

Helpful hints on how to make business development a daily habit

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For most professionals, business development is something they intend to do, but not something they actually do. It constantly sits on your to-do list, somewhere beneath “client work,” “admin,” and “invoicing”, waiting patiently for a quiet afternoon that never comes.

The problem isn’t motivation. It’s systemisation. If business development feels like a burden, it’s probably because you’re treating it like a project rather than a habit.

Sustainable growth doesn’t happen in sprints; it happens when you show up constantly.

So here are some helpful hints on how to make business development a natural, automatic part of your workday.

Redefine what matters

The biggest reason business development feels overwhelming is that it is seen as a time-consuming activity in a world where the billable hour is all-important. Attending networking events, client-facing contact, and hosting webinars are all non-billable activities for which you get little to no relief.

All of these activities have their place, but they are more client relationship reinforcement exercises (still important) than business development activities.

A more useful approach is regularly staying visible, valuable, in touch, and consistently turning up when needed.

When you strip away the theatrics, business development is a series of small relationship-building moments: quick messages, hand-written thank you notes, short updates on case law or regulatory changes, helpful insights and little contributions that keep

you on people’s radar.

Once you reframe your business development efforts this way, business development stops feeling like a chore and becomes an easy part of your daily rhythm.

Start your day with 15 minutes of business development

If you have read Atomic Habits, then you will know that one of the simplest ways to build consistency is to anchor your business development habits to something you already do.

The most effective anchor? Do fifteen minutes of business development before opening your inbox. For example:

- Send a personalised LinkedIn message to a connection congratulating them on a recent win;
- Post a short insight or tip on LinkedIn;
- Follow up on a recent fee proposal you submitted;
- Reach out to a referrer you haven’t spoken to in a while;
- Draft a quick case note to add to your CV and bid library;
- Send a thank-you message to someone who helped you recently.

Fifteen minutes is short enough that you won’t resist it, but substantial enough to create a serious cumulative impact. Over a year, that’s more than sixty hours of pipeline-building work!

Give your week a simple rhythm

Habits become easier when your week has structure. Instead of reinventing your business development plan every day, give each day a focus. For example, you might:

- begin the week with visibility, sharing something helpful or showing up on LinkedIn;
- use mid-week to review your progress and what you need to do next;

dedicate Thursday to creating something of value, even if you only draft a few sentences; and

end the week by checking in with clients and contacts to see how their week went.

This keeps business development from becoming a source of decision fatigue. You always know roughly what the day calls for, which means you're far more likely to follow through.

Create a personal business development menu of small, repeatable actions

One of the biggest reasons people don't like doing business development is that they don't know what to do when they sit down to do it.

The solution is to build your own list of small, repeatable business development activities. Simple things that take only a few minutes each.

These might include messaging someone who recently engaged with your LinkedIn content, sending a thank-you to a referrer, checking in with a past client, writing two sentences of a blog post, or reviewing your CV.

When you have this "menu" ready, business development becomes a matter of choosing an item instead of inventing one.

Use accountability to strengthen your habit

Like any habit, business development sticks more easily when someone else knows you're doing it.

Accountability can be a light-touch: a weekly check-in with a business development coach, a weekly Teams call where you acknowledge and record your business development activity for that week, or a quick Friday email to your fractional business development manager summarising who you engaged with and what follow-ups you need to do.

You don't need pressure from another business development coach: you just need a little visibility.

Accountability turns intentions into behaviour.

Celebrate the wins

It's easy to overlook the small signs that your business development habit is working: a warm reply to a message, a coffee meeting booked, a past client thanking you for staying in touch.

These small wins deserve recognition because they are the building blocks of your pipeline. When you acknowledge these moments, you reinforce the behaviour that created them.

In a nutshell

Perhaps the most important shift in mindset is recognising that business development should not be something you turn on only when work slows down. Peaks and troughs happen because business development is inconsistent. When you treat business development as a daily habit – something that is simple, steady and non-negotiable, you start to build a smoother, more predictable pipeline of work.

At the end of the day, business development doesn't require charisma or aggressiveness. It requires consistency, intention, and a little structure.

Once you embed this into your daily routine, it stops feeling like work and starts feeling like part of the job.

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