QUICK GUIDE

CONVERSATION STARTERS & EXCUSES TO FOLLOW UP

14 practical ways to keep in touch without the sales pitch

Gemma Francis
CONSULTING

Following up doesn't have to feel like a sales pitch.

If you've ever felt awkward about keeping in touch with a contact – or let a good conversation fade because you didn't know how to pick it back up – you're not alone. It's one of the most common things I hear from the lawyers I work with.

The problem isn't motivation. It's not knowing what to say that feels natural rather than forced. When "just checking in" is the only option that comes to mind, it's easy to do nothing at all. And that's where relationships – and opportunities – go quiet.

This guide is a practical reference for senior associates and above who want to stay visible and build genuine connections, without it feeling like a constant sales effort.

How to use this guide:

Review the four approaches and identify which feels most relevant to where you are with a given contact. Use the example phrases as a starting point – adapt them to your voice. Aim to note one or two follow-up opportunities each week, and act on at least one. The value isn't in the framework. It's in the small, consistent actions that compound over time.

Insight-led
(“I have something useful to say”)

Use when you want to lead with credibility or relevance.

01.

Sector news hook

“I saw [x] in the news this week – given what you’re working on, I thought it might be worth a conversation.”

02.

Legislative or regulatory changes

You may already be aware, but [x] legislation will come into force in [x] months. Are you prepared or would a chat be helpful?”

03.

Ask for their view

“We’ve been debating [topic] internally – how are you seeing this play out in your market?”
→ Invites dialogue, not a sale.

04.

Share or compare insights

We’ve had a few clients dealing with [x] recently – is that something you’re seeing too?”
→ Opens up a real conversation – not just small talk.

Relationship-led ("We already have a connection")

Use when rapport already exists and you're simply picking the thread back up.

05.

Follow-up from last conversation

"You mentioned [challenge or project] last time we spoke – I'd love to hear how it's progressing."

"You mentioned [challenge] last time – have things calmed down/how is it going now?"

06.

Past matter or deal

"We worked together on [x] a while back – I saw something recently that reminded me of it and thought it might be relevant to what you're working on now."

"I saw you recently closed/did [x] in the press. We worked on a similar deal recently – how did it go for you?"

07.

Reconnection

"We haven't caught up in a while – I noticed you've [moved firms / been promoted / expanded the team]. Would you be up for a coffee?"

08.

Post-event follow-up

"I really enjoyed your comments at [conference] – your point on [x] really stuck with me [add the reason why]."

→ Shared experiences are easy conversation openers.

Visibility-led ("I'm present without being pushy")

These are the 'soft touches' that keep someone warm.

09.

LinkedIn activity

Scrolling LinkedIn can be BD - if you do it intentionally.

→ React to promotions, comment on deals, or share something useful. Turn it into a conversation.

10.

Sharing relevant content

Set Google Alerts for key sectors, clients and targets.

→ Then send an article with: "I saw this/wrote this and thought of you. [x] is particularly relevant to your business."

11.

Event attendance or invitations

"We're hosting a roundtable on [x] – would you like to join?"
or "Will you be at [sector event] next week? I'm thinking of attending/ I'm attending".

Connector-led
(“I’m adding value beyond myself”)

Use when you want to be remembered as someone who gives, not just someone who asks.

12.

Making introductions

"I've been thinking about a conversation I had with [x] recently – I think you two should meet. You're both navigating similar territory and I suspect you'd find it useful."

13.

Referring work or flagging someone else's expertise

"This isn't something I do, but I know someone who's excellent at it – happy to make an introduction. "

14.

Share an opportunity, not just information

Flag something they could actually act on – a speaking slot, an award nomination, a relevant tender or event.
→ "I came across this opportunity and immediately thought of you – think you'd be a strong fit."

Your next step

You've read the guide. Now the only thing that matters is doing something with it.

Pick one person. Someone you've been meaning to reach out to, or a contact you haven't spoken to in longer than you'd like. Choose the approach from this guide that fits where you are with them, and send the message this week. Not a perfectly crafted email. Not when things are quieter - this week.

To make it easy, answer these three questions:

1. **Who?** Name one person you've been meaning to follow up with.
2. **How?** Which of the 14 approaches fits best right now?
3. **When?** What day this week will you send it?

That's it. One message. One conversation restarted.

BD consistency isn't built in big gestures. It's built in moments like this one — repeated often enough that staying visible stops feeling like effort and starts feeling like second nature.

Want more like this?

Trifecta is our monthly newsletter for lawyers and law firm BD teams. No generic advice - just practical insight on what actually moves the needle.

TRIFECTA BD newsletter

Sign up to receive BD insights, strategies, and tips.

BD that actually sticks

Most BD support gives lawyers a framework and hopes for the best. A training day runs, people leave with good intentions, and six weeks later, very little has changed.

The problem is rarely skill. It's usually knowing where to start, building confidence, and having a plan realistic enough to survive a busy week.

That's the gap GFC was built to close.

We work with mid-sized law firms and their lawyers – on associate training, 1:1 coaching, and in-house BD support. Whatever the brief, we start with what's actually getting in the way. Then we build habits that stick.

We're invested in whether the work actually changes something – not just whether the session went well.

We can help with:

- 1:1 coaching for partners and associates
- Associate and future partner training
- In-house BD team support
- Legal directory strategy and submissions
- Campaign design and delivery

If BD isn't working the way you want it to, let's talk about why.

We work with a small number of firms at a time – so it's worth a conversation sooner rather than later.

Gemma Francis CONSULTING

www.gemmafrancisconsulting.com