal services to potential clients is by being a "speaker" at a business meeting relevant to your practice area. Several years ago, I had an "exclusive" [recruiting assignment from the Latham & Watkins law firm in Costa Mesa](#). The partner, whom I knew from my athletic club, that gave me the requisite actually came to my office to discuss the project. Cameron and I discussed the various [corporate partners](#) extant in Orange County while sitting in my office. We mutually identified several prospects. Afterwards that day and the next day I telephonically approached all the [corporate partner](#) prospects on my list. Frankly, none of them got any traction for various reasons. I came up with the idea of doing this project "backwards." I acquired a list of the twenty largest companies in Orange County. Subsequently, both speaking directly with the CEO of these corporations or his secretary, I was able to identify the attorneys whom these companies predominantly utilized as outside counsel. By the way, "his" signifies that there were no female CEOs at that juncture. One name that came up with two of the twenty companies was Robert Goon. Interestingly enough, Bob was neither resident in Orange County nor with a firm that had an Orange County office. (He worked for a firm on the Westside of Los Angeles and lived in the Palisades.) So I called him and told him who I was recruiting for, asked if he were interested, he was, and set an in-person meeting for the next time he would be in Orange County to see one of his clients. We met at the Center Club in Costa Mesa, which Bob belonged to. Great looking guy! Looked like a younger version of Robert Redford. Over our lunch meeting, I asked Bob how he was able to capture two prominent Orange County companies as clients, especially since he worked for an LA firm and was an LA guy. He told me it was easy! What happened was Bob was one of several speakers at an Orange County business forum of some kind. There were 50 guests in the audience. After he gave his 12 minute talk and after all the speakers were finished, two gentlemen approached him offering their business cards and asking that he be so kind as to call them ASAP. Bob agreed that he would. Both these gentlemen were CEOs of their respective companies. Both retained Bob's services via the telephone meetings. Of course, Bob did a very good job representing these companies for all their legal needs and was able to retain both clients long term. As an aside, I did place Bob as a [corporate partner](#) with a law firm, Jeffer Mangels not Latham. [But the really good news is that I placed the corporate partner I was performing the search for too!](#) I found out about him in a little "social rag" called "714." This is a whole other story for another time...

See [30 Ways to Generate Business as an Attorney](#) for more information.