

Elevating the Business and Growth of Law Firms

In this segment of Communication Commandments, Mr. Dominic Grew of Elevate Business Coaching, joined host Kim Calvi of Boston Edits, LLC, and shared his insights as to why his niche consulting practice is an incredible value-add for attorneys who have been practicing law for a while, excel at their craft, are determined to get the most out of their hard work, and grow their practice.

What formed the basis of his long experience, Dominic started in Belfast, Ireland in the financial services industry, operating, managing, and developing a financial services firm on a national scale. When he moved to the United States, his role at an investment firm was similar. “My skill was helping the organization to run like a well-oiled machine and to grow,” he states. When he started his own firm here, many of the professionals he met were attorneys and he quickly became aware of an obvious need. “I realized that while they were experts in the law, they're not really taught how to grow a business or how to manage a business. And really those two are the skills that I bring to my clients,” he offers.

And who are those clients? Specifically, they are lawyers who are in their thirties and forties, have young families, have worked in a big law firm, and have gained solid experience after about ten years, and now they are thinking about their futures. They're excellent practitioners who have begun considering branching out on their own. They are looking for continued career success, but they want to balance it with every other facet of their lives.

There are two-prong deliverables from what clients obtain from Dominic's services: Business management and business growth. These particular goals require thoughtful and repeated discussion, for a variety of reasons. First, clients aren't accustomed to being the one to seek advice, so to achieve the desired result of a law practice that is managed well, overcoming a shift in position can be a challenge. Dominic is aware of this and personalizes his approach, asking them what they believe their biggest challenge is. Identifying that pain point and developing a feasible solution includes the question he regularly asks, “What would that look like?” This question opens up the discussion to address all areas of business management. A client may have worked at a larger firm where there was an HR infrastructure, an IT infrastructure, and an accounting department. Now the attorney with their own practice is responsible for overseeing and managing all of the details of each of those departments, in addition to carving out time to network and look for new clients. Time management becomes a daunting proposition. Second, business management informs business growth. Attracting talent, recruiting, and leveraging staff—in a good way, he is quick to explain—is another part of managing a business. Such concerns are typical of attorneys who are new to running their own business.

Conversely, other clients may already have their own practice, but know that it could be better managed. Sometimes, though, in this situation, the uneasiness isn't readily identifiable.

“Attorneys are paid to be critical thinkers,” Dominic acknowledges. “That attorney is an expert

in the law. But running a business is a broader role. I work with them to think differently, to think of it more from a business perspective.” Rather than finding a hole in an argument, as a lawyer would do, a client is coached by Dominic to talk about the pain. A helpful analogy, he posits, is that of a patient visiting a doctor. The physician asks how long the patient has been experiencing pain? Is it sporadic? What’s the extent of it? “That’s similar to my conversation with a client, as well. What is it about their situation that they want to change? My clients engage me when they really hit on something that they want to fix. Our discovery conversation reveals a challenge that they haven’t been able to resolve to their satisfaction. The value-add I bring is to help them find a solution,” Dominic asserts. Much like a cure a doctor would prescribe.

Additionally, clients who collaborate with him fall into three categories. There’s the attorney who wants to grow their business, generating more revenue into their practice and seeing a greater profit. There’s the attorney who is comfortable financially and now wants to focus on how they use their time. This conversation generally centers on the inability to delegate or prioritize what’s truly important. The third category requires more delicate handling, possibly, as it involves partners or others on their team, and centers on more effective communication. It’s this last category that sparks the most concern. As Dominic has noticed among this variety of clients, internal communication does not always come easily to them. As litigators, initiating an important but less contentious discussion with a team member seems foreign. In his coaching, Dominic states that, “Some of the best conversations that I’ve had with my clients have been from just having someone that they can bounce ideas off and ask for perspective on. Someone who’s going to walk that journey with them, but not necessarily tell them what to do, but bring some insight to them. I find that’s worked really well with my clients.”

Overall, Dominic’s approach when helping any of his clients, is to get them to verbalize what their biggest challenges are, as the foregoing suggests. Are these issues important? Urgent? Both? What does their goal look like? Is it living the lifestyle and making the income they want, but with less frustration, for example? One thing that Dominic stresses to his client’s, is that their goals are not restricted to some nebulous concept. Instead, by engaging an outside expert to help them in that journey the result is a clear tangible of what they want and what they need to do or adapt to, to achieve it.

Not bound by geography, Dominic’s clients stretch from coast to coast. They are already successful, but they want more and are willing to do the work to get there. “I help them get what it is that they want or fix what’s broken, and do it faster and quicker than they probably would trying to figure it out by themselves,” he summarizes. In this way, he helps his clients to elevate their business.

Dominic was recently nominated as a top-five finalist in the Massachusetts Lawyer’s Weekly rankings in the Business Development Coach category. He can be reached at 857-272-6391 or

dgrew@elevatebusinesscoaching.com. His website's URL is <https://elevatebusinesscoaching.com/>.