

Measuring Business Development

You can get better business development results by measuring your performance and identifying where to focus your improvement efforts. Start by setting up a simple spreadsheet that lists what you will measure and how you will measure it. For most measures, you'll be able to use information you already collect somewhere, e.g., in your calendar or contact list. Once a quarter pull together the numbers and decide what changes you're going to make as a consequence of what you've discovered.

Here are some ideas for what to measure in each phase of the business development process.

Starting relationships

The foundation of your business development efforts is the size and nature of your network. You might want to periodically evaluate the number and types of people with whom you have started relationships. Measures might include:

- How many good targets for your services you know personally or communicate with in ways that indicate a willingness by them to be in touch with you (e.g., with an opt-in newsletter)
- Your overall network – how many people have you started a relationship with at some point, and communicated with in some way during the past two years? (If you haven't communicated with someone in the past two years, then the relationship is stale for business purposes but not necessarily worthless).
- How many allies do you have? Allies are people who keep you in mind for possible referrals to people they meet, and who you keep in mind for possible referrals. If you don't think of someone as an ally who you might refer, they are probably not an ally who might refer you.

Maintaining relationships

People will not necessarily be ready to hire you when you first meet them and you want to remind them of you and the value you can provide. Consequently, you need to maintain relationships. Measures might include:

- Number of contacts you have reached out to (including people for whom you've left voicemails or to whom you've sent personal emails)
- Number of contacts you've spoken with

- % of good targets you have talked with in the last three months (and how many times you've talked with them)
- Number of contacts you have touched with group tools (e.g., newsletters, mailings)
- Number of conversations you've had about people's business problems. Conversations about business problems mean that you are strengthening the relationship.
- Number of times you have provided help to contacts. Helping people is a very good way to maintain and strengthen relationships.

Converting relationships to paid work

Eventually, you hope to (directly or indirectly) convert relationships into work. You can measure how well you do this step by measuring:

- Number of conversations with decision-makers about problems they have that are relevant to your work
- Number of proposals submitted (you don't want to submit proposals unless it is work you want to do and believe that you could win, but the number of proposals is still important)
- % of proposals submitted that are non-competitive
- % of competitive proposals won
- Source of proposals :
 - How many were from existing clients, new people at existing client organizations, former clients, new prospects
 - How did you do at winning proposals derived from each of these sources (win/loss rate in each category of source)?
- Average \$ size of proposal

Selling more to existing clients

Happy clients ask you to do additional projects and generate referrals. You can measure:

- Client satisfaction – measured through client surveys or interviews
- Referrals generated spontaneously by clients (i.e., a client tells someone else to call you or tell you to call someone because the client has recommended you)
- Referrals generated by your request to clients for names of people to contact

What to do this week

Get started. Decide on your measures and how you will track each one. See how you did in the last quarter on as many of the measures as you can easily do retrospectively. This will also tell you what measures or data collection processes need some adjustment to be practical for you.

What are these tips?

These monthly tips help professionals create more business and enjoy their work more. We focus on how to start relationships, how to build relationships, and how to convert those relationships into sales. Visit our [archives](#) to learn more;