

QUICK GUIDE

# MAKING THE JUMP TO PARTNER

---

How to build a thriving practice as  
a new partner

*Gemma Francis*  
CONSULTING

---

# You've made it to partner. Now what?



Making partner is a huge achievement, but it's also a major shift in responsibility.

You're no longer just delivering work; you're expected to win work. You now have to think beyond billable hours and take ownership of your practice's growth.

Yet, many newly promoted partners find themselves feeling unprepared for the business development (BD) expectations that come with the role.

So, where should you start?

This guide walks you through 20 key BD actions to ensure you build a sustainable and successful practice without burning out.

---

# 01

## STRENGTHEN EXISTING CLIENT RELATIONSHIPS

Your first source of new work should always be your current clients. Make sure you're deepening those relationships by proactively understanding their evolving needs.

**Action:** Identify your top 5 revenue-generating clients and schedule check-ins.

# 02

## KEEP A RUNNING LIST OF WARM CONTACTS

Create a system (use a CRM or even a simple spreadsheet). Track key contacts, touchpoints, and follow-ups in a CRM (or at least an Excel sheet). If you're interested in a CRM, we like Folk and Dex. Track and nurture key contacts – referrers, intermediaries, and potential clients.

**Action:** Categorise contacts (clients, referrers, intermediaries) and set calendar reminders for touchpoints.

# 03

## MAKE BD A DAILY HABIT (EVEN WHEN YOU'RE BUSY)

BD isn't something you do when you have time. It needs to be a non-negotiable part of your week. Small, consistent efforts compound over time.

**Action:** Block out a minimum of 15 minutes daily in your calendar for your BD – treat it like a client meeting.

# 04

## IDENTIFY YOUR NICHE

As the saying goes: 'If you're speaking to everyone you're speaking to no one'. Generalists struggle to stand out. What's the one thing you want to be known for? A strong niche makes BD easier.

**Action:** Track which topics get the most engagement from clients and contacts – let demand shape your focus.

---

# 05

## CREATE AND OWN YOUR PERSONAL BRAND

Your LinkedIn and industry presence should clearly communicate your expertise and what you bring to the table.

**Action:** Refresh your LinkedIn headline & summary to reflect your niche & expertise.

# 06

## DEVELOP YOUR COMMERCIAL AWARENESS

Clients don't just want legal expertise – they want a lawyer who understands their industry, business goals, and commercial pressures. Align your advice with their bigger picture.

**Action:** Ask the three clients from number 13 about their business goals – not just their legal needs.

# 07

## USE CONTENT TO START CONVERSATIONS, NOT JUST SHOWCASE EXPERTISE

Posting articles or speaking at events isn't enough. Engage with your audience – ask questions, comment on industry trends, and create real dialogue.

**Action:** Send your content to five clients or prospects with a tailored 'saw/wrote this and thought of you' message.

# 08

## BUILD YOUR INTERNAL NETWORK

The easiest BD starts at home (your own firm). Your colleagues across departments can introduce you to their clients. Make sure they know what you do and when to bring you in.

**Action:** Book coffee chats with two colleagues per month from other practice areas.



---

# 09

## TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR BD PLAN

A partner without a BD plan is just hoping for work. Set clear targets for the type of clients and matters you want to win, and detail how you're going to do it.

**Action:** Write down three BD priorities for the next quarter.

# 10

## PRIORITISE REFERRAL RELATIONSHIPS

Fellow professionals – accountants, consultants, and other lawyers – can be an excellent source of work. Don't overlook them and remember reciprocity and openness are key.

**Action:** Identify three key referrers and schedule a call or lunch. Before that call or lunch think about what you might be able to refer them.

# 11

## LEARN TO ARTICULATE YOUR VALUE

Prospects need to understand why they should work with you. Develop a strong, clear pitch that explains the impact you deliver and what makes you different.

**Action:** Write a one-sentence pitch explaining why clients should choose you and get comfortable saying it.

# 12

## TRACK YOUR PIPELINE

BD is a numbers game. Know how many introductions, follow-ups, and proposals you need each quarter to hit your goals and plan accordingly.

**Action:** Get clear on what steps most prospects go through before becoming a client, and map those steps onto your contact list.

---

# 13

## STAY VISIBLE TO CLIENTS & CONTACTS

If you disappear for months, you're forgotten. Regular check-ins, LinkedIn activity, and industry updates keep you top of mind. Remember to do this even if you don't have a live matter/deal with them right now.

**Action:** Identify three clients where you don't have a live matter/deal on and pick up the phone or send a check-in email.

# 14

## GET STRATEGIC ABOUT NETWORKING

Attending events isn't enough. Know who you need to meet, why, and follow up intentionally.

**Action:** Before any event, research five key people you want to meet.

# 15

## GET COMFORTABLE WITH SELLING

Partners sell – whether you call it that or not. Learn how to have confident business development conversations without feeling salesy. If you don't feel comfortable ask for help as soon as possible.

**Action:** Read *To Sell is Human* by Daniel Pink - try out the exercises.

# 16

## FOCUS ON THE LONG GAME

Winning new work isn't instant. BD is about relationship-building, not quick wins. Keep nurturing prospects even if they're not ready now. Research says that people are more likely to instruct someone if they are front of mind.

**Action:** Don't give up on lukewarm leads – check in every 3-6 months.

---

# 17

## ASK FOR HELP (PRE-EMPTIVELY)

You don't have to do BD alone. Find a mentor, someone who has trodden this path before you and get their insights. Learn from their successes (and mistakes) to accelerate your own progress.

**Action:** Ask partners in your firm what BD strategies worked for them.

# 18

## FIND AN ACCOUNTABILITY PARTNER

Sharing your BD goals with a peer makes you far more likely to achieve them. Not to be confused with a mentor, this is a two-way partnership – you keep each other on track with regular check-ins and support.

**Action:** Pair up with a peer – share your BD goals and set monthly check-ins to track progress.

# 19

## FIND THE TACTICS THAT WORK FOR YOU

Not every BD activity suits every lawyer – what works for one partner may not work for you. The key is to identify BD strategies that suit your personality, strengths, and practice area, then get really good at them. Play to your strengths.

**Action:** Identify two BD activities you enjoy and that align with your practice – focus on mastering them (and them alone).

# 20

## KNOW YOUR METRICS

If you don't track it, you can't improve it. BD isn't just about effort—it's about results. Identify key metrics like referrals, client conversions, or follow-ups to see what's working. Tracking your numbers helps you focus on high-value activities and drop what's not delivering.

**Action:** Review your BD efforts quarterly—double down on what works, adjust what doesn't.

The future  
lawyer will be a  
hybrid  
professional -  
part expert in  
law, part  
strategist, part  
business  
consultant, part  
technologist.

Richard Susskind  
Tomorrow's Lawyers



---

# Like this content?

Stay ahead of the curve with our monthly Trifecta newsletter - delivering essential insights and expert advice straight to your inbox. Sign up to receive insights, strategies, and tips that will elevate your career and business development efforts.



## Want support?

At **Gemma Francis Consulting (GFC)**, we help lawyers build thriving, sustainable practices without burning out. From one-to-one strategy sessions to team training and hands-on support, we work with lawyers and law firms across the UK and Europe to make business development feel practical, focused, and achievable.

### Your next step:

Pick 3 actions from this guide and commit to them this month. Then, book a free strategy call to talk through your goals, challenges, and get tailored advice based on what works best for *you*.



[Book a strategy call here](#)

Or email Gemma directly here:



[gemma@gemmafrancisconsulting.com](mailto:gemma@gemmafrancisconsulting.com)

Let's build a BD plan that fits *your* strengths and helps you grow your practice with confidence.



[www.gemmafrancisconsulting.com](http://www.gemmafrancisconsulting.com)

