

# “Networking Tools”

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Good morning. Welcome to our session on networking. – Our **other** full time job! My name is Doug Hall. I will be your speaker for this session. My background includes 25 years in the professional services business as a marketing manager, business owner and independent consultant. My firm, the W. D. Hall Company works with attorneys to find and keep good clients.

Today, you will get **practical** client development tips that you can use immediately.

- I’ll focus on three tools that I know from my own experience **really work**.
- They’ve worked for **me** for over two decades.
- They’ve worked for **dozens of my clients** and they will work for **YOU!**
- The three proven tools for client development are the  
elevator speech,  
building a network, and  
working a room.

Now, I **know** some of you are preparing yourselves to hear the “S” word.

- So before I tell you about these tools I want to acknowledge the obvious.
- I know that many attorneys HATE the thought of SELLING.
- To most of you, the ultimate four letter word is SELL.

Well, you can relax because I’m not going to talk about selling today. I’m going to talk about getting and keeping good clients.

Let’s get to the first TOOL – The Elevator Speech. **What is an Elevator Speech?**

It’s a brief and clear description of who you work for and what services you provide.

- Brief means less than 20 seconds.
- Clear means nothing higher than eighth grade language – at least when talking to non-lawyers.

You use an elevator speech all the time, whenever anybody asks you what you do..... My guess is that some of you just don’t use it well.

If you are like I used to be, you mumble an answer or .....make a self-deprecating remark about your job. Believe me, as attorneys you don't need to put down your profession. There are thousands of lawyer jokes to do that for you.

When somebody asks you what you do --- think of it as a golden opportunity.

- Whether you are in an elevator,
- receiving line,
- at a little league game,
- PTA meeting,
- on the golf course or
- at happy hour – you have 10 to 20 seconds of free advertising – IF you know how to make the most of it.

Your message must be brief, clear and repeatable. **You want them to understand your message well enough to tell somebody else.** Here are some tips for preparing your elevator speech-

**A good place to start** – Ask yourself - What are the typical problems you solve on your job and who asks you for help?

For example – this is what I hear from my clients -

- We need to find out what our clients really think about us. Can you get us that feedback?
- Our firm has lost its focus; our revenue is flat; we need a new strategic plan. Can you help us?
- Our younger attorneys are very good at dealing with legal issues but we need more help from them in getting new work for the firm. Can you give them some client development tools?

**For those of you that worry about limiting your opportunities, here's a secret – Most attorneys have more than one elevator speech.**

Remember - the three important requirements for an elevator speech are:

1. A simple answer to the question “What do you do?”
2. Use eighth grade language when speaking to non lawyers
3. It must be easily repeatable

**The Second Client Development Tool we're going to talk about is - BUILDING A NETWORK**

As a professional, your network is the most powerful client development tool in your tool box.

What exactly is A network?

- According to Harvey MacKay, the author of several great books on the subject “Your Network includes **your own contacts + your contacts own networks.**”

- Since client development is a numbers game, the more exposure you have to more networks - the better your odds for success.

What is networking? These are the things you do every day- only you are going to be doing it with a new awareness, purpose, and discipline. It's -

- meeting people,
- building relationships and keeping in touch.

It's helping your contacts, asking for referrals and receiving referrals

One thing you must realize – effective NETWORKING IS WORK! - It is not called net-Playing or net-Hoping.

Who are the best people to have in your network?

They are called **Centers of Influence** – People who come in contact with the people you need to know. They include:

- Existing clients, Other professionals – (CPA's, Attorneys, Bankers)
- Government officials, friends and community leaders
- **And my favorite - Opinion leaders of influential group** – These individuals influence the behavior of dozens, hundreds or even thousands of prospects.

Examples include:

- Executive directors of professional associations where your clients and prospects are members
- Presidents and board members of youth sports leagues
- Executive directors of university alumni groups
- Presidents and executive directors of community service organizations and non-profits
- Leaders in city, county and state government

The best way to influence the opinion leaders of groups that you, your prospects and clients belong to is to **give them something of value**. Send them new members, new business, find volunteers, offer sponsorships, or, do something else useful for the influencer.

Depending on your particular areas of expertise and experience, you may be able to find good speakers, be a fund raiser, actively support their causes, generate publicity and endorsements for the group, or even help negotiate new purchases or financing.

Just listen for needs and keep you eyes open. You have something of value to offer. Benefits of building relationships with these people include:

- introductions and access to members,
- testimonials,
- word-of-mouth endorsements and
- referrals.

Remember - Networks are the most powerful client development tool in our tool box.

- They are made up of your own contacts and your contacts own networks
- Networking is work – It's not called net-playing or net-hoping
- The best people to have in you network are Centers of Influence

Harvey Mackay said – “People aren't strangers if you've already met them. The trick is to meet them before you need their help.”

Speaking of networking events – **WORKING A ROOM is client development tools #3.**

Politicians and entertainers are NOT the only people who work a room -- successful attorneys do it too. Sometimes we're anxious because our expectations are way too high.

Please hear this -networking events are not for selling!

Networking events are for

- visiting with existing clients,
- for qualifying prospects and
- for meeting centers of influence.

They are great opportunities for one-on-one face time. They give us an opportunity to get to know each other through small talk to see if we enjoy conversing with each other. Very few prospects will make a decision to hire a new attorney after a 15 minute conversation

- Your goal should be to have enjoyable discussions with two to four new prospects or referral partners.
- Take the pressure for sales off!

Let's start with today -

- How did you feel when you walked into this room this morning?
- Were you uncomfortable with all the unfamiliar faces?
- Did you scan the crowd for someone you know?
- If you scanned the room and did not see a familiar face – what did you do?
- Did you get anxious and look for a temporary time-user-upper like a trip to the restroom, making a phone call, or finding your seat and reading the paper?
- If so, join the club – about 90% of the people in the room feel the same way and do the same thing!

Perhaps you were standing around waiting for someone to speak to you. That's what many of us do when we are uncomfortable.

I have a better suggestion- IF YOU DON'T REMEMBER ONE OTHER THING I'VE SAID TODAY – REMEMBER THIS:

- At any social or networking event, whether you know anyone or not, think of yourself as a HOST – not a Guest.
- MAKE IT YOUR MISSION TO MAKE OTHERS FEEL COMFORTABLE. You will feel better and so will they!

Go up to a people who are standing by themselves – and introduce yourself. They will be grateful, relieved and probably a friend for life!

And after you introduce yourself –

- spend 70% of your time asking about them and really listening.
- This small talk is actually the biggest talk we do.
- During this small talk, rapport is being built and the face to face contact is critical for building a relationship.
- Another tip - be INTERESTED, not INTERESTING

My favorite questions are “How can I help you and your business be more successful?” and “How would I recognize your ideal prospect?” Isn't this why most of us go to networking events?

When the time is right – you'll have a chance to share your own elevator speech.

Working a room can be fun.

- Take the pressure for selling off.
- Look for people who look uncomfortable and help them feel more comfortable.
- Spend 70% of your time asking questions and listening to the answers.
- And, remember to be interested not interesting.

My time is up.

To summarize – I focused on three tools to help you get and keep clients.

**First, your elevator speech. Make sure it is brief and clear and repeatable. It needs to tell what you do and who you do it for.**

**Second, build your network – The best people in your network are opinion leaders of influential groups. And,**

**Third – When you are at an event, be a host- not a guest. Make it your mission to make others feel more comfortable. Thank You**