

# DEVELOPING BUSINESS IN A POST COVID WORLD

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COVID-19 has changed everything. It has changed how we interact, how we communicate, how we work, how we play, and it has changed how we develop business. Many are prognosticating what this new paradigm will be. Many believe we're never going back to pre-pandemic behavior and patterns. Others think we will. I believe the new prism is a hybrid – a mix of old and new, in-person and virtual, and traditional and new tech. Those of us who can straddle two worlds - the way things were and the way things are, working a room at a live cocktail party and a virtual one, sending handwritten notes and direct messages, picking up the phone, and sending a text, are best positioned to grow our practices and our firms. How we communicate has changed. How we think has changed. How we interact has changed. And we need to change if we want to remain relevant or risk becoming an anachronism.

So let's discuss this new paradigm.

Are we still going to develop business in person? Yes.

Will we still attend conferences, seminars, events, and cocktail parties? Yes.

Will we still meet for coffee, lunch, and dinner? Yes

Will we do it as frequently as we once did? No.

Will there be as many in attendance at events? No.

Will events be smaller? Yes

With there be fewer events? Yes

The traditional face-to-face attorney marketing will remain, but there will be less of it, and there will be fewer individuals at those more occasional events. So what to do? Well, there are several options. First, one can focus exclusively on in-person events and make the most of those available. Second, one can transition solely to online marketing. Third, which is the most viable, is a hybrid model focusing on in-person and virtual marketing.

How does this hybrid model work?

Let's start with traditional business development efforts.

What does face-to-face marketing in a post COVID world look like? In-person marketing takes various forms. Let's address the most widespread in turn.

**Conferences.** There will be fewer conferences with fewer attendees. I don't believe we're going to get back to pre-pandemic numbers for conference attendees. I also expect organizations

to have fewer conferences, shorter ones, and less elaborate ones. So, you'll have to make the most of the conferences you attend. Secure the attendees' lists and schedule as many one-on-one meetings that your schedule will allow. I secure the attendee list early, and updated lists as the event draws close and schedule multiple coffee meets each day I'm at the event. I schedule them an hour apart and generally lay claim to a small table at a local coffee shop, often at the hotel where the conference is scheduled. It's a bit humorous because it appears I'm affixed to the same seat for several days, and it becomes an inside joke for those who know and see me. But it does allow me to make the most of my time to build relationships.

**Organizations.** We all belong to organizations, including the FDCC. Each organization has planning meetings, social events, and other gatherings. Expect fewer in-person meetings, requiring more effort to make the most of the remaining meetings. As with conferences, determine who is attending meetings and schedule one-on-one meetings with attendees.

**One Off Events.** I'm not a fan of one off events because I view it as a shotgun approach to marketing, which distracts and takes one away from more

### **50 Post-COVID Business Development Tips**

1. Purchase personal stationery and write two handwritten letters to prospective referral sources or clients each week.
2. Schedule at least one coffee meet before office hours once a week.
3. Update your firm and social media photo and your website and LinkedIn profiles.
4. Decide upon one to three topics you want to post about on social media and try to post on one of those topics daily.
5. Repurpose content from articles and power points you've done and break them down to bite-sized portions for social media. One slide deck may have enough content for a month's worth of daily LinkedIn posts.
6. Don't do everything. Choose one social media platform. Choose one or two organizations. Less is more.
7. Have an accountability partner to keep you on task.
8. Keep a journal to track your daily marketing activities.
9. Set goals for yourself and pursue them. A goal may be meeting a new person each week for coffee.
10. Pursue low-cost marketing efforts. Handwritten notes. Social media posts. Coffee at the local coffee house.

11. Your contacts are critical. Grow and deepen your business relationships.
12. When joining an organization, volunteer. Do the tasks no one else wants.
13. Marketing is a daily activity. Do something every day that is marketing-related.
14. Calendar all your marketing activities. If it's not on your calendar, you likely won't do it.
15. Develop a plan to stay top of mind of your contacts - newsletters, social media, press releases, etc.
16. When you meet someone, actively listen.
17. When networking, it's 80% listening, 20% talking.
18. Your best referral sources are satisfied clients. Their recommendations go a long way to secure new clients.
19. Have regular firm meetings to discuss individual marketing efforts.
20. Create and stick to a marketing budget.
21. Business development is based on relationships, not selling.
22. Customer service is vital. Promptly return calls, texts, DMs, and e-mails.
23. Connect your connections.
24. Before a conference, schedule coffees, lunches, and dinners with attendees. Always secure the attendee list to do this.
25. Always ask yourself - what I'm about to do - is it something that would turn me off if it was being done to me? If so, don't do it.
26. Take rainmakers out for coffee and pick their brains.
27. Read books on business development.
28. Call colleagues and check in on them.
29. Send thoughtful gifts - a favorite book, a favorite bag of coffee, or box of tea bags, etc.
30. Remember others' names and their hobbies.

31. Keep up with the news.
32. Let others direct conversations. Make it about them.
33. Practice networking. I used to be a wallflower. Not anymore.
34. Join toastmasters or take an improv class to develop your public speaking skills.
35. Beta test. Try different things to see what works for you.
36. Make your office a destination. I turned my office into a rum bar. Maybe get a fancy coffee machine. Or a pinball machine. Anything that will want others to visit you in your space.
37. Make your business card stand out and have a virtual business card.
38. Be willing to do others favors and mentor others. Always be paying it forward.
39. Watch YouTube videos and CLE on marketing.
40. Take your time. Business development is a marathon, not a sprint.
41. Get published.
42. Self-publish an e-book.
43. Find your prospective clients and join organizations they belong to.
44. Be passionate. Don't do something you don't enjoy.
45. Recalibrate as necessary.
46. Be willing to reach into your pocket to market.
47. Always move forward.
48. The more you put into it, the more you will get out of it.
49. We all have a brand. Everything we do builds it or undermines it.
50. Don't do things you don't enjoy. I've never played golf to get work, and I never will.