



HOW TO GET JUNIOR PROFESSIONALS CONTRIBUTING TO YOUR FIRM'S BD

How do you get professionals to contribute to your firm's business development from the very moment they start? It's one of the hottest issues in professional services marketing and BD right now, and it's something I spoke about recently at an [APSMA session in Auckland](#).

We covered 14 ideas in 90 minutes, and at the end of the session everyone was asked which idea they thought was most useful for their firm. Here's the ideas that came out top.

1. Embrace the procrastinators

We're often taught the value of consistency. That means we tend to encourage and even celebrate the pre-crastinator - that person who get so anxious about deadlines that they complete their tasks ahead of time. But [studies show](#) that creative people are often the ones who leave everything to the last minute.

One theory says that procrastinators come up with better ideas because our first thoughts are almost always conventional. While pre-crastinators jump in here, at the vanilla stage, procrastinators give their mind the chance to turn things over before committing.

So look for those juniors who get good work done at the final bell. They may be your [greatest strength](#) when it comes to innovation and prototyping new BD ideas.

2. Go analogue

Few things are more celebrated these days than being tech savvy. But the general consensus was that taking in all our information electronically often comes at the expense of deeper engagement.

For instance, when we read digitally, we never really free ourselves from distractions. As Naomi S Barron notes in the [Washington Post](#):

"When a digital device has an Internet connection, it's hard to resist the temptation to jump ship: I'll just respond to that text I heard come in, check the headlines, order those boots that are on sale."

So here's a novel idea... Why not hand your junior professionals a printed book: one of the classics such as W. Clement Stone's, [The Success System that Never Fails](#), Dale Carnegie's [How to Win Friends and Influence People](#) or Stephen Covey's [7 Habits of Highly Effective People](#).



Ask them to read it cover-to-cover, then check in with them again to make sure they really understood what it's about. You could even hold an impromptu book group where you discuss what you've learned. For digitally-raised workers this can be a powerful experience... Just make sure you give them a bit of reading time so they don't resent the exercise too much.

3. Take a LinkedIn snapshot

Let's face it, younger, more junior professionals are usually much better at harnessing the power of social media than their more senior counterparts. So why not tap into this by sharing your team's Social Media Snapshot, or at least your LinkedIn snapshot (let's leave facebook for their personal lives).

Share information across your team such as:

- a. The number of LinkedIn connections everyone has
- b. What LinkedIn groups you're members of: show the groups – provides example of range and diversity
- c. How active you are (eg posts and updates)
- d. What your profiles look like, including whether you've updated LinkedIn for projects and experience. Are the right keywords in there to make sure you get found.

Make sure you let people know who's doing well and why (it could well be your juniors). Then others will start following their lead. As Wharton Marketing Professor Jonah Berger [points out](#) when we can see what other people are doing we are more likely to imitate it.

And, for competitive professionals, that phenomenon often plays out in overdrive.

4. Exploit their knowledge

Often the most interesting projects get left to a firm's heavy hitters. But if you're not involving the juniors on your innovative or creative projects, I think you're missing a trick.

Junior professionals often come to the table with fresh eyes and ideas and can usually teach your senior people a thing or two about the way the world works right now. For instance, why not get one junior person to present to partners each quarter on the latest business apps or technology. Perhaps get them to show how you could be using Slack instead of dropbox, or something similarly relevant.

Doing so will empower your junior staff and bring them new confidence. And that makes them far more likely to keep contributing a meaningful way... Which is why we always include a presentation on a business or tech project in our 'Leadership for managers / associates' programmes (link).



5. Get them tendering

Often a firm's tenders are tightly held in the hands of a few key people. But sharing this information can help your junior professionals understand your position and make them much more engaged with your brand.

So get your junior professionals to review past proposals or tenders or service level agreements, so they can see why you won (or didn't). Ask for their feedback. What surprised them? Where do they think you could do better?

Doing this can provide your people with tremendous insights into client relationships and your value proposition.

And, as an added bonus, you're also grooming the next generation of tender writers in the process!

6. Make them a part of Christmas

The last one is simple but it can be immensely powerful too: give everyone access to the firm Christmas card. When I say this, I really do mean everyone, from the mailroom to the managing partners.

For junior professionals, this gesture lets them know they're a central part of your business: one that's allowed to speak to the clients as peers and have a proper relationship with them.

After all, business development begins with making someone feel part of the firm. And nothing says you're part of things more than sending something on the firm's behalf.