



Driving Business: When Business Development and Marketing Are in Sync

Business Development Best Practices Series

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Business development and marketing go hand-in-hand. And when they are in sync, your professional services firm can see increases in visibility, growth, profitability, and more.

For this to happen, each team needs to understand the other and how to best support one another. But time and time again, we've seen that this often isn't the case.

There are quite a few opportunities for these two distinct groups to work together toward their common goal: growing the business. To be successful though, it's important to understand each team's different roles and responsibilities and then examine how the two can best collaborate to support each other's efforts.

What's the Difference?

While both business development and marketing are responsible for growing the firm's client base, they each have separate roles in achieving the same goal.

Here is a brief definition of each department's roles and responsibilities:

- **Business Development** – Responsible for forming partnerships, strategic relationships, and other professional contacts in target markets in order to bring in new clients.
- **Marketing** – Responsible for understanding the needs and wants of the target market and developing a strategic plan to establish the firm's overall messaging, benefits, capabilities, and for communicating those out to the target audience.

As you can see, both departments address the same issue—how to engage prospective and current clients—but they have different reasons and means for doing so.

Why the Disconnect?

It's common for marketing and business development departments to not work together. In fact, across professional services industries, only a slight majority (54 percent) said marketing and business development activities were strongly coordinated. However, a lack of integration between the two teams can result in wasted efforts and lost opportunities for the firm.

There are a number of reasons why this disconnect might happen. For many firms, it's just the way they've been operating for years. There aren't real processes or intentional opportunities for getting the two departments to communicate. And they might not even realize how important it is.

In other cases, business development and marketing teams might be at odds. Although both teams should be working toward that common goal, it's not always obvious from day-to-day. Business development team might press their marketing teams for more and better qualified leads, while marketing might expect business development to improve the way they nurture and close leads.

Ideally, marketing creates messaging, content, and collateral that will resonate with clients and prospects. Yet, no one is in a better position

to inform marketing on industry trends and client pain points than business development folks. Business development teams are talking to clients day in and day out, so it's likely that they have a pulse on what's going on with target clients.

Likewise, when marketing creates the right content that generates interest, coordination with business development ensures that these warm leads can get nurtured, not lost.

How to Get on the Same Page

With a better understanding of each team's roles and how collaboration can be beneficial, the next question is, in what ways can they collaborate?

Fortunately, there are plenty of opportunities for joint activities that align with client-focused priorities. Here are a few:

- **Strategy development** – From the onset, business development and marketing should work together to determine the best strategy for communicating the firm's message, following up with leads, and measuring the results of both teams' efforts.
- **Content development** – The marketing team should create educational content like blog posts, articles, and webinars on topics that business development believes will resonate most with the target audience.
- **Campaign development** – Marketing's role should be to create and promote campaigns, including events, while business development reaches out to the target audience for follow up.
- **Speaking engagements** – Marketing can work with business development to pitch to the firm's SMEs to speak at industry events and conferences. Meanwhile, business development should attend these events to meet prospective and current clients and follow up afterward.

If you want to grow your business the right way and with a ton of momentum, then marketing and business development need to be focused on the same goal – working together to attract the right clients, clients who will truly benefit from your services.

Firms that make this commitment will stand out against the competition. And, when business development and marketing work together to attract ideal clients to the firm, less time is wasted and the team drives more revenue.

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Elizabeth is a nationally recognized expert in high-growth marketing and leads Hinge's Technology and Consulting practices.

How Hinge Can Help:

Hinge has developed a comprehensive plan, The Visible Firm® to address these issues and more. It is the leading marketing program for delivering greater visibility, growth, and profits. This customized program will identify the most practical offline and online marketing tools your firm will need to gain new clients and reach new heights.

