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SUMMARY KEYWORDS

people, important, networking, networking group, business, clients, firm, referrals, relationship, attorney, book, person, network, meeting, area, attorneys, meet, law, introductions, networking event

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Good afternoon, everyone.

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My name is Colleen brains. I'm a Senior Associate Attorney at Law law, which is a law firm based in Schaumburg in the Chicago Board of Trade. We serve as Cook County and all of the collar counties, basically all over Illinois. And in some cases, we do some outside work, not just confined to Illinois. We handle just about every area of law, but my specialty is family law. I'm a senior associate there on the litigation team during Family Law. So what that means is I help people going through family transitions. I help people when they're thinking about getting married and they want a prenuptial agreement in place. I help people when they're thinking about growing their family through adoption. I help people and they need protection and they're not domestically violent situation. And I also help people on the other side of relationships with custody disputes and divorces. I also do prenuptial and postnuptial agreement work. I'm here I'd like to talk to you about the topic of networking and growing your business. To me, I found that this has been it These have been invaluable things to know about not only as a law student coming up as an attorney, but also especially as a new attorney, and now a more established attorney. I think the first most important things to talk about when we're talking about this topic is first what is a book of business. There are plenty of people out there who are not familiar with this term, or maybe have heard it but don't know exactly what it means. Basically, what it is, is a list of clients. It talks about your past clients, your present clients, any future clients that you reasonably believe well being or future clients, and that it's portable. It wants to really show another firm, who would go with you, if you were to go to another firm, what clients can you count on to stay with you because they hired you for you, and not just hiring you for your firm. It's also a list of your

triumphs and successes. So here, it's important to detail any major cases or trials you've had, because it shows not only who you serve, but what your experiences and what your track record is in terms of success. It's also something that's valuable, because it's the basis for past present and future income. It's important to know that

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not something that you can put a hard dollar number on, because a lot of the important thing for law firms is not only how much work you can do and Bill, but also what the law firm can collect on it. Generally, it's more valuable and more preferable if you're doing work for a client who you know, not only will give you good business, but will also actually make good on the contract to pay your firm for it. The firm doesn't want a list of clients that want you to do their work, but then do skimp out when it's time to pay the bill. So that's important to know too. That hopefully this client list is valuable and people can be counted on. So not only want to work with you but also to pay when it's time to pay. It also represents profit and future rainmaking, this is important to any firm because what a firm wants is an attorney who can not only be self sufficient and keep him or herself busy, but also keep other people busy. That's the ideal. If you can keep not only yourself busy by a paralegal and some associates are even more, the more valuable your book of business is because you're bringing in not only your own work, but you're bringing in work for other people to do. Your book of business also represents your relationships. It's not a list of people have signed a contract that said they will go with you wherever you will go. But instead it details who you have a relationship with who knows you who likes you, who's worked with you before who wants to work with you in the future, because you have that relationship. And that's what makes the book of business portable that relationship. It's someone who wants to work with you, regardless of what firm you're at. a book of business also gives you a good idea. As to your potential earnings. Plenty of firms are willing to work with attorneys when they're hiring lateral moves or hiring partners to give you a cut of whatever business that is you bring into the firm. So your book of business can give you a good idea of what income you could expect from that book if you're going to a firm like that. It's also a book of business is also something that can be sold at the end of your career. If you're ready to retire and you're not looking to do any sort of legal work in the future, this is something that you could sell to a firm or to another attorney but it's important to know That because the book of business represents your relationships, the value of selling a book of business is objective, it's hard to appraise. And that's because there's no guarantee that a client who wanted to do work with you would be willing to do work with whoever you sell your book of business to. So as much as you can bridge that gap to the relationship, the more valuable book of business would be, if it comes time to sell it. Like we talked about the value of a book of business,

it's hard to value exactly, because it's unknown what future clients can and will exactly do work for you. But it demonstrates to affirm your past current and likely future ability to remake. And firms like we talked about want to know that you can keep yourself busy and earn your keep even better if you can help other attorneys be busy too, with your book of business. Here, you must be prepared to mentor and delegate while you maintain your client relationships. If you're bringing a book of business. That is more than just what you can do. If you're, if you're bringing a book of business, that's going to be keeping other people busy, it's a good idea that you spearhead those cases and maintain the relationships. So the person who hired you is still getting that relationship, that point of contact, even if you're delegating workout. With a book of business, that is a bigger book of business, it's really important to know how to delegate and how to mentor other attorneys. It's a skill that you have to practice and fine tuned over time. Because if you're coming with more work than you can do yourself, you have to make sure that your book of business that this trusted list of clients who rely on you are getting the work that they deserve, and that you're helping to make sure that that's delivered a few years allegation. So this book of business represents a lot It represents who you are, as an attorney, it represents your potential, it represents what you're doing now. And it represents, hopefully, your ability to be an amazing asset to another firm, as you're not only someone who brings in revenue and remakes, but also delegates and mentors, other attorneys. So now that we know why book of business is so important, it we should also talk about how to start up a business. This can be pretty simple,

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I'd say the biggest way to start up a business is to make sure that those around you know what you do. So I'm talking friends, family, acquaintances, and those you network with, you would be surprised. Your maybe your friends or family know you're an attorney, but they may not know exactly what you do. I've had this come up even with my own parents, I do family law. And I've always done family law. And they knew that. But they may not know exactly what Family Law is and what a situation arises for a family law case referral, they came to me and wanted me to update their estate plan. And I had to let them know that that's actually not what a family law attorney does. And I was able to refer them to someone who could help them. So this anecdote is just to say that don't assume people know what you do, make sure that you actually talk with them about it, make sure it's actually clear. So they have a good idea of when someone is in front of them. That could be a good introduction or a good referral to you and hopefully a client's another way to start this book of business is making sure that you always have business cards on you. You never really know when an opportunity may arise to help someone. So for me, I always like to have business cards, even in my purse, even if I'm just going out socially, just because you never know who may need your help and who you may want to connect with. Another way to make sure that people know what you do is by leveraging your social media. I see plenty of attorneys who are very vocal on Facebook, about not only being wires, but what kind of lawyers they do. And you can do this on Facebook, Instagram or LinkedIn, I would always suggest making

it professional, never talking about things that should be confidential or about clients in a way that may be construed as not so polite. But it's a great idea to be on social media and make sure that even their people understand exactly what it is you do. I would say another great way to help you start your book of business is to always follow the basic principles of professionalism. So here, number one is punctuality. I think it's super important that you practice punctuality with anyone you interact with. It says a lot about you. I think if you can show a friend or family member you can be on time to be somewhere when you say you're going to be there, they will have that confidence that that's how you will treat Every one of their friends or family members or someone they love, if they're referring someone to you. Another thing is to be prepared. You know, whatever that means. If you're going into a networking meeting with someone, for example, it shows a great ability to be prepared by having done your research on that person and asking thoughtful questions based on that, that goes a long way as opposed to just winging it. Another thing is, I think it's important to always look polished, people have an idea of what an attorney looks like, whether that's warranted or unwarranted, people put a lot of stock in how you carry yourself and appear as a professional. So here, I would say, it's always important that make sure that you you're dressed appropriately for the situation, that you practice good hygiene, that getting enough rest that you're taking care of yourself, because it shows that you're able to have order over yourself, and therefore are in a good position to help others. And also to provide excellent services, whatever that is. Obviously, when you're doing legal work for someone, it's important that you create a great work product. And it's even better if you can, under promise and over deliver when it comes to producing that work product. But it's important to practice this principle of providing excellent service. And whatever you do, if you're volunteering for an organization, make sure you're doing your absolute best, for example, because people see this, and they take stock of this, when they're determining if you are someone that they would trust with potential referral or clients. So those are those are important to know. And I think a general overview of following the principles of professionalism is a treat anyone you meet as you would a client's that way, they have the confidence in you and your abilities.

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also can look like you know, timely returning calls, emails, keeping meetings, giving undivided attention, and under promising over delivering, if you treat everyone This way, they will have the confidence to believe that you would be someone that they're trusted and loved one would be in good hands with in a potential case. Right. So next, we should talk about why to have a book of business, we touched on this a bit. The biggest reason is it provides value to your firm. But another thing that you should know about this is it also helps you to be indispensable to your firm, if you're

someone who's doing great work in meeting your billables, and doing everything that's expected of you at the firm, but you also have a book of business, and you also represent someone who's brought in clients and serious money to this firm, that firms gonna want to hang on to you. And that's job security that is super important, especially during the uncertain times of a recession, having a book of business can help you to make sure that you you're protected and that your careers secure. But also it gives you the autonomy to change firms. If you wanted to make a lateral move or take on a partnership role in a different firm, a book of business helps you do that. If it's portable, it's something that can go along with you. And by that I mean if clients are willing to go with you, wherever you go, it gives you great advantage. And it really lets you have the ability to leverage where you would leverage that book of business to get to where you want to be, whether that's moving up in your firm, changing firms or even opening your own a book of business, they actually represent that autonomy, that you may have to open your own firm. If you want to be your own boss, you can keep yourself busy with that book of business. So that's really important and really invaluable.

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allows you that independence, just like the work that you do, and the instances where we have about a business that's so big that you need help from other attorneys to do the work that allows you the opportunity to pick which cases you want to do yourself and which you delegate out to someone else. So that's really important. Another thing to know is it also helps you to develop a niche within your area of practice. So here you know, as you pick out the cases you want to handle you can also help to develop a niche, you may find that I prefer to do X type of case like I prefer to do adoption cases, for example, so I'm going to hang on to those and get really good at that. So I can pull myself out as someone who is an expert and very experienced in this area, while delegating other areas, in cases to other associates. So it helps you to get that experience. It helps you to get that name out there. When you're developing And working your book of business. The biggest way to grow a book of business is networking, I would say that networking is absolutely essential if you want to grow a book of business, because a book of business isn't just going to come to you, it's not just going to grow overnight. It's something you have to work at. And the biggest way you work at it is through networking. So there are lots of different ways you can network. One is through regular events that don't require membership. These could be, you know, Bar Association events that are open to the public Chamber of Commerce events that are open to the public. And generally, these are events that are local, that pull together a lot of different professionals, to have a big room of people you can network with. These are great opportunities, but they can also be a bit overwhelming. And they can also be a bit redundant.

And by that what I mean is, it's possible to go to one of these meetings, and you're not only in a room full of attorneys, but you're in a room full of attorneys who all do exactly what you do, and are who are all looking for that same kind of case and referral that you're looking for. And that's not to say that you can't have a great referral relationship with someone who does what you do, there may be differences and price point, locations, skill set, what have you. But if you can find these events, where you are more unique in the room for what you do, the better off you would be. So that that transmits the idea of membership and networking groups. There are plenty of networking groups. And by that I mean networking groups that meet regularly that require membership, that also allow you to lock out your competition. A BMI, for example, is a networking group, wherein there's a rule that in each chapter, there's a one fee per industry. So for example, I'm going to be an AI group, and I'm the only family law attorney in that group. So what that means is, there isn't an opportunity for another family law attorney to join the group and try to take my referrals away or share my referrals, and allows me to be the go to family law person in this group, which I think is super important. When you're looking at networking groups, it's really important to find your target audience. And how you do that is by taking stock of what people have actually been the most helpful to you in growing your book of business or who could potentially be the most helpful to you in growing your book of business. I'll use myself for an example, as the family law practitioner, I found that the people I want to network with are people who are other attorneys who don't who do other areas of law, it's most easy for me to refer to them and vice versa. And on top of that therapists, mediators, real estate professionals, financial advisors, that these are great people who can easily refer to me because they're working with people who I would want to work with. So for me, it's important for me to find groups that have those types of professionals already in the room, so you can get those easy introductions. So that's an important thing to take stock of and know when you're looking at membership in a networking group. Or you can also network through one to one meetings. Here, it's really important to establish a relationship. You want to actually have and develop likability and commonality with this person you're meeting with, you don't want to meet with them just to see what you can get out of them. People can smell that from a mile away and do not want to work with you, if that's what you're like. They want to know that you care about them as a person that you want to get to know them that you want to develop a friendship or report. So that's the most important thing you can do on a one to one. And then it's also important to follow up with that once one, if you made promises in that meeting, to say, Oh, I would love to introduce you to x person, and then you don't do it, that definitely goes.

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So you've got to make sure that you not only want to help the person that you're having a meeting with, but that you also actually do it and that you follow up promptly. Also, after you have a one to one meeting with someone you want to stay in regular touch, you don't want it to just be a one off meeting where you just both instantly forget about each other, stay in touch,

have regular meetings, send a friendly email and, and build that relationship a cure. I think it's really important in all networking, especially one to one meetings is to focus on how you can help someone else. Don't focus on what they can do for you. And I say that because being other centric is a great way to not only develop a great network and develop a great rapport with your network such that they want to help you but it also I really believe it comes back to you. If you go out of your way to help someone else succeed, they will probably want to help you to whenever they can. So that's important. If you go to a networking event You meet someone that you want to have a one to one with, make sure you reach out to them at timely, you can do this by getting their business card, getting their email address and shooting them an email the next day. And then when you're reaching out to them to see if you can schedule that one to one meeting, I think it's a great idea to include specifics about the conversation or interaction you had, so they can remember you. Because they may have had a bunch of conversation at that large networking events. It also shows that thoughtfulness and that this conversation mattered to you. And that's why you're following up. So those are important rules to keep in mind when it comes to networking generally. So say you want to join a networking group, like we touched on briefly, it's important to choose that wisely. achievement with intention, and there are a few different pointers, I think, are good things to look at if you're determining if a networking group is a good fit for you. Number one, you want to look at the reputation of the group. So by that, I mean, what have you heard about this group? Have you heard that it's friendly and welcoming and productive? Or have you heard that it's kind of clicky. That's important to know about when you're deciding which group you want to join, lots of networking groups also have the opportunity for you to visit for free as a non member to see what you think about it. And there, you can get a good sense of what kind of group that is, if you haven't heard one way or another about the reputation. Another thing to look at is the location, where do these networking groups meet, you want it to be somewhere that's convenient for you, you don't want it to be somewhere where you have to take hours out of your day to commute back and forth to this place, especially as an attorney, where your biggest goal for the day is to make sure you're maintaining your billable requirements. So you want to pick a location that's convenient for you and easy for you to get to. You also want to take a look at what the requirements are. Different networking groups can have different requirements for membership or participation in the group. BMI, for example, has certain requirements when it comes to attendance, timeliness, and action, as well as continuing education and the ability to take on a leadership role. So these are things that you should know upfront, when you're choosing a networking group, you want to know what those requirements are. Because you need to ask yourself, if it's something that you're able or willing to do and to stick to, it's not a good luck, to join a group know the requirements, and then just treat them like they don't matter. Even though if that's not something you're doing in work, per se and you're doing it in a networking group, it's very easy for the people in that group, to look at

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you're treating this group, and only assume that that's how you would treat a client. So I would say only join a group if you're able to meet the requirements. Also look at the timing, when do they meet? And how often do they meet? Is that something that works for you? For example, I'm in my DNI chapter. And it's, it meets very early at 715 in the morning. For me, that's a great thing. Because I'm a litigator, I'm in court most mornings, and my days can be a bit unpredictable when it comes to meetings, trials, discovery deadlines, what have you. So for me, getting something done in terms of networking first thing in the morning, before the office even opens, before my clients are even awake is the best way for me to do it. I know some transactional attorneys that don't have those issues with time that I may have as a litigator, and are able to reliably say, Yes, I could do the lunch hour on this day, every single week, for example. So Timing is everything. When it comes to choosing a group, you want to make sure it's a time that works for you, and when that you can actually show up at like with the requirements, it's not a good plug, if you join a group and then never show up. It's easy for the members to assume that that's how you would treat a client, whether that's fair or not fair. But you also want to look at what the members are, you want to know how many members there are, what they do, if it's a one seat per industry kind of deal. And if these are the kinds of people that you can help and that can help you. You know, for example, I don't know how helpful I would be if I was in a networking group that was full of just architects, for example, I do Family Law, I do legal stuff, I'm not on that side of things and their industry. So they may not know a whole lot of people that can help them. Therefore a made up here great idea for me to join that group. You don't want to join a group just looking to see how these people can help you. You also want to know you can help them too, that helps to build the relationship and build some credibility with them. And I guess the overarching description of all of these roles I have for selecting your group is know that you have the ability to connect to this group. If you don't, that's not the end of the world. You can find plenty of different networking groups that have required It's timing, location, everything that worked well for you. So the next thing I think that's really important when it comes to growing your book of business by networking is to know your pitch. So here I'm talking about an elevator speech. I say that this is the number one thing you can do for yourself as an attorney, is to have a clear and concise way to introduce yourself, describe what you do, and get that across to someone else in 60 seconds or less. Actually, in DNI, we all do this every week, we have a 60 seconds to be already talking about ourselves, what we do and who are looking to me or what kind of referral we're looking for that week. So because of that, I've got my elevator speech down, Pat. And it's important that I think every attorney does. So when you're doing your elevator speech, you have to introduce yourself, explain your business and identify good clients or introductions for you in 60 seconds, you should have this ready to go until it becomes second nature and networking settings. And you should never forget to ask others about themselves and how you can help them. The worst thing in the

world at a networking event is to have someone come up to you talk about themselves, tell you what they want hand you a business card, and then bolt on to the next person. That's someone who's not other centric. And I don't know about you, but that's not someone I would be so inclined to help. You want to help someone who also wants to help you and wants to build that relationship with you. So this this elevator speech shouldn't be the only thing you say to people. But you should have this ready to go and work into a conversation if you're asked about yourself and what you do. So an example is, you know, my elevator speech. What I would say is, my name is Colleen brains. I'm a Senior Associate Attorney at Lavelle law, which is a full service law firm based in Schaumburg and the Chicago Board of Trade. I'm on our litigation team focusing mainly on family law. So I help people through family transitions, whether they're thinking about getting married with a prenup, when they're thinking about growing their family with an adoption. On the other side of a relationship with a divorce, custody dispute or order protection. I like to help people smoothly navigate these transitions. On the other side. Good people that I'm looking to me are other attorneys who do other areas of law, or any mediators, you may know, if you know of anyone going through a family, family transition, or anyone in those areas where there's some synergy, I would love to be introduced to them. So that's a good idea of a quick elevator speech, you should only produce that when asked.

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But I think it's great to have down and be ready to have it. And if it's something that you've practiced, and it's something that you've been doing for a while, the more practiced it is the more polished and prepared you seem, which goes to the principles of professionalism, as we talked about. And a bonus, and something that I would challenge you all to do is if you have a network that you're close with, or there are a few people on your network that you're close with, and you want some help, that the best way to help these people is that you can actually give their elevator speech for them. If you know them so well. You know what they do, and you know who they're looking for that you can recite it yourself. There's no reason you can't help these people. And you can also share this intro for them if you're introducing them to people, either in person or email. Actually, a great thing to do is to ask people that you care about and people that you want to help for their elevator speech. So you have that ready to go when you're doing email introductions to someone that they want to meet, for example, so it's a little bit more personalized and polished, then ABB button said, Hey, I'd love for you to meet b. here is everything that's great about the everything you need to know about beam. And better yet, if you could do the same thing for a and one email. That's amazing. And that shows the skills of a master networker. So I would challenge all of you to not only know your elevator speech, but know the elevator speech of the people you care about the people you want to help. It makes for better warm, qualified referrals. And I think also in turn, would make them want to know yours and to help you too. So some networking tips. Here, I hear from a lot of attorneys that they are daunted by networking, that networking doesn't sound so fun to them, that it sounds like this

horrible requirement that they have to do as an attorney that they just dread. And it doesn't have to be that way I would challenge you to think about it differently. Um, networking does not need to be difficult, in my opinion. I think the best way to look at it is with a goal of building friendships and relationships. And I think that the business would really follow if you look at it like that, and I think you'd also have a better time with networking. If you like. Got it like that. So here are just a few quick tips that I would like to share when it comes to networking. The first one is if you're going to a networking event, do your research, see if you can get a guest list, see if you can know who can be there. If there's someone you really want to meet, do some research about them ahead of time, you know, almost everything is on the internet these days. And it says a lot, if you meet someone and you, you're able to ask them really thoughtful questions based on what you've learned about them. Another thing is don't go to a networking event in a pack, I see this a lot, I've been guilty of it myself, if you're going to a networking group with a lot of people from your firm, for example, it's very easy to just stay in your own group only talk to those people you came with, and not really make those meaningful relationships and introductions at this networking group. So I would say if you must go with some other people limit that number and promise each other that you're going to work the room and meet other people, instead of just go there and socialize with them. You could always find another time to socialize with your co workers or friends. At a non networking events, I would recommend that but networking events, you're there to meet other people. So make sure that's at the forefront. Another great tip is if you see someone at a networking event that's not heard of a conversation or seems a bit left out or lonely, go up to them, introduce yourself and make sure that you introduce those to other people in the room. I think that they would really appreciate you for it. I don't know who wouldn't. And it also shows good emotional intelligence. I think I would always remember someone who went out of their way to help me and make me more comfortable and make me feel included in a networking events. So I would challenge you to do the same. Another thing I would say is don't be afraid to go up to someone and introduce yourself. That's what networking is all about, you're not going to be labeled as weird or crazy by going up to someone and saying, Hi, my name is so and so.

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Who are you? What brought you here? How do you know the host? Introduce yourself and get to know them. Don't be shy to do that. If you are shy, sometimes that's where it's okay. So, you know, go into CAC with one other person that you went to this networking group with. And together so it's not awkward. But I would challenge you to see if you could do it on your own. I think that makes a great impact. Another one that I hope this is obvious, but I found from networking events, but it's not always obvious is to ask other people about themselves. One of my biggest pet peeves is when someone comes up to me and they just start talking to me about them. And they never asked me about myself, it's a bit of a turnoff, it comes off as pretty ego centric, even if that's not how that person is, they may just be going around networking the wrong way. It's important that you've come away from networking groups, knowing about other people

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and knowing about

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who they are and how you can help them.

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Another thing

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is to ask for a business card from a from someone you enjoy talking to as opposed to just handing yours out everywhere. He gets that business card, maybe even make a note on that business card about something notable that you talked about. And follow up promptly, I would say the next day with the business cards with anyone you met that you want to keep in touch with. I would also say it's important to keep a list of those who meet through networking, and have it somewhere accessible. I think it's important to have their name their industry, who good referrals are for them and who good good centers of influence there are for them, and what their personal information is. This way you have it handy and say next time you have a client that says hey, I need a great financial advisor, would you suggest you've got a list ready to go. And you can reach out to those people and see if that that intro makes sense. But it's good to have something at your fingertips when it comes to networking so you can keep people straight and keep your relationship straight. This list also helps you stay in touch. I would say if there's someone that was especially meaningful to you and that you definitely want to keep up with stay in touch with them regularly. This can look like it's something as simple as just a quick email, sharing an article sending holiday cards sending a gift, congratulating them on a promotion, birthday wedding. treat them like a person. treat them like someone who's a friend that you want to stay in touch with. Certainly don't overwhelm them. Don't overdo it. But I think a couple of short and sweet contacts throughout the year quarter stay a lot. Next, I would say if you invite someone to go to a one to one meeting after meeting them in a networking group, if you're the one who invites it's If you're the one who pays for the coffee or the lunch, and I bet you that this person would want to reciprocate in the future, but to the extent you do it, you can't do it, I think it shows good manners. The next is to keep business cards on you at all times, especially at networking events. It's a cardinal thing to go to a networking event and not have your business card, because you will be asked for it. It shows you're prepared, when you have that business card ready to go. And it also helps that person stay in touch with you. So keep those handy. I actually keep them in all of my bags, you know, my my bags for when I'm going out socially, as well as my work bags, just so I'm never in a spot where I

don't have my business cards. I also do everything you can to remember the name of someone you meet at a networking group. Use that name as often as possible when you're first introduced to them to help that stick in your minds. And through the repetition of using the name. Don't make it weird. Don't use the companion in every sentence. But do your best to try to repeat it to yourself and solidify it in your minds. And having a business card. And name tags also help with that too.

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Another tip I

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would say is when you're talking to someone at a networking group, ask questions so you can answer these questions for yourself about them. What excites them? What motivates them? What energizes them? What do they do? What do they love? Those are important things to know. And lets you know that you're asking the right questions if you're able to answer that for yourself later. Also, it's a good idea to determine what makes you stand out from the crowd. So stand in a room full of Family Law Attorneys, we all do the same thing. But we all have different strong points, different specialties. For me, something about me, that's not true of every family law attorney is I represent children, I can be appointed by the court to be a guardian ad litem, a child representative or an attorney for a child, which is a little bit different than just the general Family Law practitioner. So it's good to know that about yourself. So you can share that with other people about what makes you different and how they can set you apart from other family law attorneys. at a networking event, also, don't be busy eating the whole time, it's a good idea to have a snack or a meal before. Because if you're there and busy eating and attach the debate, it signals that you're not there to talk to people that you're not receptive to people coming up to you. Even though that's not how you feel. That's how it looks. So be mindful of that. When you're meeting people smile, use open body language, be friendly, be inquisitive about them, they really notice that it goes a long way to making people feel good and comfortable in your presence. If you're meeting with someone at a networking group, who's kind of not leaving you alone, and hogging your time, when you're trying to meet other people, excuse yourself from somebody talking your time, politely. And a great way to do this is by introducing them to someone else you met. So that person could also have a conversation with someone else. Um, I would say do at least some networking regularly. For me, I make a goal of having at least a couple meetings, one on one meetings with people every week. You can even designate at the same time every week for this if you'd like if you know, for example, Tuesdays at two o'clock are always open for you starting to fill that with a networking meeting. And start to do that every week strive to have that dedicated time there to focus on your building or network. And I would say after you meet with people come away with an action plan. If they're telling you that they would like to meet someone who is a residential broker, and you know someone who's a residential broker, offer up

that person who you like and trust in that area. Ask if you can make that introduction for them. If they say yes, follow up and make sure you're doing that promptly. I would say by the next day, at least, if it's something you just talk about and never do, it goes noticed and they would assume that's how you would handle a client even if that's not true. So show people that you can be dependable and that way. Next I'd like to talk about the idea of mentorship and networking. I would say that this is a great idea if you know someone who is a master networker, and someone who you admire and someone who has a relationship with you enough that they would be willing to mentor you. So look for those excellent networkers. You can find them in your office,

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you can find them in your networking group, or you can even find them in your friends or family and ask if they'd be willing to mentor you and help you improve your networking. You can do this by sitting in on their meetings, have them sit in on yours. Set up once once with them to discuss strategy for your networking, your marketing and building your book of business. And to be sure focus on how you can help them in return. mentorship does not need to be a one way street. If there are ways you can help them, make sure you're doing it. You can do this in a few ways. You can do this by passing referrals, making introductions for them, helping them with tasks, articles, etc. But if you can help them do it. Also, when you're setting up regular meetings with them to discuss strategy, see if you can make this regular, see if you can make this happen quarterly, monthly, whatever works for them. I know my firm, for example, actually has quarterly marketing meetings with every attorney at our firm, to check in and see how we're doing when it comes to bringing in business, how we're networking and how we're growing our book. So it holds you accountable, and lets you take stock of what you did in the past quarter, what went well, what didn't, and what you'd like to do in the future, and write it down. I think writing it down is really powerful when it comes to taking stock of what you've done and what you'd like to do in the future. And come back to those goals regularly and see how you're progressing on them and see if you need to rework them at all. That's totally possible. When you have a mentor and networking you can learn a lot about them from how they run their meetings and how they close the deal. I find by and large, when you're networking or meeting with a potential client, the less pressure you put on that person, the more comfortable they are to work with you. No one wants a pushy salesy person, they want someone who is willing to help them, but it's not pressuring them to act right away. I think that that's just a good principle for life.

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So

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let's talk about organizing your networking, we talked about this a little bit, I think it's a great idea to keep a list of those you network with by having hansy, maybe even an Excel spreadsheet, the name of the person, their industry, the area they serve their referral partners, their centers of influence. If you want to network with someone, you should, at minimum have at least that information, if you don't have it, get it that's not at the meeting, make sure you come away with that information, and work to help them stay in touch with them. Take note of your commonalities, make introductions for them and pass referrals. I find that for me, it's super easy to refer to other attorneys I you know, like the scenario I talked about earlier with my parents. Lots of people know I'm an attorney. Plenty of people don't understand that I'm a family law attorney. And that means I do only a certain area of law and not others. So when people come to me and they say, you know, for example, I need help with this contract dispute, I may not be the ones to do it. But I know someone who is from my networking so I can make that introduction and hopefully pass that referral. And people on your network really notice that really remember it and really, really appreciate it. Um, let's talk about some sneaky networking. Networking can be done anywhere and it doesn't have to be over. It doesn't have to be at a networking group only. I find that social clubs and events are great ways to get some sneaky networking in. Look for you know, for example, clubs in your area that have lots of professionals who are looking to me, I was a member of the Union League club of Chicago, for example, where I was able to meet a lot of really impressive professionals and network with them by you know, developing relationships and developing friendships, you should also look for a pro bono and community service opportunities. These are great ways to meet other people and get some sneaky networking and by building those relationships, when I've been involved in Chicago volunteer legal services, providing pro bono legal work to people in the area. And I've also been on the board of the Junior League of Chicago, which is a women's volunteerism organization in Chicago, where you can meet a lot of professionals who are like minded, similar interests, similar age, and it's super easy to network when you already have those commonalities. Another idea is boards or steering committees, and even taking on a leadership role in these committees. So for example, I'm on the board of the DePaul College of Law Family Law Center. I'm also a co chair for the Chicago Bar Association, young lawyers section of the family law in Chicago. And these are great ways to meet other professionals network and build those relationships. As opposed to just being in a straight up networking meeting. This is a great way for you to build a relationship outside of a formal setting and build those relationships over time without specifically asking for anything. With these longer term relationships, you help to build trust, confidence in you, as there's someone who would be more likely to pass business to you or should they want to Next, let's talk about how to grow up a business. It's really important to identify referral partners and centers of influence security think it's really important to take notes and keep metrics on this. Take stock of past referral sources. Check out who have who have been the professionals that have been most easy to refer to you and see if you can keep up those relationships and see if you can meet more people like that. I just heard from your current network who works with potential clients. So for example, financial advisors may work with plenty of people who are thinking about divorce, and may 1 Talk with

your financial adviser about it. Those are great people to identify as referral partners because of that. Also take stock of who in your network is also Rainmaker in their industry. Someone who's a Rainmaker in one industry may very likely be able to help you when it comes to referrals as well, because they, they just get it when it comes to networking and building a book of business. So it doesn't have to be someone in the legal industry. If you know someone who's a Rainmaker in real estate, for example, it's good to build that relationship with them. Because they may be other centric just like you and me come across people who they can't help but who you can help. Another great way to grow your book of business is to understand the value of cross marketing. This is a fantastic opportunity for firms who practice more than one area of law. For my law firm. For my law firm, for example, we can sell just about every area of law. Generally, when I'm looking for a case that I can work, I'm looking for a family law case.

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But any case

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that handles any area of law is a good referral for me and something I could bring into the firm. Obviously, another attorney would be handling it because they have the expertise. But that's still your referral, that's still your client, that's still someone you can add to your portable book of business. So for example, I've been able to bring in a criminal estate planning and small business cases to our firm, and have been able to make sure that I maintain the relationship,

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that potential client,

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but they're also getting the expert help that they need by an attorney at my firm who knows what they're doing, and that area of law. So I would encourage you to make sure that those in your network know not only what you do, but everything your firm does if your firm does more than just what you do. Another thing to talk about when it comes to how to grow your book of business is to build your brand. That's super important because you want to be someone who's known in the industry, someone who's visible, someone who's top of mind when they're looking for someone who does what you do. So you can do this through speaking engagements. You can do this through taking board positions, you can do this by pro bono Community Services. You could do this through articles, you could do this through podcasts. You can even do this through social media. There are lots of opportunities like this that you can find through bar associations, lunch

and learns CLE Lee's guest lecturing at law school, about relevant topics. And also drafting articles that are timely and current in something that people would want to read or know about. So for example, when we're talking about growing the brands, I've been able to do a number of speaking engagements on family law topics through that might pass law school as well as bar associations that helps to get some visibility as someone who is an expert in that particular topic. In addition, I this past year in 2020, I've been able to see a lot of podcasts about relevant hot topics that are new and up and coming that not only clients but maybe even other family law attorneys would want to know about and want to have something to easily refer to. So this past year COVID-19 impacted not only the world but family law cases. So I was able to do research about COVID impacts on orders of protection, on divorce, on parenting time and on court proceedings. And I've been able to communicate what those changes are and what that means to the community and some potential clients as well as to my referral partners. They know I'm the go to on certain topics. And so that helps for them to keep me more top of mind as good referrals and introductions come their way. Another thing we want to talk about is growing your book of business by marketing. So like we touched on briefly, you can do this through an online presence. Having a leveraging Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, blogs, podcasts or your firm website are all great ideas. That's where you could put those great articles. That's where you could put those great thoughts about new areas of law or emerging topics. And make sure it's fresh. Make sure it's updated regularly. Make sure currents. I think it says a lot when you're going to someone's blog page and you see that they haven't made a blog post since 2009. And if you want to be a blogger, it's important to keep that current. For example, another way to do this is through mailers, or direct mailing campaigns for some areas of law that makes sense. Another way to do this is through interviews or classes, like we touched on, if you have an opportunity to guest lecture on a topic, that's wonderful. If you can guest interview for someone in your network, that's wonderful. That if you can help to produce the podcasters CLE, with someone in your network, that's wonderful. These are all great opportunities to make sure that you're visible and out there on the topics that matter to you. And you can do this, they're speaking engagements as well. There are plenty of speaking engagements that are available through bar associations. For example, if there's a topic you know a lot about, and you want to present that, see if the person station would be willing to have you put on that presentation, I'm willing to bet that a lot of people would be interested in what you have to say.

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But

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these are just some ideas to grow your book of business. But ultimately, where you want to be is the best kind of marketing, which is referrals through word of mouth, you want to be doing such

great work that you have clients who are happy to refer you to their friends and family and write great reviews for you. So that the referrals just come to you naturally, that's an ideal place to be. And that's a place that I think everyone should strive to be at, where you don't need to worry so much about marketing, because you've got word of mouth marketing. So more about how to grow your book of business, I think it's really important to set regular goals for yourself. I know every quarter, I set a goal for how many cases I hope to bring into the firm. And then as we enter a new quarter, I check in to see if I met that goal and if so how, and if not why. So you can kind of recalibrate what your future goals are, and make sure that they're realistic, while also still always pushing yourself, take stock of the past month, the past quarter something regular, so you can determine what's working or not. It also helps you to see trends as for what's been working well for you, it may be something that you wouldn't have thought of, but allows you to see that and to focus on that more to do more of that more of what's been working as you can continue to bring in those great referrals. Now let's talk about maintaining that book of business. Number one, and I can't stress this enough is by doing great work, people are gonna want to refer to you if you are doing great work. If you're dropping the ball on deadlines, if you're not returning calls, if you're not returning emails, if you're not prepared if you're not polished. These are things that could dry up your referrals. So you don't want to to count. But assuming you're doing the great work, and you have that book of business, maintain it by keeping in touch with clients in your network alike. There are a few ways you could do this. Constant Contact is one method that I've heard is really useful for certain firms. You could produce regular newsletters that get emails out to your clients or network about hot topics. You could produce articles on your website and share them with people who you think would be interested. You could do email check ins regularly, you can send holiday cards or gifts, where appropriate. You can also have great reviews that have been posted about you share. And you can also keep in touch with your network and clients. If you have referrals for them as you

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like we've touched you like we've touched on, the more willing and able you are to help other people,

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the more likely they're going to want to help you too. So always keep in mind that it's not just about you, of course you want referrals and you want this great book of business. But how you can come by that more easily is if you're other centric and if you're helping others and if you're helping others to succeed in theirs as well. So I want to thank you for taking the time to listen to me today about building your book of business and networking. I could talk about this for what feels like hours. So if you have more questions about this, and you'd like to connect, I have my information here on the slide. Feel free to email me or call me. I would love to hear from you. And thank you

very much for your time today. Have a great afternoon.